

Migrant Vulnerabilities and Integration Needs in Central Asia

Root Causes, Social and Economic Impact
of Return Migration

Regional Field Assessment in Central Asia
2016



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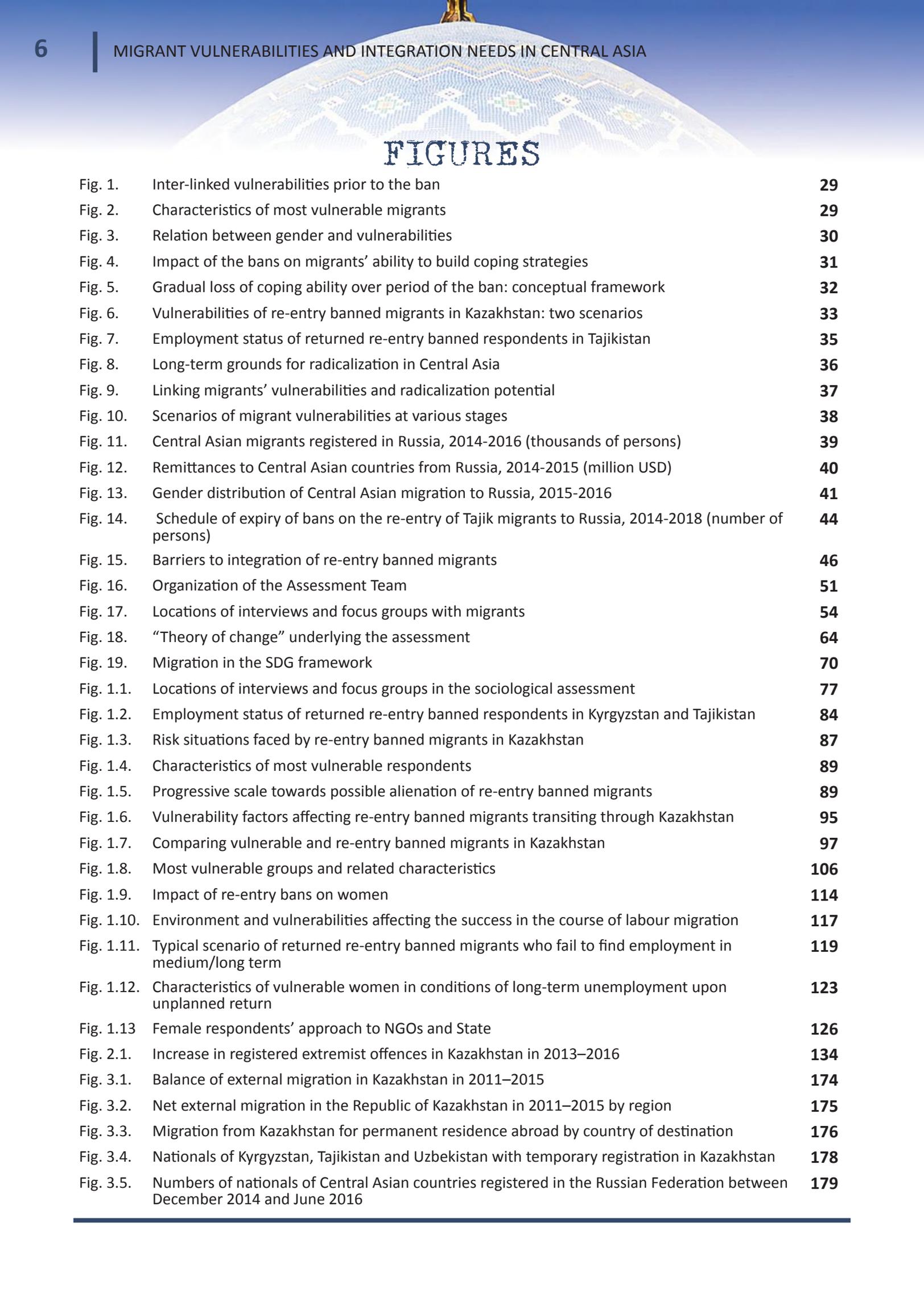
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ABBREVIATIONS

CA	Central Asia
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSTO	Common Security Treaty Organization
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
EEU/EAEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EU	European Union
FMS RF	Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFMD	Global Forum on Migration and Development
HLD	High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
ILO	International Labour Organization
IML	International Migration Law
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISIS/ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria/the Levant
KR	Kyrgyz Republic
KZ	Kazakhstan
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MGI	IOM Migration Governance Indicator
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
RF	Russian Federation
RK	Republic of Kazakhstan
RT	Republic of Tajikistan
RUB	Russian Ruble
SAMK	Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan/Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan
SCNS	State Committee for National Security
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SDGs	UN Sustainable Development Goals
SMS KR	State Migration Service of the Kyrgyz Republic
STD	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
TJ	Tajikistan
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollar
USSR	Union of Socialist Soviet Republics



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The Library of the First President of Kazakhstan-Leader of the Nation, informally known as “Nazarbayev Center”, was established by the Decree of the Head of State on March 13, 2014. It combines the services of presidential archive, museum, and think tank in the way presidential centers, libraries & museums successfully function today in the USA, France, Russia and other countries of the world. The mission of the Policy Analysis Center is high-level decision-making support via research and policy analysis, as well as promotion of strategic initiatives of the First President of Kazakhstan inside the country and abroad. Center is targeted to provide high-quality strategic insights and alternative solutions for certain policy-making impact. Its subdivisions conduct complex analysis of Kazakhstan’s domestic and foreign policies, strategic research in the field of country and geopolitical studies (with focus on the USA, Russia, China, EU, Caspian and Central Asian states), risk assessment and forecasting in national security with outcome of concrete policy recommendations.



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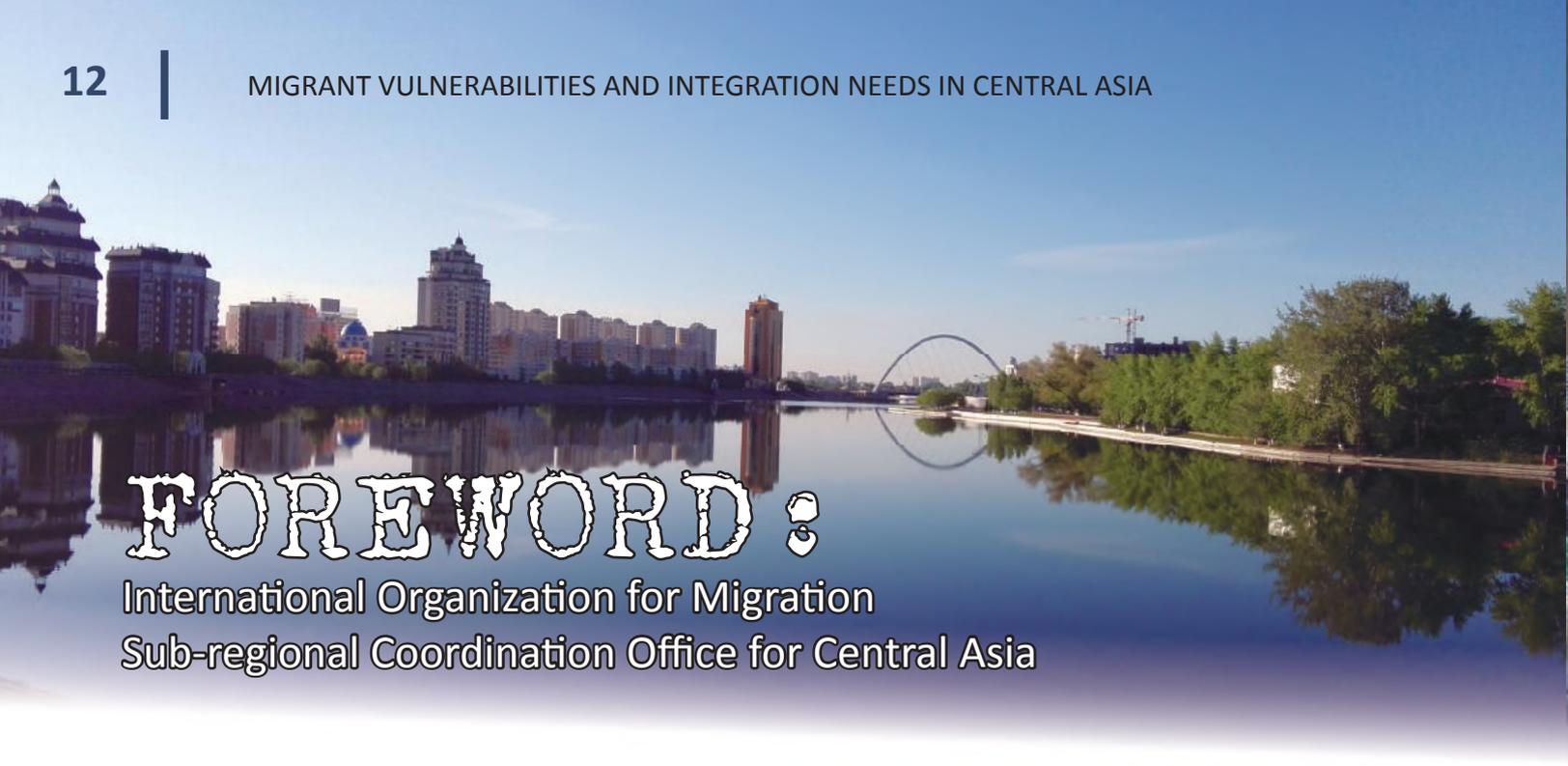


The Regional Field Assessment “Migrant vulnerabilities and Integration Needs in Central Asia Root Causes, Social and Economic Impact of Return Migration” provides evidence based highlights on a set of actual challenges in Central Asia. First of all, the IOM’s report reveals an unobserved dimension of regional transformation comprising from mixed migration flows, socio-economic developments and hidden radicalization triggers. Furthermore, the assessment touches upon return migration issues in the context of socioeconomic and sociopolitical developments including radicalization and roots of extremism in Central Asia with broader geographic impact highlighting diverse options to make PVE and CVE efforts in the region more focused. Finally, the report emphasizes the importance of collaborative approach in the Central Asia and gives substantial grounds to address key findings through regional dialogue together with governments, communities, NGOs and researchers for effective policy making.

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FOREWORD :

International Organization for Migration Sub-regional Coordination Office for Central Asia

Central Asia is a dynamic region where people move primarily for economic purposes. It is estimated that more than six million CA citizens are on the move, at any given moment, looking for better work and life opportunities. The majority of Central Asian citizens move towards the Russian Federation, with Kazakhstan being the second choice of destination. The current regional field assessment analyzes the impact of the Russian Federation policy in introducing re-entry bans to migrant workers from Central Asia, reflects on the socioeconomic impact of the precarious position of Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek migrant workers and outlines some of the coping mechanisms.

The assessment relies on a combination of interviews with government and non-government stakeholders, international and national experts and migrants, and it points to some specific vulnerabilities that affect certain categories of migrants, taking into account the deterioration of their legal, economic and social status. Finally, it relates these vulnerabilities to the potential for social and ideological radicalization, outlining a number of scenarios that could come into being should the vulnerability factors remain unaddressed.

The regional field assessment fills an important gap in addressing the socio-economic roots of radicalization from a rights-based perspective. It acknowledges the various initiatives of the Central Asian countries at preventing and countering violent extremism (PVE and CVE) in the region while noting the need to complement the predominant security approach with a broader approach that tackles the long-term grounds for radicalization. It also identifies women as a particularly important group among migrants and in their communities for defusing radicalization potential, which so far received relatively little attention in this context. Finally, it demonstrates that migrant diasporas and informal support networks play a decisive role in preventing the onset of radicalization.

IOM follows an analytical and holistic approach in tackling the issues at hand, working closely with the Governments in the region, community and spiritual leaders, as well as migrants themselves in order to capture and address in a preventive manner root causes, social and economic impact of return migration. IOM looks forward to build upon the current report's findings and recommendations in promoting safe migration under international migration law as well as work hand in hand with government and non-government stakeholders and the international community in ensuring a better and safer world for migrants and societies.

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INTRODUCTION

Migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have played a pivotal role in ensuring the sustainable livelihood of households and communities in countries and regions where other sources of income are hard to generate. Social networks established by migrants helped them overcome a range of difficulties on the Russian labour market, such as the steep economic downturn of the Russian economy after 2008 and strong competition in sectors of employment and vulnerability to sanctions due to irregular work status. However, the additional stress factors operating since 2014, such as the prolonged contraction of the Russian economy, devaluation of the ruble as well as of the Central Asian currencies and large-scale imposition of sanctions, in particular re-entry bans, have all made the migrants' position unstable. This has exposed a large number of them to new or deepened vulnerabilities, ranging from the loss of financial resources to a sense of desperation and lowered self-esteem.

The failure of the established long-term strategies has pushed some of the more vulnerable migrants toward a search for new ways of coping with these challenges. Over the past two years a number of reports (official statements, policy research and media) have begun to associate the growing socioeconomic vulnerability of migrants with the risk of exposure to radical religious propaganda and, in isolated cases, involvement in extremist activities. However, the reports could not be firmly verified, as little was known about the extent and mechanisms of radicalization in such groups. The issue was framed in security terms, especially from Central Asian governments, while reliable testimonies from within the migrant community and migrants' families could not be collected as they were reluctant to discuss the issue. As a result, the link between migration and radicalization was tenuous, based mainly on anecdotal evidence. This made it difficult for the authorities, the international community and non-governmental organizations to define the problem and target prevention activities properly.

The IDF report *Mapping on Irregular Migration in Central Asia 2014*, published by IOM Central Asia in 2015, identified as a key regional issue in the area of migration management the need to re-integrate migrant workers who are subject to re-entry bans in Russia in their countries of origin. The circumstances, mechanisms and consequences of falling into irregularity among Tajik migrants and the impact of the re-entry bans on their rights were the subject of a report commissioned by IOM Tajikistan.¹ The study highlighted a complex set of factors underlying continued emigration from Central Asia and stimulating irregularity of stay and employment.

Building further on the IDF report, IOM Central Asia conceptualized and commissioned, with the assistance of an international expert, a dedicated field (rapid) assessment in August-October 2015, during which various vulnerabilities of re-entry banned migrants were considered. In particular, it was investigated under what circumstances re-entry banned migrants might be prone to religious radicalization. The assessment involved interviews with migrants, experts and officials, as well as five focus groups with Central Asian migrant workers in selected city locations in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.²

1 IOM (2014) Tajik Migrants with Re-entry Bans to the Russian Federation, Dushanbe, available at: http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/tajik_migrants_report_15jan.pdf

2 "Returning Central Asian Migrants: Between Radicalization and Re-integration" IOM Central Asia Field Assessment in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, August/September 2015



Central Asian countries and international donors came to acknowledge the need to identify the specific factors and circumstances that can potentially trigger radicalization among migrants and to establish the links between migrants' broader socio-economic vulnerabilities and the radicalization risk. At the request of USAID and with the support from the Governments of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Sub-regional coordination office for Central Asia undertook in 2016 a regional field assessment on "Migrant Vulnerabilities and Integration Needs in Central Asia: Root Causes, Social and Economic Impact of Return Migration" that aimed to fill the gaps in knowledge on the scenarios of radicalization among Central Asian migrant workers who returned to their countries of origin or were in transit in Kazakhstan after receiving bans on re-entry to Russia.

The regional field assessment fills an important gap in addressing the socio-economic roots of radicalization from a rights-based perspective. It acknowledges the various initiatives of the Central Asian countries at preventing and countering violent extremism (PVE and CVE) in the region while noting the need to complement the predominant security approach with a broader approach that tackles the long-term grounds for radicalization. It also identifies women as a particularly important group among migrants and in their communities for defusing radicalization potential, which so far received relatively little attention in this context. Finally, it demonstrates that migrant diasporas and informal support networks play a decisive role in preventing the onset of radicalization.

This report provides an overview of the dynamics of human mobility and in particular of labour migration within and out of Central Asia, demonstrating multiple consequences of the current economic downturn and application of re-entry bans in Russia. It reflects on the socioeconomic impact of the precarious position of Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek migrant workers on the Russian labour market and outlines some of the coping mechanisms: return, irregular stay and search for alternative destinations, in particular Kazakhstan. The regional field assessment relies on a combination of interviews with government and non-government stakeholders, experts and migrants, and it points to some specific vulnerabilities that affect certain categories of migrants, taking into account the deterioration of their legal, economic and social status. Finally, it relates these vulnerabilities to the potential for social and ideological radicalization, outlining a number of scenarios that could come into being should the vulnerability factors remain unaddressed.

The assessment in particular revealed a complex link between migrants' socio-economic vulnerabilities and long-term radicalization potential. It recognizes that migrants are one of the vulnerable social groups in difficult life circumstances. Most of all, migrants want to find a decent job to provide for themselves and their families. Lack of employment and financial difficulties are very likely to push migrants into illegal activities. So the economic factors that contribute to irregular status of migrants and their potential exposure to criminal groups' activities are also relevant to the issues of religious radicalization. It is fair to say that as the economic challenges experienced by migrants continue to build up, the risk of them becoming receptive to radical groups' messaging and eventual involvement in violent extremism will only increase. The deterioration of the economic situation of migrants abroad can also turn into an additional motivation for travelling to the war zone. Radicalization potential of the vulnerable migrants cannot be ignored because they are a social group directly affected by socioeconomic and other problems in society. Being an active part of the population, migrants can easily perceive radical ideas as a way out of the difficult situation and become victims of extremist and terrorist groups as a result.

The report puts returning migrants' vulnerabilities in the larger context of the socio-economic challenges faced by the local communities in migrants' countries of origin as well as the difficulties in integration in the countries of destination and in re-integration into the economies and societies of home regions. It opens with the presentation of some cross-cutting regional issues, such as the typology of vulnerabilities, links between return migration and broader socio-economic impact on migrants, their families and communities as well as the framework for understanding the interplay between these vulnerabilities and radicalization potential. The Background section presents also the "theory of change", which guided the analysis, pointing to some crucial "entry points" for intervention to reduce the

risk of radicalization at all stages of the migration process. This conceptual scheme is based on the premises of the centrality of migrants' rights, as defined in international instruments, and the priority of removing stigma associated with the failure of past migration strategies and building migrants' long-term capacity for securing their livelihood and dignity in an independent manner.

The body of the report is made up of three chapters, which provide a comprehensive analysis of current vulnerabilities, both preceding and resulting from the re-entry bans and other shock factors, and analyse the legal, economic and social environment, in which the migrants operate upon return or when moving to another country of destination (Kazakhstan is presented as a case study). The sociological findings offer a comparative review of various types of vulnerabilities and discuss their impact on migrants' strategies, both from a regional and country-specific perspective. Particular attention is paid to the specific vulnerabilities affecting women. The second chapter considers migrants' vulnerabilities in relation to the broader trends in religious radicalization in Central Asian countries and in the context of recruitment strategies and targeting, applied by violent extremist groups. The chapter discusses the effectiveness of prevention measures, deployed in the countries of the region and offers suggestions for additional national and regional initiatives to reduce the risk of radicalization concerning this social group. Finally, Chapter 3 outlines the legal and institutional framework for necessary measures for socio-economic re-integration of returning migrants in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and integration in Kazakhstan as a new country of destination. The chapter relies on official statistics, received from the authorities of the three Central Asian countries, as well as on interviews with officials and experts to assess the impact of re-entry bans and of the economic downturn on migrants' strategies and draws conclusions as to the best ways in which migrants could be directly assisted by state institutions, NGOs and international organizations.



KEY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



1. OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1.1. Emerging migration trends

Key findings

In recent years the situation in labour migration in and outside Central Asia has been complicated, requiring a broad range of policy measures to adequately respond to the emerging issues. Regional human mobility and particularly labour migration in and out Central Asia is an issue that can only be effectively addressed only through a combination of efforts of national governments, non-governmental and international organizations as well as migrant communities.

The recent economic downturn in Russia has left a lasting impact on Central Asia, not least on migration movements in the region. In conjunction with a more stringent migration policy vis-à-vis immigrants from outside the Eurasian Economic Union, Russia became less attractive as a destination country for Central Asia's working-age population seeking to work abroad. This is reflected in the decreasing migration numbers from all Central Asian republics, with the exception of Kyrgyzstan that joined the EEU in 2015. But even stable migration levels are no remedy for the regional economic downturn's ramifications: (i) National Bank of Russia statistics show that remittances levels have taken a hit throughout the region; (ii) The Tajik and Kyrgyz national currencies' depreciation following the Russian ruble and the Kazakh tenge devaluations has mitigated some of the negative effects of falling wages, but dropping remittances nevertheless slashed migrants' households' disposable income; (iii) Russia's continuing imposition of

bans on re-entering the country for migrants who committed administrative infringements is impacting on migration dynamics in Central Asia as well; (iv) Tajik, Uzbek and Kyrgyz migrants who cannot return to Russia for a period ranging from 3 to 5 years, even longer as the period of the ban fluctuates, are looking for alternative migration destinations due to lack of opportunities and unsatisfying wage levels at home.

Kazakhstan is increasingly becoming a destination country for Central Asian migrants searching for employment. Although there are no statistics on how many of the migrants currently working in Kazakhstan are banned from re-entering Russia, evidence from our regional field assessment shows that migrants stuck in transit who were refused entry at the Russian border are deciding to remain in Kazakhstan, while others are pursuing employment in Kazakhstan as a substitute for migration to Russia.

The Central Asian migration situation, which was the topic of the assessment, is not static and over the coming years it is likely to evolve in response to the following factors. Firstly, the labour force supply in Central Asia is predicted to grow by up to 4 million workers over the next ten years and is expected to grow further beyond 2026. Continuing economic uncertainty in the region may thus stimulate increased human mobility and labour migration both within and out of the Central Asian region. Secondly, mid-term forecasts do not predict a quick return to growth of the Russian economy, which might encourage further administrative controls on non-nationals' access to Russia's labour market. This in turn may bring about the growth of number of irregular and vulnerable migrants in Russia. Thirdly, an increase in legal labour migration could occur as a result of further enlargement of the Eurasian Economic Union, establishment of free-trade arrangements with other Central Asian countries and the facilitation of the conditions of access to the EEU labour market for nationals of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Finally, regional migration flows may be eased as the region becomes part of new infrastructural and trade projects (e.g. the *Silk Road Economic Belt*). The growing demand for workforce will certainly require proper management of migration flows in order to ensure protection of migrants' rights and their effective integration and re-integration as well as access to social assistance and protection mechanisms.

Policy and assistance implications

As the scale and impact of irregular migration in and out of Central Asia become evident, it is increasingly recognized as an issue that can only be dealt with through effective engagement of both the hosting countries and countries of origin. The assessment confirms that the growing mobility and migrants' search for new destinations in response to external shocks call for a new level of cooperation between the governments of Central Asia. In this regards the governments of Central Asian states could negotiate the signing of a regional agreement on cooperation in migration, covering a whole gamut of issues ranging from facilitating mobility of migrant workers, protecting their rights and providing safe environment for migration to addressing emerging security threats, such as radicalization of certain categories of migrants in a comprehensive and rights-based manner. Central Asian states also need to prioritize both in their national and regional efforts the issue of integrating and reintegrating returning re-entry banned migrants and creating new income generating activities in the region (at both hosting countries and countries of origin). It is important to incorporate socio-economic integration addressing migrants' vulnerabilities as a substantial prevention element in the CVE policy measures to prevent radicalization and involvement in religious extremist organizations.

The governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have on numerous occasions emphasized the importance of adherence to international standards, including those in the area of human rights, international migration law, labour law and transnational criminal law and other branches of relevant international law. In this context, the experts recommend that the countries adhere to relevant international instruments providing support for better protection of migrant workers' rights, economic, social and cultural rights. Another important factor relates to necessity to adopt a rights-based approach in development of corresponding legislation and policy in the area of migration but also mainstreaming migration into development and other states policies. Attention should be moreover paid to creating regional, bilateral and multilateral mechanisms which ensure safe working conditions, access to health services, admission and readmission, recognition of qualifications, simplify issuance of permission for temporary labour migration, create infrastructure for temporary accommodation of migrants.

Forming a realistic picture of migration experience among prospective migrants and creating a positive image of migrants as welfare providers in the countries of their origin could help reduce the misinformation and prejudice surrounding the issue. The governments in the country of origin jointly with NGOs would do well by launching mass-media information/awareness/education campaigns to inform current and potential migrants about the issues of human trafficking, risks of irregular migration, recruitment by radical and religious groups, etc., which would portray returning migrants as full-fledged society members. Taking into account the vital role that mass media play in forming the public opinion of the Central Asian societies, such campaigns can contribute to better awareness among migrants, than NGOs and State programs, addressing the above-mentioned issues.

1.2. Integration of returning migrants in countries of origin and Kazakhstan

Key findings

Effective integration of returning migrants, including re-entry banned ones, in their countries of origin and Kazakhstan has been hampered by three main factors. Firstly, the limited scale of returns prior to the onset of the downturn in economy and application of sanctions for a long time did not raise the question of re-integration onto the national policy agendas in the migrants' countries of origin or of integration in Kazakhstan. Secondly, the economic slowdown has further limited opportunities for creating jobs in the Central Asian region, which would entice a significant number of returnees away from the Russian labour market. Finally, as the comparison between the Uzbek and Tajik nationals shows, sustained reorientation of labour migration flows (e.g. away from Kazakhstan to Russia) is dependent on the establishment of strong diasporas, which would provide legal, economic and social support to the newcomers.

The assessment of the position of re-entry banned migrants in Kazakhstan has shown that factors such as lack of information about the country and poorly developed migration networks may expose them to various types of vulnerabilities. High-risk groups include those coming from extremely poor backgrounds, lacking strategic networks in the host country, and failing to get duly informed about the rules in the host country. Declining income, failure of life strategies applied so far and sense of lack of alternatives induce the migrants to seek quick earnings through informal channels. These short-term solutions, however, perpetuate their vulnerabilities as they often fall prey to exploitation by unverified mediators and new contacts. Irregular status is a factor, which discourages them from seeking assistance through formal channels (authorities and civil society), which cuts them off from accessing effective protection mechanisms. Such self-induced invisibility may further expose migrants to various risks of exploitation and manipulation on the part of criminal and extremist networks, ultimately leading to their conflict with the law of the host country. This may in the long run lead to the expansion of the number of migrants whose employment status remains irregular. At the same time, Kazakhstan, being an attractive destination for labour migration is interested in the development of inter-governmental dialogue on the regional level to seek most effective ways of legalization of status and protection of rights of migrant workers.

Policy and assistance implications

On the basis of the results of the sociological analysis and of good practices that were observed during the fieldwork, recommendations focus on higher involvement of diasporas and/or community leaders, enhanced dialogue with NGOs and State entities and stronger and longer-term information campaigns for migrants.

Prior to departure

As many as 70% of respondents stated that they did not have any strategy to deal with the new circumstances in their host country. This suggests a need to *reinforce pre-departure orientation* through concerted activities of

international organizations, NGOs, migrant communities and State agencies. The programmes should cover the information about the country of destination and vocational training according to the job demand in the country of destination, while courses on the language of the host country could mitigate the risks faced by migrants lacking adequate experience. Cooperation between NGOs, migrant communities and State agencies in the country of destination and in the countries of origin should be taken into consideration in order to build safe routes for migrant workers during the whole migration cycle, and reach out to a larger number of migrants through the dissemination of relevant information.

Upon return to the country of origin (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan)

Re-entry banned migrants remain unemployed upon return to their country of origin. The assessment shows that most of the returning migrants do not have access to the pension or social security scheme as they either did not contribute to the national fund or their pension capital could not be transferred back home. It is important to consider the launch of *special government programmes* to address this gap through adopting dedicated legal solutions and provide easily accessible support to returnees in partnership with local NGOs, migrant communities and IOM to prevent the alienation, isolation, discontent and subsequent radicalization of this extensive social group.

Migrants' limited use of existing job-creation schemes is also a major barrier for reintegration, which indicates a need for adjusting income-generation programmes so that they would meet the specific needs of returnees. It is important to consider the possibility to *launch direct assistance programmes (seed funds, microcredit, microloans)* for returned re-entry banned migrants only to give them an opportunity to earn a living and reach some economic sustainability. Tailored re-integration activities should be organized separately for *abandoned and divorced women with small children*, in order to facilitate their undertaking economic activities and getting the necessary social assistance.

Female migrant workers face additional and specific vulnerabilities, further limiting their integration opportunities. These need to be addressed through the *introduction of dedicated assistance programmes for migrant women* through a concerted effort of NGOs (implementing), international organizations (sharing of best practices and logistical support) and the government (establishment of legal and procedural conditions) for legal, socializing, psychological, job-seeking and additional support. This measure could create safe channels for help and fill in the lack of networks and limited support from diasporas and communities for various categories of female migrant workers as a particularly vulnerable group.

Assistance to migrants in Kazakhstan

Lack of information about legal requirements and rights in the host country is one of the key challenges for re-entry banned migrants, who consider Kazakhstan as a country of transit or alternative destination. It is important to *prepare and disseminate detailed official information* on the rights and legal opportunities available for various types of migrant workers and on the sources of assistance or emergency upon arrival and stay to Kazakhstan – in airports, railway and bus stations, as well as at all border crossing points. The multi-language printed information (*in Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Russian, Tajik and Uzbek*) should contain brief description of the risks of irregular status, the legal requirements in the host country, and need to address types of help offered to migrants by IOM, NGOs, community and diaspora organizations.

Those migrants who came in contact with NGOs in Kazakhstan did so mostly through word of mouth within the migrants' community. Lack of funds, however, limited the ability of the NGO, communities and diaspora to reach out to a larger number of migrants. There is a need for dedicated funding of direct preventive information campaigns, involving official bodies, NGOs, communities, diaspora organizations and informal networks to spread the information about regularizations and assistance options. This might reinforce the dissemination of information among the migrants, enhance its accessibility and reduce potential for misinterpretation, manipulation and exploitation due to lack of awareness.

1.3. Mitigating the negative consequences of unplanned returns

Key findings

The assessment confirms that the precarious economic position and legal status of a significant group of Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek migrants have not only influenced their own migration decisions, resulting often in unplanned returns to the countries of origin or a search of alternative destinations. The new situation has had also broader negative impact on the socio-economic well-being and stable development in Central Asian countries as a whole. From the sociological perspective, the present study confirms that re-entry bans have a long-term impact on returned migrants' chances of re-integration and safe migration to alternative destinations, with the ultimate result of significantly reducing their resilience once the ban expires. Re-entry bans have also affected migrants' households, extended families and/or communities, which find themselves in extreme poverty within a year or two from the ban. The immediate effects of the ban on migrants who could neither leave to other countries for work purposes during the duration of the ban, nor find a job back home, is that they fail to integrate back in their communities/societies, and might also find it difficult to leave again once the ban has expired as they are at high risk of using up all their material resources for survival. Visiting and studying returned re-entry banned migrants in their countries of origin (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), it also became clear how the bans are contributing to the impoverishment of the local communities, especially the rural population in Tajikistan and those living on the outskirts of the main cities in Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek, Osh etc).

The study reiterates also the crucial role that migrant community plays in mitigating the negative impact of the economic slowdown and administrative sanctions and thus indirectly deterring the emergence and spread of radical messages among vulnerable migrants. It stresses that alienation from both formal institutions (state institutions, non-governmental organizations) and the community support networks is a major contributing factor to radicalization, which fuels sense of resentment about the lower socioeconomic status. Moreover practice shows that the recruiters from religious extremist organizations target these alienated individuals among migrants with the purpose of involving them in own networks. This well-organized recruitment system often infiltrates migrant communities through intermediaries with migrant background. As mistrust is an essential barrier to receiving assistance, it becomes apparent that to reach the vulnerable migrants with aid, the governments and international donors need to engage leaders of migrant communities who enjoy the target group's trust. This engagement is most crucial in the areas of awareness-raising, dissemination of information on radicalization symptoms and risks as well as religious and ethical education. All these elements are closely linked to long-term prevention efforts.

Policy and assistance implications

Re-entry banned migrants could potentially become one of the most vulnerable migrant group, exhibiting some characteristics conducive toward involvement in religious extremist organizations or related radical activities. Specific vulnerabilities of this group need to be the focus of attention when planning *broader PVE and CVE policy* with regard to the group of migrant workers, and particular attention needs to be paid to identifying the individuals who could become the target of extremist organizations' recruiters. Agencies on religious issues, labour ministries, employment centres and social service need to *elaborate preventive de-radicalization activities* (PVE) involving diasporas, community and spiritual leaders, formal and informal networks. Relying on international experience, offered by international organizations and experts, long-term measures could be put in place to help various types of migrants legally and consciously avoid situations where they could be involved in extremist networks as a result of low awareness, manipulations, or due to difficult life conditions.

Dialogue between official entities and migrants needs to be reinforced in order to create a consistent response to re-entry banned migrants' psychological, economic and social needs as one of the CVE procedures. It is important to consider and launch *regular special trainings for official entities' staff on central and regional levels* on how to

better manage the issues with different types of migrant workers in need applying for legal support, and how to effectively partner with NGOs, communities, diasporas, informal networks and international organizations.

Inclusion of returning migrants alongside all other categories of population into development process and labour market, support in micro, small and medium size business opportunities, access to education and highest achievable level of health services as well as all other economic, social and cultural rights become crucial aspects contributing not only to re-integration but also into prevention of radicalization and criminalization of migrants facing re-entry bans. Sustainable Development Goals, to which all the governments of the region committed, may serve as a framework for monitoring and evaluating the progress toward these objectives.

Both in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, future interventions should reinforce the economic reintegration of returned migrants in order to enable them to pay back their debts and maintain the possessions they acquired through remittances. Assistance in economic integration is crucial as it allows households to survive during the ban period as well as provides diversified sources of income, in case of new migration. It is thus recommended that economic and development projects to support returned re-entry banned migrants *form a substantial part of PVE/CVE policy measures*. This might require reallocation of some current development funds in the field towards reintegration measures, helping tackle the economic vulnerabilities that could act as a trigger toward radicalization and exposure to extremist recruitment.



2. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. Mitigating negative consequences and addressing socio-economic vulnerabilities

In both countries of origin (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and Kazakhstan

Research

- Conduct a broader quantitative survey on households of re-entry banned migrants to determine their survival strategies and to detect the most vulnerable strata of the target population; assess the role of community leaders (religious and informal ones) within the community and their relation with returned migrants concerning their integration needs.
- Conduct a more extensive research based on gender differences in return migration caused by re-entry bans, and assess the needs of men and women and their roles in the households upon return in order to better formulate assistance programs.
- Conduct research on migrant workers' children, their roles and needs when left behind while their parents are in labour migration.

Information campaigns

- Reinforce education/information/awareness campaigns in collaboration with state stakeholders, community and spiritual leaders and civil society to familiarize returned re-entry banned migrants with their rights, safe migration and employment alternatives (both at home and abroad).
- Strengthen employment centres and organize pre-departure orientation and trainings on language skills, information about the country of destination and related rights and duties of migrant workers as well as provide information on local employers' requirements and vocational training opportunities to obtain certificates.

Community and NGO engagement

- Involve community and spiritual leaders in assessing the most vulnerable returned migrants inside their community and their specific needs.
 - Engage community, spiritual and informal leaders at all stages of designing and implementing programs targeting re-entry banned migrants. Community leaders may serve as a bridge in terms of re-integration.
 - Establish a State-NGO-community Council to provide an ongoing dialogue platform on issues of concern.
 - Develop programs based on local NGOs experience aiming at diversifying the income of households of migrants in order to guarantee them more social security and reduce the risks of dispossession of re-entry banned migrants during the duration of the ban.
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Direct assistance to most vulnerable groups

- Develop a rapid support program of psychological and first aid economic assistance to re-entry banned migrants immediately upon their return.
- Intensify direct assistance program, including education, legal assistance, health services, to returning migrants and their family members, to create a snow ball effect, according to which migrants would start helping other migrants within the family and/or beyond.
- Establish mentoring programs at educational institutions (schools, universities, vocational training centres, etc. through which experienced labour migrants can share their stories and experience and provide guidance to potential migrants.
- Conduct trainings for migration entities in countries of destination (Kazakhstan) and countries of origin (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan whenever possible) to provide better treatment and information for re-entry banned migrants with respect to their rights and initiate proper referral processes to NGOs and IOM.
- Reaching out to women
- Create focused programs for women (the most vulnerable group) in rural areas to ensure inclusive involvement.
- Establish Women's Forums to address gender-specific issues and provide a networking opportunity on national and regional levels for female migrants.

In Kazakhstan

It is recommended to broaden opportunities for migrant workers from Central Asian countries in the existing procedures of registration and regularisation in Kazakhstan as per current legislation.

Recommendations for this purpose include:

For legislative authorities: to amend legislative acts regulating legal procedures for entry, stay and employment of foreign citizens in the Republic of Kazakhstan in order to reduce legal and administrative barriers, ensure provision of free legal advice and access to justice to migrant workers and simplify access to places of migrant employment to officers of the Labour Inspection.

For executive authorities: to assess the demand for foreign labour force in different segments of the domestic labour market and to explore ways of regulating the foreign workforce; to ensure the implementation of measures (using existing facilities in the form of job centres) aimed at inclusion of foreign workers into the domestic labour market and promotion of the rights of migrant workers.

For non-governmental organizations: to facilitate measures for integration of migrant workers into the labour market and Kazakh society, namely: to develop new integration instruments and practices in cooperation with public and private stakeholders.

For diaspora organizations: to intensify awareness-raising among migrants and employers regarding the need to comply with the employment processes and to respect the procedures for regularisation as specified in the law; For international community: to coordinate economic and development programmes on national and regional levels, promoting ownership by national governments in building cohesive and more tolerant societies with respect on migrants' rights.

Implementation of the above recommendations will prevent foreign migrant workers from joining the shadow labour market and from creating local, hidden from state and society control, social support networks in Kazakhstan that could potentially become a breeding ground for radicalization.

In countries of origin (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan)

Here are some of the recommendations, addressing the identified socio-economic vulnerabilities of migrant workers returning to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (including migrants who have been temporarily banned from entering the receiving countries):

- To co-ordinate activities of state institutions and non-governmental organizations in providing current information to returning migrants on the local employment opportunities, legal and administrative conditions of concluding employment contracts, starting own business and financing own activity.
- To set aside a quota of jobs to be created by local employment centers, allocated to returning migrants and to monitor the effectiveness of job-creation programs on a regional basis so as to identify barriers to employment of this group.
- To identify returning migrants as a target group for re-integration in the framework of the strategic documents under development (the Concept for the State Migration Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2030) and those already approved but not fully implemented (National Strategy for Labour Market Development of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2020).
- To establish the legal framework for organised employment of own nationals abroad and for this purpose to conclude and monitor implementation of relevant agreements with the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation (organised recruitment, health care, social security).
- To elaborate within bilateral and multilateral agreements between countries of migrants' origin and destination appropriate measures to offer professional and/or vocational training, skills upgrading and certification to the migrants who returned home following the economic crisis in the receiving countries. These may include standard procedures for recognition of qualifications, the development of special curricula at professional and technical schools in the countries of migrants' origin in collaboration with partner institutions in the countries of destination.
- To assess the scale and impact of economic and legal problems facing the most vulnerable among the returning migrants and their families. On this basis, it is recommended that regular reports are produced on the basis of the data, provided by the Ombudsman/Commissioner for Human Rights, local employment centers and non-governmental organizations providing assistance to migrants.

2.2. Preventing and Countering Radicalization

For the purposes of preventing religious radicalism among Central Asian migrant workers and returned migrants it seems advisable:

That the governments of countries of migrant workers' origin and destination monitor the position of Central Asian migrants and reduce their vulnerabilities by taking the following measures:

- to reinforce the work of the state institutions (i.e employment centres, consular services, in the countries of origin (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) and in the countries of destination (Kazakhstan and Russian Federation) in order to provide better legal and social protection to migrant workers.; at that, special attention should be given to establishing positive cooperation between these institutions and organizations of the ethnic diasporas in Russia and Kazakhstan that have not only significant resources but also extensive experience in improving the situation of migrant workers;
- to increase efforts on raising legal awareness of migrant workers and on familiarising them, at least to a basic level and while still in the country of origin, with the Russian and Kazakhstani regulations on the entry to and stay in the countries of destination;

- to create conditions for carrying out educational activities by reputable spiritual and community leaders among migrant workers in the countries of origin and destination;
- as labour migration from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan is primarily bound for Russia and Kazakhstan and partially via Kazakhstan for Russia, it seems reasonable to develop a joint Kyrgyz-Tajik-Russian-Kazakh educational/awareness/information strategy on preventing religious radicalization of migrant workers.

That the governments of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan address the root causes of radicalization by undertaking the following measures:

Kyrgyz Republic

- to set up mechanisms for inter-agency cooperation on exchange of information and prevention and countering practices as well as to coordinate activities in fulfilment of the objectives of the Concept of the State Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Religious Sphere for 2014–2020;
- to regularly review and amend the national list of organizations and movements considered as extremist through monitoring of instances of violent extremism and reference to “The list of organizations designated as terrorist and extremist in the CSTO Member States”;
- to feature to a larger extent the factors of radicalization affecting groups identified as most vulnerable in trainings to members of the clergy and officials from law enforcement agencies on the matters of religion so as to sensitize the participants to the specific issues of these groups.
- to consider the successful experience (e.g. of Kazakhstan) in implementing rehabilitation measures in prisons or experts’ recommendations to set up a rehabilitation centre for victims of religious extremism through carrying out of study visits and joint trainings.

Republic of Tajikistan

- to invite moderate spiritual leaders under the auspices of the Grand Mufti of Tajikistan for carrying out information and prevention activities among the returned migrant workers and members of their families
- to organize pre-departure courses of the Russian language and culture and legal conditions of residence and employment in the Russian Federation, targeting prospective migrant workers. Moreover, considering that the majority of secondary school leavers who were not able to secure a place at a Tajik higher education institution intend to leave for Russia and other CIS countries to join labour migration, it is recommended that additional mandatory Russian lessons and initial vocational training be introduced into the senior secondary school curriculum
- to improve the level of basic religious training by establishing a network of primary and secondary education institutions, offering religious education according to state-approved curriculum and under the auspices of the Islamic Center of the Republic of Tajikistan and Ministry of Education and Science.;

It is also recommended to invite the national and international community:

- to ensure continuous and objective monitoring of religious radicalization processes as well as radicalization of migrant workers in the countries of residence with the emphasis on finding out root causes and trends of this phenomenon by both state and non-state institutions in both the countries of origin and destination;
 - to promote good practices in official and independent mass media of objective coverage of religious radicalization issues and measures to prevent and counter radicalization;
 - to assist official state institutions in reintegrating returned migrants and providing access to different social services, loans, training, small business support, etc. at least for the most vulnerable and low-income families of returned migrants.
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Executive Summary

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1. SOCIOLOGICAL FINDINGS

Vulnerabilities and migrant strategies: regional findings

Objectives and methods

The primary objectives of the present sociological assessment are to verify the impact of re-entry bans to the Russian Federation on the strategies of Kyrgyz, Tajik and Uzbek migrant workers, to identify the main types of vulnerabilities to which these migrants are subject, and to consider their main integration needs in the countries of origin and in Kazakhstan, serving as an alternative destination. The assessment team posed the hypothesis that re-entry bans could have serious consequences through creating one of the most vulnerable groups of Central Asian migrant workers in the medium to long term, and that especially in the mid-term of the ban period migrants would undergo a process of social isolation and alienation that would further reduce their resilience or coping ability.

For the purpose of the analysis, three countries have been assessed: Kazakhstan as a transit and alternative country of destination of migrants from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan as countries of origin and return. 13 locations across Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were selected with the aid of local NGOs assisting migrants as areas of migrants' origin or transit.¹

To better identify the most vulnerable and isolated groups of migrants, a qualitative approach has been used, employing semi-structured interviews, focus groups and group interviews with the total of 214 respondents (including 62 women). The majority of respondents (135) had been issued a re-entry ban to the Russian Federation between 2012 and 2015, while the remaining number (79) included migrants without a re-entry ban that had vulnerabilities in common with the first group (see below). The respondents identified by the IOM team included seasonal migrants who resided in the Russian Federation for periods ranging from 6 months to 1.5 years, and regularly returning to their country of origin for a period of 1 to 3 months while eventually leaving again. Only a small part of them had stayed in Russia for longer periods of time.

Types of vulnerabilities

Data collected from the regional field assessment revealed that re-entry banned migrants had been affected by a range of vulnerabilities prior to the imposition of the ban. They fell in three categories: economic, legal and rights-based, and social and network related.

Rights-based and legal vulnerabilities consist in migrants' low level of awareness of their human rights, as well as low trust and awareness of the role of State and non-State institutions in providing protection and assistance. These factors increase the risks of falling into irregularity in the host country. Due to limited awareness of relevant legal requirements and procedures, the migrants often fail to comply with them and thus find themselves in a precarious situation, lacking a work permit, a written contract, and in effect are unable to enforce their rights in the workplace (such as limited working time). Additionally, the field assessment revealed that those respondents

1 Kazakhstan: Astana, Almaty, Aktau, Petropavlovsk, Shymkent; Kyrgyzstan: Bishkek, Osh; Tajikistan: Dushanbe, Farkhor, Kulyab, Yovan, Qurghonteppa, Tajikobod



with little knowledge on how to legalize in the host country often fell prey to dishonest mediators, obtaining forged documents (the migration card or the registration document) or losing both money and identity documents that were taken by employers or mediators. Irregular status had a further effect of alienation, in which instead of turning to authorities, interviewees hid from them for fear of getting punished and as a result would not turn to them for help in redressing their wrongs.

Economic vulnerabilities include pre-existing conditions of relative or extreme poverty and limited economic outcomes of labour migration. Findings show that migrants' critical economic situation is not the only reason for leaving but, once abroad, becomes a decisive factor for the migrants' regularization of their status. The shortage of funds discourages migrants from seeking to legalize their status as they find the procedure inaccessible (in particular, some consider it too expensive) and tend to postpone their legalization to a moment of better economic standing. It is worth noting, however, that despite low legalization costs in Kazakhstan, many migrants had neither sufficient knowledge of legalization procedures in Kazakhstan nor awareness of the advantages of residing abroad with regular documents and permissions. In particular, according to interviews, migrants failed to find information while crossing the border or along their route on how and where to legalize, as well as about their rights as migrant workers. Expert interviews with NGO representatives also confirmed that information campaigns in those target areas were able to reach out to migrants, but only for short periods of time, i.e. upon availability of funds.

Social vulnerabilities stemmed from the almost exclusive use of informal networks in building strategies to live and work abroad, which reduced migrants' capacity for effective protection. The use of networks was most common among migrants with limited education, coming from poor and underdeveloped areas of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Informal networks were used as the main tool to search for jobs, find accommodation and get information on how to legalize, as well as change jobs in case of conflict or non-payment of salaries from the employer, build coping mechanisms in case they are cheated or mistreated by mediators, employers, or other migrants, or find themselves in extreme economic needs. However, for the majority of the respondents, networks failed to protect migrants against discrimination, irregularity of status, and vulnerability to exploitation, harassment or trafficking. Those among the respondents who were irregular in the host country could not rely on their extended and consolidated networks in cases of detention, lacking the necessary assistance (legal consultation, proper information). Field interviews also showed that informal networks proved to have limited and temporary effects and could not always guarantee that migrants would get safe jobs with regular salaries or be protected from harassment of police or employers.

Networks had a limited impact on migrants' economic status. Those among them who found themselves in extreme economic needs would make use of networks to raise the money required to return home, or to pay the cures for a sick family member. This kind of use had a one-time character, and migrants rarely addressed the same network again to ask for support. Although informal networks were found to bear a temporary character, they tended to be consolidated and extended over the period of stay abroad. During temporary return to the country of origin, contacts with the members of informal networks were interrupted for short periods of time and resumed soon after a new departure to the country of destination.

Results of interviews and focus groups with migrants established that the various types of vulnerabilities were inter-linked and tended to reinforce one another, leading ultimately to greater susceptibility to exploitation, trafficking and harassment (Fig. 1). These pre-existing vulnerabilities could in turn reduce the resilience of the migrants to the effects of a re-entry ban. As will be shown below, they tended to see their social and economic situation deteriorate in a short period of time, which in the long run could diminish their ability to react and find alternatives in order to support their families.

Fig. 1. Inter-linked vulnerabilities prior to the ban

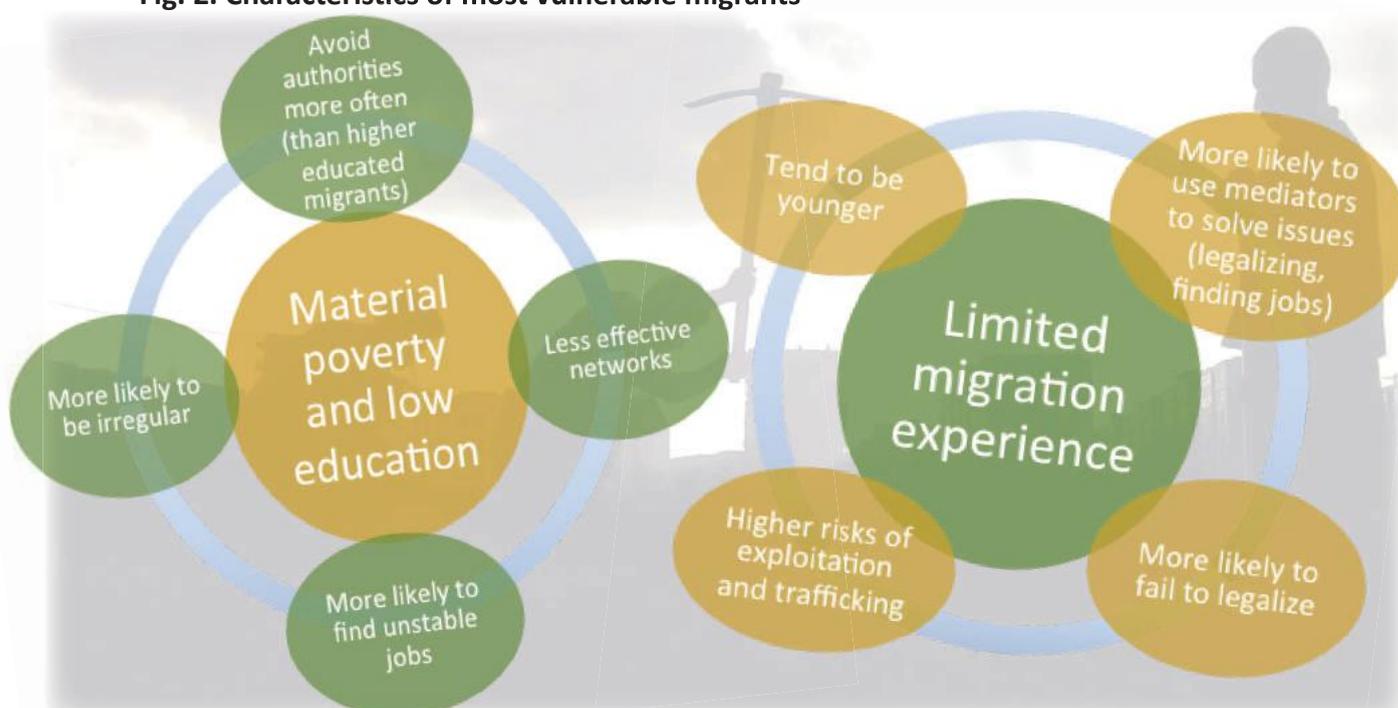


Source: IOM Interviews and focus groups with migrants, Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan, January-June 2016

Some groups of migrants seemed to be more prone to the vulnerabilities described above and presented the following characteristics (Fig. 2):

- Interviewees coming from weak social and economic contexts (poor and with lower education) had less effective networks.
- Interviewees with less migration experience were more prone to fail to legalize, and at higher risks of exploitation and trafficking. Young migrants tended to be in this group, and risks were enhanced in case they lacked kin networks that could support them in the first period.
- Interviewees with lower education levels tended to avoid addressing authorities or non-State organizations. Many claimed that knowing the Russian language would have helped them, but that they had no time or money to learn it. To cope with difficulties, they tended to delegate procedures such as their registration or the payment of patents to co-nationals, employers, and mediators.

Fig. 2. Characteristics of most vulnerable migrants

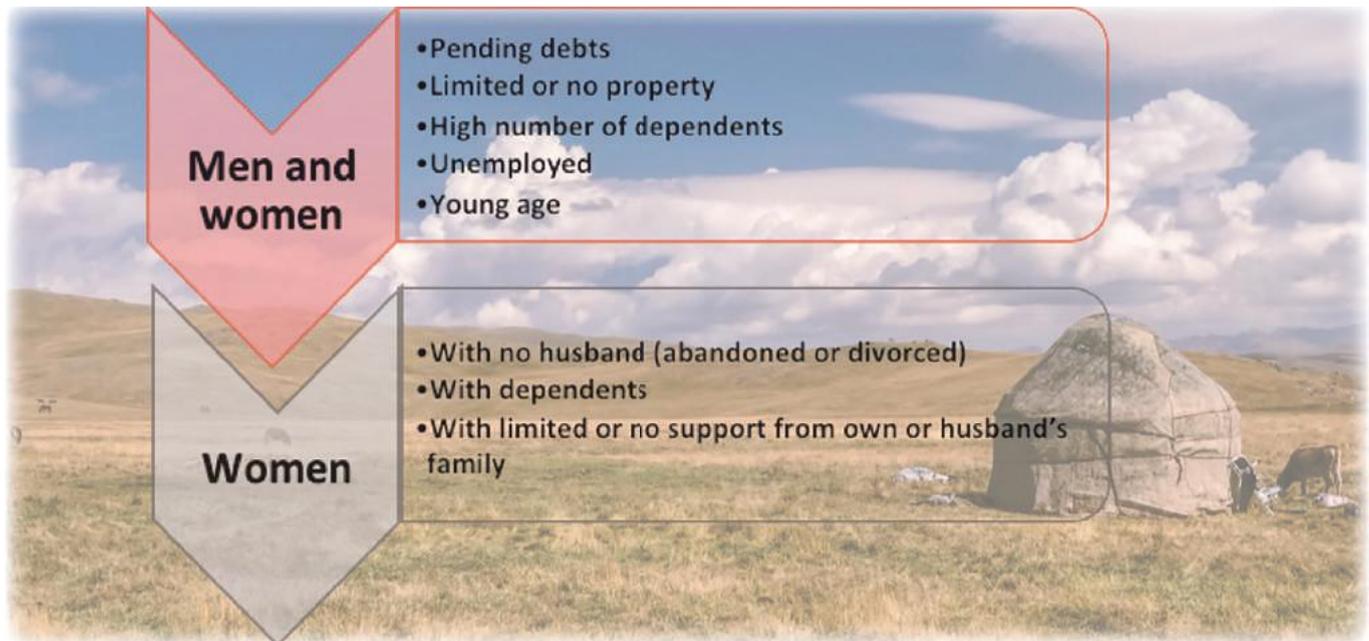


Source: IOM interviews and focus groups with migrants, Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan, January-June 2016

Gender as a vulnerability factor

While the group of respondents was characterized by a range of pre-existing vulnerabilities, irrespective of gender, the assessment also sought to verify whether women migrants presented additional or different vulnerabilities. Findings showed that vulnerabilities and coping mechanisms varied according to women's marital status (Fig. 3). In particular, it became clear that divorced and abandoned women became the only breadwinners by migrating to the Russian Federation in order to make up for the lack of economic contribution by their male counterpart. They counted on very limited networks made up of their closest relatives which made it more difficult to find and/or change jobs.

Fig. 3. Relation between gender and vulnerabilities



Source: IOM interviews and focus groups with migrants, Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan, January-June 2016

Re-entry bans impacted all three levels of vulnerabilities, and the effects can be summarized as (a) economic deterioration (b) reduced self-worth (c) alienation from communities and (d) State institutions.

(a) In case of return due to the re-entry bans (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan), long-term unemployment was the most common effect on the economic level, leading migrants' households to extreme poverty and indebtedness in a relatively short period of time.

(b) The majority of re-entry banned migrants had lost contacts with their networks in the Russian Federation within a year after return as they came back as they claimed that they did not feel at ease at constantly contacting them to ask for help, nor did they think that their networks were willing or able to help.

(c) Constant state of need, with consequent sense of loss of authority, power and self-worth, lead re-entry banned migrants to withdraw gradually not only from their networks but also from their community back home, with high risks of social isolation both from families and communities and a growing sense of alienation. Serious psychosocial consequences can be recognized in migrants with longer periods of unemployment at home, in particular lack of plans and no efforts in searching for jobs. A substantial difference was noted between men and women: re-entry bans meant for men loss of authority, economic power and status. For women the impact of

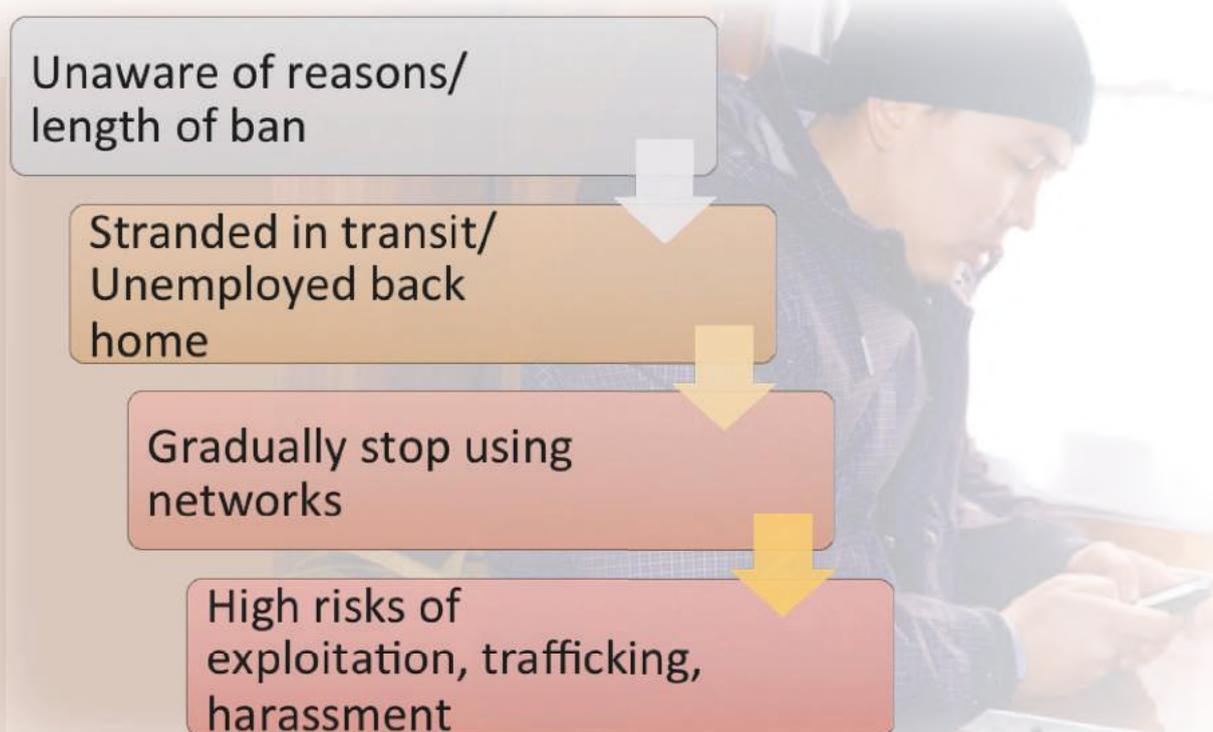
the bans was felt more on the economic level. Indeed, women who migrated did not necessarily acquire status through migration. On the opposite, they ran high risks of being stigmatized back home, especially if they were not accompanied by men. Migration for them was a survival strategy and the bans seemed to limit their possibility to provide for their dependents through labour migration.

(d) Lack of basic knowledge of their rights and low expectations towards official entities deterred migrants from seeking help and/or information at State agencies and NGOs. Avoidance of contact with official institutions (State and non-State) made it difficult for the latter to establish the most relevant needs of vulnerable population groups. Migrants tended to address official institutions only to get information about their bans, but did not expect that they could help them find decent jobs. Alienation from State institutions was expressed through a doubtful attitude toward their role, showing that dialogue between official entities and migrants needs to be reinforced in order to create a consistent response to re-entry banned migrants' psychological, economic and social needs.

Reaction to the ban

Re-entry bans were found to have a definitely negative impact on migrants' well-being, aggravating the vulnerabilities, existing prior to the ban. Figure 4 shows the interplay of various short-term effects of the ban on migrants' ability to plan their future and eventually to cope with the emerging deterioration of socio-economic status. The primary vulnerability resulting from the ban is migrants' lack of awareness as to the grounds for the ban and its terms, a circumstance observed among those who became subject to the ban early on.

Fig. 4. Impact of the bans on migrants' ability to build coping strategies

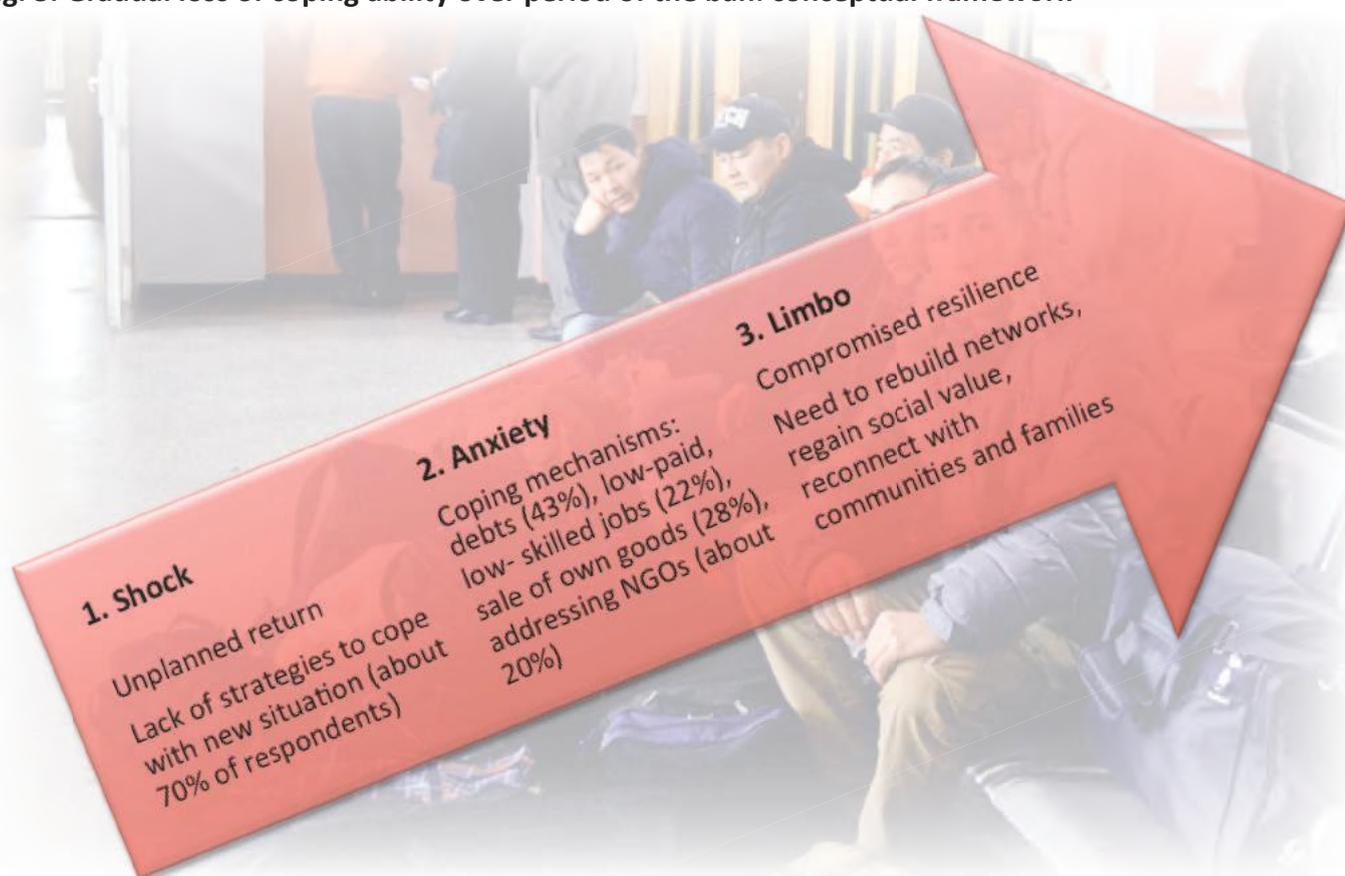


Source: IOM Interviews and focus groups with migrants, Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan, January-June 2016

In turn, the sudden and unexpected nature of the ban disrupts the economic position of the migrant, which in turn lowers his or her self-esteem, dependent on the status within the migrant network. Respondents referred to the stigma associated with the inability to deliver on the expectations from the community as a factor, which diminished their interest in seeking help from the network. The resulting isolation from the community (compounding the alienation from formal support mechanisms offered by either the state or NGOs) tends to expose the migrant to risks of exploitation, trafficking and harassment.

The combination of pre-existing vulnerabilities and the depletion of migrants' resources leads to the loss of their resilience to respond to the post-ban challenges. Results of the interviews and focus groups, carried out in the three countries under study, suggest that the ability to cope diminishes over time and for the most vulnerable migrants may result in the path, shown in Fig. 5. In the first period of several months since the ban (referred to as the stage of shock) migrants on the whole fail to overcome their problems through the use of personal strategies (as many as 70% of respondents did not have any strategy to deal with the new circumstances). Those who are unsuccessful enter the stage of anxiety when they deploy various emergency strategies to improve their economic status, which, however, tend to deepen their vulnerability – as many as 43% of the respondents took loans, 28% sold their own goods and 22% accepted lower-paid jobs.

Fig. 5. Gradual loss of coping ability over period of the ban: conceptual framework



Source: IOM interviews and focus groups with migrants, Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan, January-June 2016

The final stage is reached when the migrant exhausts all the alternatives and becomes resigned to his or her fate, finding no alternative solutions. This stage, termed here as limbo, is particularly precarious as the most vulnerable among the migrants may opt to seek assistance from outside the home or migrant community and thus become susceptible to fraud, deception and manipulation, characteristic not only of criminal but also extremist groups (see the section on radicalization above). While none of the interviewed migrants exhibited the symptoms of reaching this stage, the fact that a substantial part of the respondents have entered the second stage in the process might be a cause for concern.

Position of re-entry banned migrants: country findings

This section concentrates on the challenges faced by re-entry banned migrants in integration in the country of transit and alternative destination (Kazakhstan) and in re-integration in the countries of origin (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). Attention is paid to the legal and economic status as well as the use of support (both formal and informal).

Kazakhstan

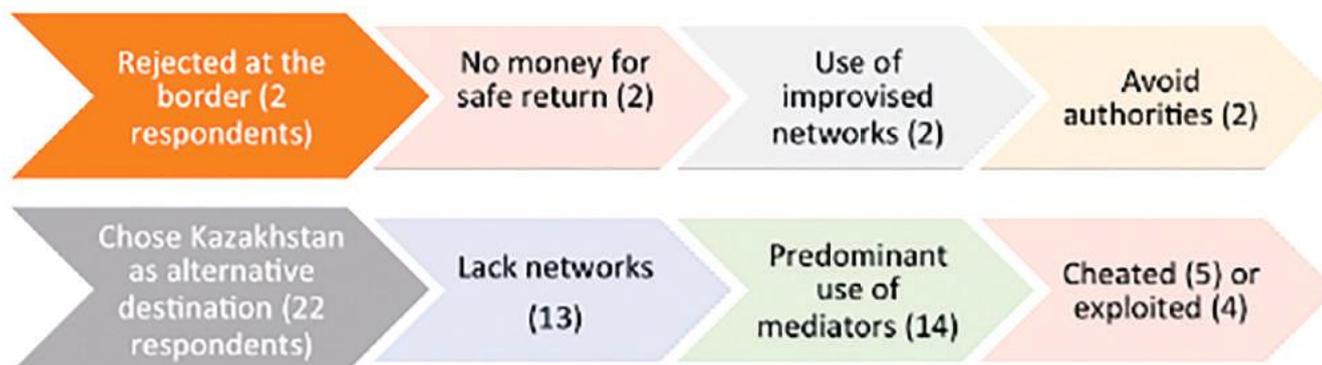
The sociological analysis looked at Kazakhstan as a country of destination and transit for migrant workers from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, focusing on migrants banned from re-entering Russia. Interviews and focus groups with the respondents showed that the re-entry banned group in particular faces vulnerabilities such as extreme poverty, irregular status, exploitation and social isolation.

About 52% of re-entry banned migrants took out loans to travel to Kazakhstan, which left them devoid of economic means upon arrival. Because their medium to long term unemployment back home made them prone to accept low paid jobs without written contracts in Kazakhstan, they were often at the mercy of employers and mediators (37% of respondents).

More than half of the respondents had no contact to migrant networks in the country, and the rest could only count on a few relatives for support. More than half of re-entry banned migrants interviewed in Kazakhstan made use of mediators or new contacts to find jobs and regularize their status, many of whom proved untrustworthy. As a consequence, when their rights were violated (non-payment of salary, withdrawal of passport from employers/mediators) the migrants found themselves either under strict control of the employer/mediator with limited possibilities of leaving the workplace and their place of residence, or they had difficulties in finding help through official channels. In the latter case, they were often not aware of the existence of NGOs working to support migrant workers, or were reluctant to reach out to them or the migration police, as they feared to be prosecuted rather than assisted.

Migrants with a re-entry ban were at a high risk of becoming irregular for different reasons, depending on how they entered the country (Fig. 6). Two respondents who attempted to enter Russia and were rejected at the Russian-Kazakh border failed to register within 5 days, as prescribed by Kazakh law, or did not know of the registration requirement in the first place. 62% of re-entry banned migrants who had chosen Kazakhstan as an alternative country of destination lacked networks and relied on improvised contacts on the way to Kazakhstan or on mediators and employers to regularize their status in the country. In many cases they were living and working illegally, cheated and exploited without getting a salary, and some even reported of other migrant colleagues having been beaten up by the employer.

Fig. 6. Vulnerabilities of re-entry banned migrants in Kazakhstan: two scenarios



Migrants who have come in contact with NGOs or IOM did this by chance or through word of mouth. It seems that their high dependence on employers/mediators deterred them from seeking help from outside as they did not trust official entities and feared the reaction of employers.

Among migrants in Kazakhstan who were interviewed, misperception was widespread on two levels: NGOs and IOM were believed to be State entities; and State entities were feared and seen as a source of punishment rather than a source of information and assistance, as migrants perceived themselves more as law breakers than as victims.

Kyrgyzstan

In Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, two migrant-sending countries, the analysis established re-integration mechanisms and challenges among the interviewed returned migrant workers. Interviews showed that re-entry banned migrants in general attempted to reintegrate through unofficial channels. Poorly educated migrants and women who were abandoned by their husbands working in Russia were the least successful and represented most vulnerable groups.

Migrant workers reached out to their social networks especially in the period immediately following their return home in order to ask for loans (47%) or for temporary jobs (about 70%). In case of continuing unemployment several months after their return, however, the respondents expressed embarrassment at asking their networks for support because of outstanding debts and because they did not want to be seen as needy people by their community.

Job search was conducted mainly by word of mouth and helped returned migrants to be temporary or occasionally employed, but none of the respondents had a stable job, and economic needs persisted. Only 22% of migrants managed to find a job back home.

Use of State or NGOs services was made by 68% of respondents with the only purpose of getting more information about the duration of their re-entry ban. Migrants did not expect to find decent paid jobs back home or help from State institutions.

Particularly vulnerable were abandoned and divorced young women who only in a few cases were supported by kin networks made up of close relatives. Focus groups and expert interviews with NGO representatives confirmed that together with poorly educated migrants, they formed the group with the least chances of successful re-integration.

About 80% of re-entry banned migrants reacted to the lack of jobs that pay decent salaries by ruling out the option of integrating back home. They did not ask State agencies or NGOs for support, waiting instead for the ban to expire while gradually disengaging from community life, which carries a high risk of alienation and social isolation. Interviewees reported that many re-entry banned migrants considered or already undertook illegal journeys to the Russian Federation by using forged documents.

Tajikistan

As in the case of Kyrgyzstan, migrant workers returning to Tajikistan mostly made use of informal channels in an attempt to re-adapt, with low chances of success. Unlike in Kyrgyzstan, success levels were low regardless of the respondent's level of education. Even migrants with higher education faced serious challenges and vulnerabilities upon return to Tajikistan.

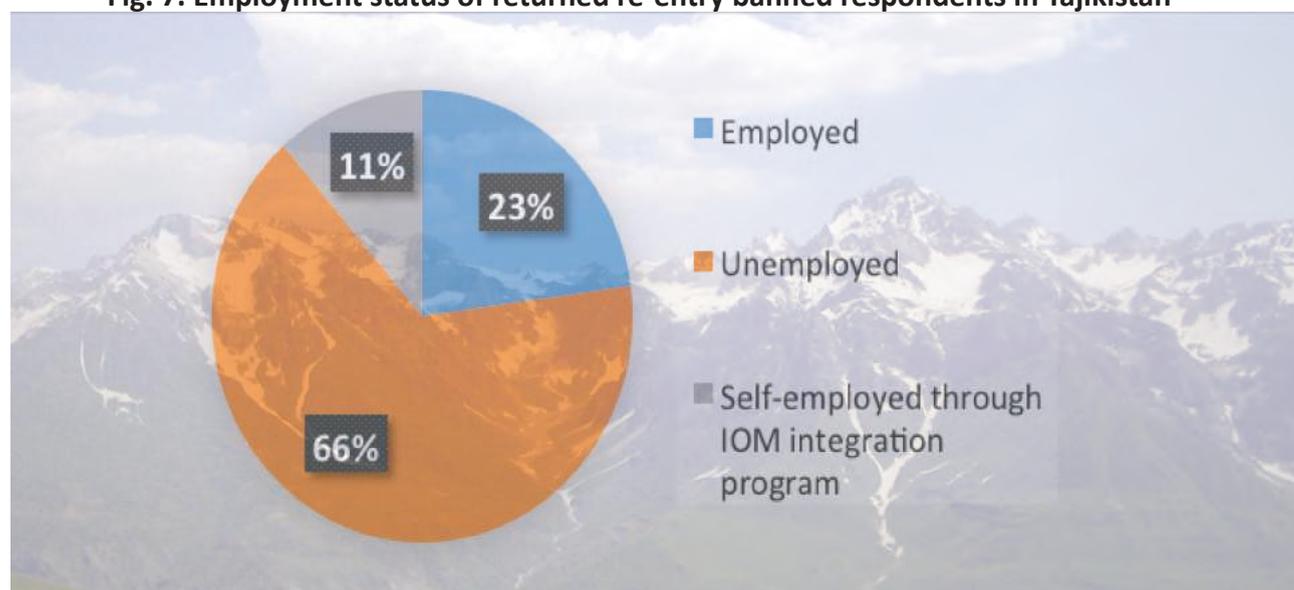
Migrants with re-entry bans dispose of few coping mechanisms. Similar to the situation in Kyrgyzstan, migrants initially made use of networks to ask for loans (43%) or for temporary jobs (about 80%). With time, however, they quit these jobs because they did not pay enough to support their families, while embarrassment about outstanding debts and increasing economic need grew.

Abandoned migrant women appeared to be among the most vulnerable and isolated group. It is important to notice in this context that in Tajikistan, stigmatization and isolation of single women seemed higher than in Kyrgyzstan. The reason is that migrants in Kyrgyzstan, even if of rural origins, tended to live closer to city centers (Bishkek or Osh), escaping from rural contexts where gender discrimination was higher, whereas women interviewed in Tajikistan were living in rural areas.

Success in integration was limited for migrants regardless of their level of education. Two-thirds of interviewed re-entry banned migrants in Tajikistan were unemployed upon return to the country (Fig. 7). Migrants searched for jobs through word of mouth and at the local bazars where underpaid day jobs as handymen are advertised. Mostly, migrants with occasional jobs were not able to provide their household with basic needs on a daily basis.

Use of State or NGOs services was rarely made. Only one surveyed migrant contacted an NGO with the sole purpose of getting more information about the duration of their own re-entry ban. Respondents who addressed NGOs mostly asked for jobs and considered State agencies (like Employment Centers or Hukumat²) of no use in helping them. In turn, migrants who were self-employed in the framework of the IOM integration programme pointed to some immediate as well as lasting benefits: the income allowed to provide for basic needs of the household and in some families, a more cooperative behavior was observed between spouses.

Fig. 7. Employment status of returned re-entry banned respondents in Tajikistan



Source: IOM interviews with re-entry banned migrants in Tajikistan, January-April 2016

2 City administration.

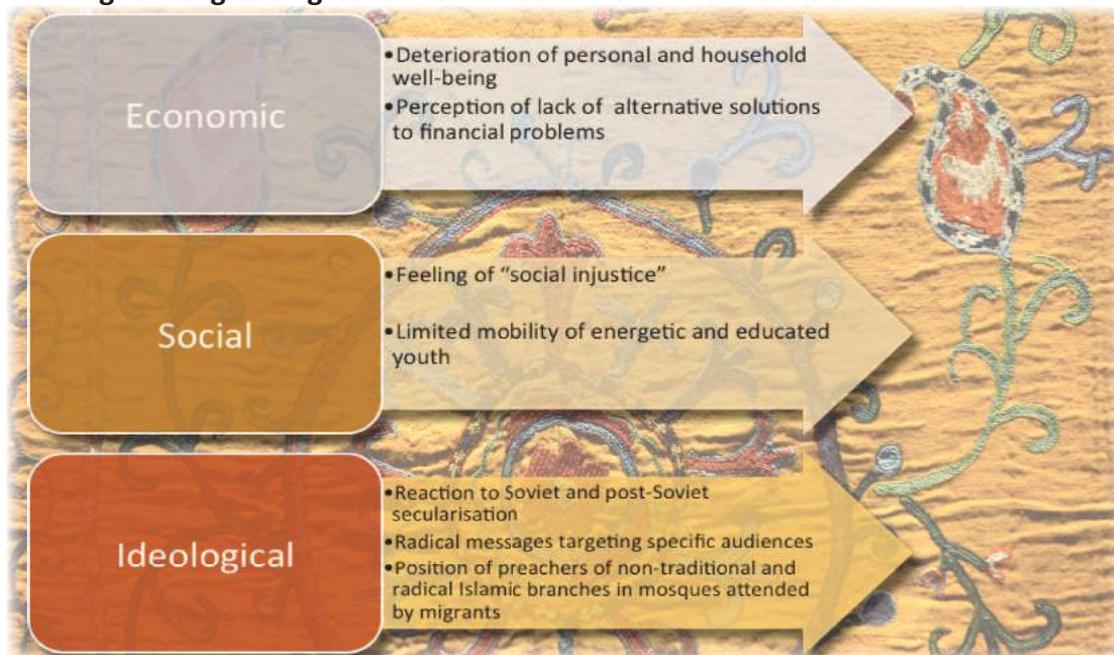
2. RADICALIZATION, PREVENTING AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM



Interviews with experts and officials who work on preventing and countering radicalization as well as sociological research carried out among returning Central Asian migrants (especially re-entry banned ones) reveal a complex relation between migration and radicalization. The findings suggest that the link between labour migration and radicalization is not direct, but rather presupposes the co-existence of several vulnerability factors: deterioration of economic status and a resulting diminished sense of self-worth accompanied by the alienation from both state institutions and from their own community. While it has not been shown that migration is in itself sufficient to account for cases of radicalization of migrants, the study points to the impact of the economic downturn, the presence of radical messages in religious communities in both the country of destination and origin and the sense of social injustice and desperation, felt by certain migrants when faced with the loss of legal status and an uncertain economic future.

While migrant workers as a group have not been shown to be particularly prone to radicalization, they share certain broader socioeconomic vulnerabilities that affect population segments in Central Asia. Interviewed experts in the field of radicalization suggest that migrants might become more receptive to ideological messages that are actively disseminated by extremist organizations and preachers when they display a combination of economic and social vulnerabilities (Fig. 8). They indicate that ideological arguments become activated only when they resonate with the target audience's existing concerns. This may happen when the deteriorating personal and household well-being is associated with the perception of social injustice and a sense of inability to improve this situation.

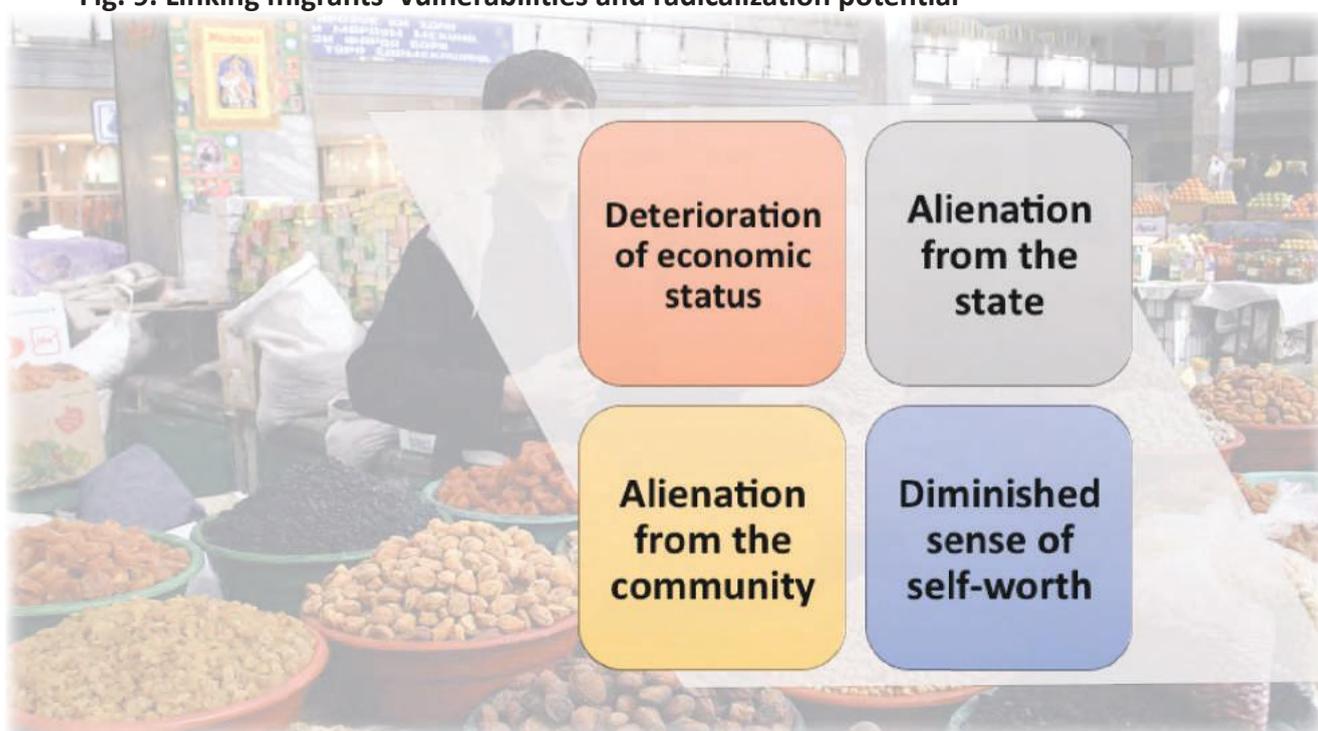
Fig. 8. Long-term grounds for radicalization in Central Asia



Source: "Returning Central Asian Migrants: Between Radicalization and Re-integration" IOM Central Asia Rapid Field Assessment in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, - interviews with experts, August 2015; interviews with officials and experts in Tajikistan, June 2016

Interviewed experts stress that radicalization potential is highest when objective (socioeconomic) and subjective (psychological) factors act jointly on an individual who has no recourse to external sources of support (alienation from both the state and community). (Fig. 9). They point out that the personal perception of the situation as below one's expectation (relative deprivation) and failure to deal with the deteriorated welfare are more likely to fuel radicalization than actual poverty, which is accepted as a constant fact of a migrant's existence. Thus, self-assessment of the socioeconomic position is considered to be the crucial element of the radicalization process. However, as confirmed by the sociological fieldwork, of equal importance is the migrant's relation to the larger environment (both the formal institutions and his or her informal support network). In the higher-risk scenario, the migrant is alienated both from the state institutions and from the community (diaspora and/or home community).

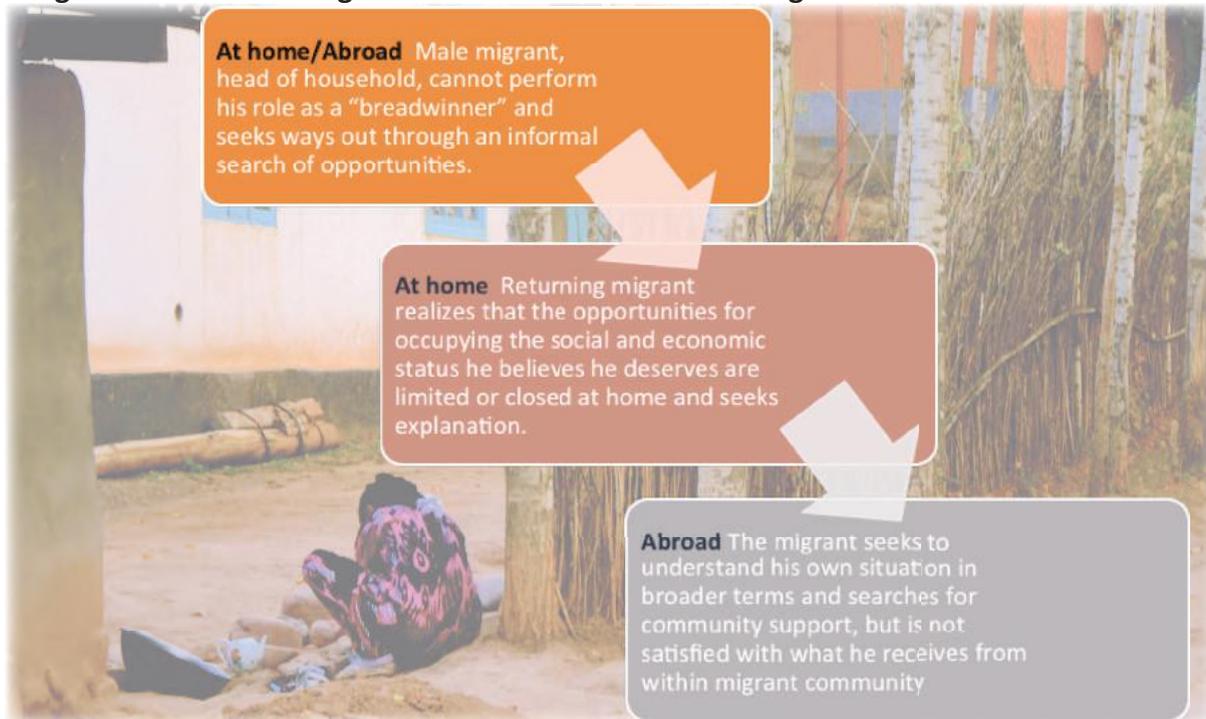
Fig. 9. Linking migrants' vulnerabilities and radicalization potential



Source: IOM Central Asia assessment team analysis, February-May 2016

Experts note that radicalization is a process that can occur at various stages of migration. They point to a crucial role played by intermediaries who either enjoy or win trust of migrants and provide a safe environment for disseminating radical ideas. Intermediaries who may be former migrants offer help out of the financial difficulties, promising aid, including facilitating trips to third countries. Those migrants who upon return home cannot locate adequate employment or otherwise are not able to support their families may then experience a sense of socio-economic and political injustice. These sentiments may then be channeled through radical interpretation of religious texts, in which authorities are viewed as hostile or uncooperative. Those migrants who become alienated from state institutions and from the community are then being tracked and given an ideological “final push”, which induces them to leave for Syria or Iraq or to join radical groups. The following diagram presents some scenarios of the process of radicalization, taking place at different stages of migration.

Fig. 10. Scenarios of migrant vulnerabilities at various stages



Source: IOM interviews with experts and government officials, Kazakhstan/Kyrgyzstan/Tajikistan, April-June 2016

Interviewed experts and officials do not believe that so far the potential for radicalization among Central Asian migrant workers and their households has exceeded that of other social groups. They point out to such strong deterrents as the primacy of supporting households among married men who account for the vast majority of Uzbek and Tajik migrant workers, and the social stigma associated with failure to deliver as breadwinners. Until the onset of the current economic downturn and broad application of sanctions, these migrants clearly felt accountable to the family and community. However, they warn that two scenarios could be contemplated that could change that situation. Firstly, the sense of individual frustration with limited advancement or actual deterioration of economic standing could be coupled with the loss of legal status and resulting shame, inducing the migrant to seek assistance from outside their own ethnic or professional community. Secondly, the sense of frustration could grip an entire migrant community and be translated into a broader perception of discrimination or even hostility from the host society. This social perception could then be given a more solid shape in the form of religious messages, in which the current socioeconomic reality could be explained through a radical interpretation of religious ideas.

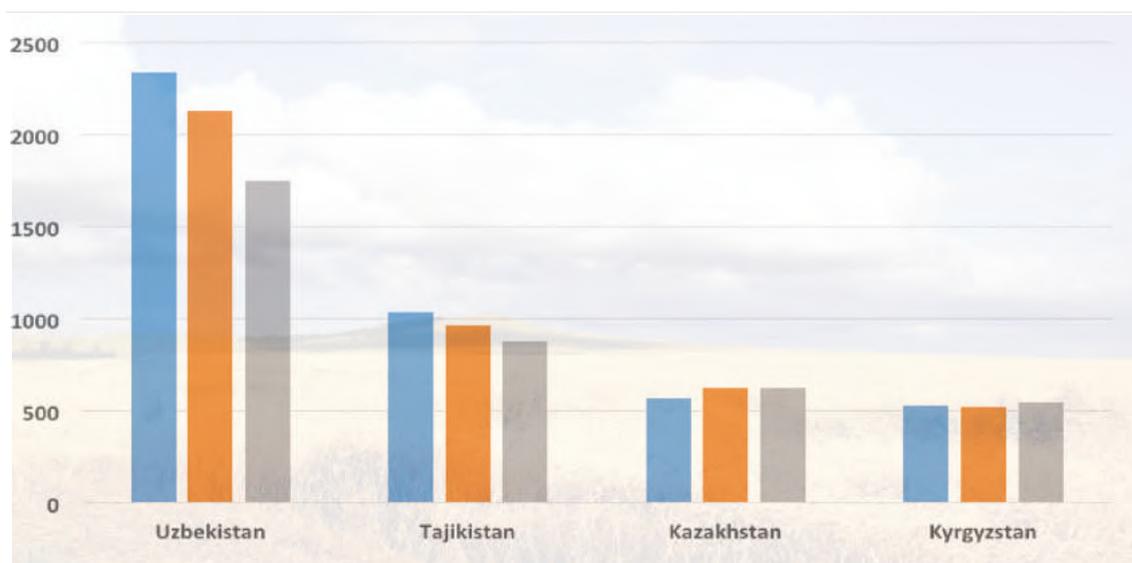
Experts recognize that two general approaches have been deployed in the region to deal with the threat of radicalization. The *security approach* seeks to minimize the threat by eliminating the agents of radicalization (extremist groups) and concentrates on the ideological sources of the process. In that framework, the key role is played by the law enforcement agencies that seek to counter the spread of ideological messages and isolate both the agents and the intermediaries. In turn, the *integration approach*, applied primarily by agencies on religious issues as well as employment and social service institutions addresses the broader socioeconomic vulnerabilities, which often serve as the ground for the spread of radical messages among social groups, such as, for instance, migrant workers. The integration approach targets primarily the potential adherents of radical ideologies as well as the larger communities in which they live through identifying and responding to genuine economic needs and resulting societal frustrations. A number of experts come to the conclusion that effective work on countering violent extremism (CVE) requires going beyond the security approach and that more prominence needs to be given to the integration approach as complementary to security measures. This involves first of all activities aiming at preventing violent extremism (PVE), including long-term engagement with the vulnerable migrants, their families and home communities. Experts note the priority of countering radical messages through religious education, disseminating knowledge of traditional beliefs and values and raising awareness of extremists’ recruitment techniques. They also point to the crucial role that women play in transmitting values and shaping opinions, which might be powerful deterrents to radicalization.

3. MIGRATION TRENDS AND IMPACT OF RE-ENTRY BANS

Regional trends

Russia's economic downturn over the past two years in combination with a more stringent migration policy has impacted on migration flows and mobility from and within Central Asia, the predominant region of origin of migrant workers in the Russian Federation. Decreasing demand for foreign labour in a worsening economic climate has made Russia less of an attractive destination for Central Asia's working-age population seeking employment abroad. In addition, the introduction of bans on re-entering Russia for foreigners who committed multiple administrative infringements is preventing more than 1.5 million individuals, most of whom are Central Asian migrant workers, from returning to Russia for a period of up to five years. Official Russian migration statistics show that the overall number of Central Asian migrants in Russia has decreased over the past two years, with a particularly strong decline among the migrant population from Uzbekistan that dropped from 2,343,000 individuals in 2014 to 1,756,000 individuals in 2016 (Fig. 11). There has been a similar, albeit less expressed decrease in migration from Tajikistan, declining from 1,034,000 registered migrants in 2014 to 879,000 migrants in 2016. Mobility from Kyrgyzstan in the wake of its accession to the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) has remained more stable, showing a slight increase from 526,000 persons in 2014 to 547,000 persons in 2016.

Fig. 11. Central Asian migrants registered in Russia, 2014-2016 (thousands of persons)

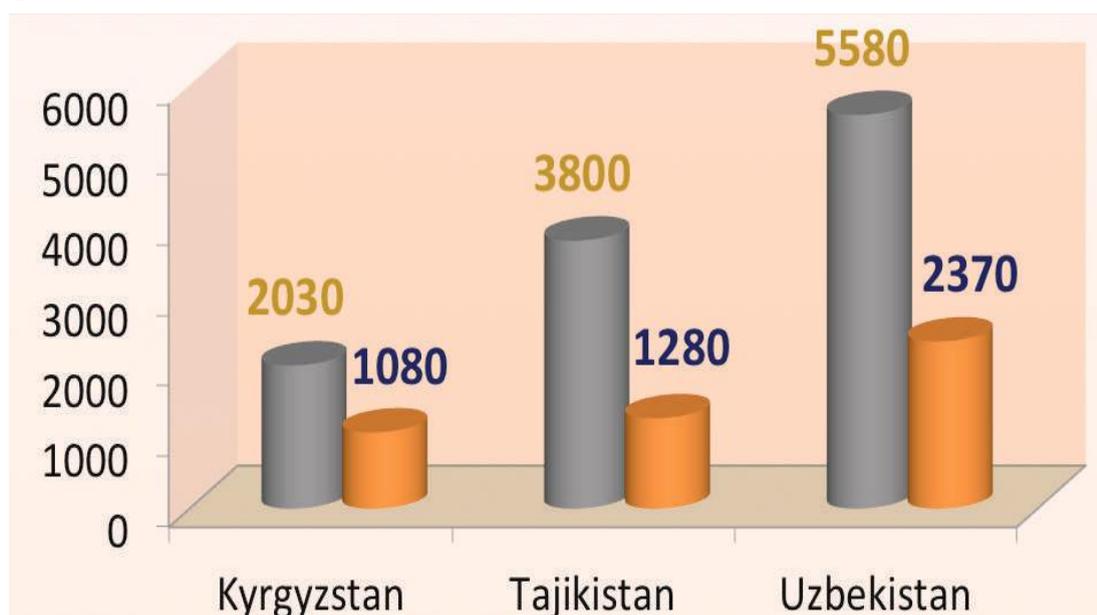


Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, Directorate for Migration Affairs available at https://eyem.mvd.pf/about/activity/stats/Statistics/Statisticheskie_svedeniya_po_migracionno

The changing economic and regulatory framework in Russia has led to shifting migration flows within Central Asia, too. Kazakhstan is increasingly becoming a country of transit and destination for migrant workers from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan seeking for alternatives to employment in Russia. In 2015, almost 950,000 citizens from these three Central Asian republics have temporarily resided in Kazakhstan, signifying a sharp increase from the ca. 500,000 temporary residents in 2011. Uzbek citizens make up the by far largest subgroup among this population, having increased from 530,683 individual migrants in 2014 to 797,982 migrants in 2015. Migration from Kyrgyzstan is less pronounced, although a growing number of citizens of these two countries have taken up employment in Kazakhstan over the past two years, leading to the assumption that Kazakhstan is becoming an alternative destination for Central Asian migrant workers who are unable to return to or find employment in Russia.

Although migrants' strategies seem to be adapting to the new realities, the economic downturn in Russia nevertheless has taken a toll on a region that depends to a significant extent on migrants' remittances. These have seen a sharp decline from 2014 to 2015, thus slashing the disposable income of many Central Asian households. According to data from the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, remittance levels to Kyrgyzstan have decreased by 47% in US dollar terms, remittances to Uzbekistan fell by 58% over the same time span while personal money transfers to Tajikistan have dropped by 66% (Fig. 12).

Fig. 12. Remittances to Central Asian countries from Russia, 2014-2015 (million USD)

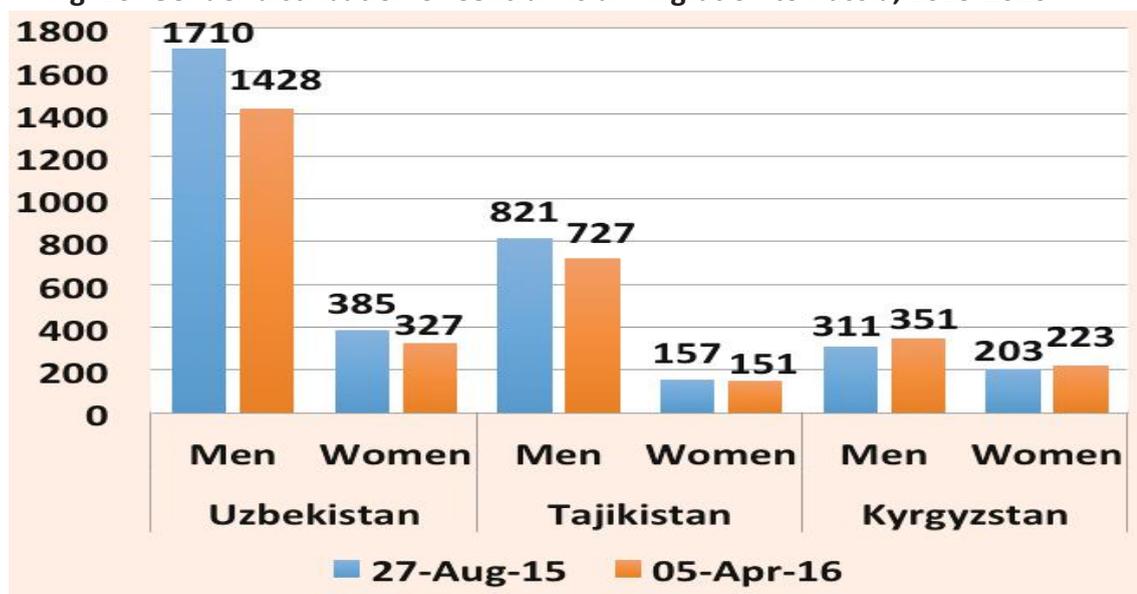


Source: Central Bank of the Russian Federation, available at http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/CrossBorder/C-b_trans_countries_15.xlsx; http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/print.aspx?file=CrossBorder/C-b_trans_countries_14.htm

Even though the real decline in purchasing power is much weaker than these numbers suggest, because Central Asian currencies have seen a devaluation to the US dollar similar to that of the ruble, households with family members working abroad face a worsening of their living standard that might even push some into poverty due to the decrease in money transfers. This issue is further exacerbated by a shortage of provisions to accommodate returned migrants' needs and further their potentials.

Analysis of the dynamics of Central Asian migration to Russia suggests that the economic crisis and re-entry bans induced a change in the gender composition of labour migration flows. (Fig. 13) Between August 2015 and April 2016, the number of Uzbek men registering their residence in Russia dropped by around 290,000, and nearly 100,000 fewer Tajik men migrated to Russia over that period. The decline among Uzbek women was less pronounced while it was minimal among Tajik women. While both the Uzbek and Tajik labour migration to Russia consists mainly of men, these changes may point to certain shifts in the strategies of migrant households, which can no longer rely on the steady and sufficient source of income in the form of remittances sent by man alone.

Fig. 13. Gender distribution of Central Asian migration to Russia, 2015-2016



Source: Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation, available at: https://звм.мвд.рф/about/activity/stats/Statistics/Svedeniya_v_otnoshenii_inostrannih_grazh/item/5850/

Country Findings

Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan's migration profile differs significantly from that of its Central Asian neighbours. Steady economic growth has turned Kazakhstan into predominantly a country of transit and immigration that attracts skilled workers from various countries and, increasingly, becomes a destination for low-skilled migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Close to 950,000 citizens of these three countries have temporarily resided in Kazakhstan in 2015, up from ca. 500,000 in 2011. Uzbek citizens are by far the largest group, which disposes of the strongest migrant networks due to kin ties along the Uzbek-Kazakh border. From 2014 to 2015, Uzbek migration has increased from 530,683 to 797,982 individual migrants, which accounts for the largest part of the overall increase in migration to Kazakhstan (Table 1). Kyrgyz and Tajik citizens migrate in lesser numbers to Kazakhstan, although more pronounced migration flows from these two countries have been noted as well over the past two years.

Table 1. Registered Central Asian temporary residents in Kazakhstan, 2011-2015

Country of Origin	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Uzbekistan	404,468	431,919	495,167	530,683	797,982
Kyrgyzstan	93,848	103,001	93,127	94,313	114,385
Tajikistan	10,915	10,193	12,917	18,463	33,036
TOTAL	509,231	545,113	601,211	643,459	945,403

Source: State Migration Service of the Republic of Kazakhstan, May 2016

This trend coincides with the onset of the economic downturn in Russia and the beginning of the imposition of re-entry bans, leading to the hypothesis that Central Asian migrants who cannot return to Russia for economic or legal reasons are now striving to enter Kazakhstan instead. Although no statistics on the number of migrants banned from re-entering Russia currently working in Kazakhstan exist, our research could confirm the hypothesis that many Central Asian migrants are either seeking out Kazakhstan as an alternative destination country or decide to remain in Kazakhstan upon being denied entry at the Russian-Kazakh land border.



Low oil prices and the Kazakh tenge's devaluation have taken a toll on the Kazakh economy, making it more difficult for migrants to send home savings. According to data from the National bank of Kazakhstan, between 2014 and 2015 remittances from Kazakhstan to Kyrgyzstan fell by 15% (from 73.82 to 62.32 million USD), while remittances to Uzbekistan decreased by 17% (from 191.87 to 159.10 million USD). In contrast, private money transfers to Tajikistan increased from 11.87 million USD to 15.74 million USD over the same time span, most likely due to the strong increase in migration from Tajikistan to Kazakhstan that almost doubled from 2014 to 2015. In addition to the negative effects of the economic downturn, Kazakhstan is set to introduce changes to its migration law that is going to restrict employment opportunities for low-skilled migrant workers. These developments will likely make it more difficult for many Central Asian migrant workers who are banned from re-entering Russia to find legal work in Kazakhstan. The increasing number of expulsion orders issued to Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Tajik citizens (from 2101 expulsions in 2014 to 8741 in 2015) shows that Kazakh officials are taking the issue of irregular migration seriously and are willing to protect the national labour market through prioritizing employment of their own citizens.

Kazakhstan's economic development, however, will in the long run increase the demand for both low- and high-skilled foreign labour. Growing migration numbers despite the economic downturn demonstrate that employers see a need for labour that the domestic workforce cannot fulfil. Return migration to Kazakhstan remains relatively low, with fewer than 1,000 Kazakh citizens returning to the country for permanent residence in 2015. Emigration of Kazakh citizens for permanent residence abroad remains significantly higher, numbering 33,468 in 2015 (86% of these emigrants left for Russia).

In light of these developments, it remains likely that the trend of increasing migration from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to Kazakhstan will continue, especially if the Russian economy continues to stagnate while immigration regulations become more restrictive.

Kyrgyzstan

Labour migration from Kyrgyzstan to Russia and Kazakhstan continues to play an important role for the country's economic development and the livelihoods of many households with one or more family members in migration, whose remittances are often the main source of income in rural regions with high poverty rates. As of June 2016, more than 750,000 Kyrgyz citizens were living and working abroad, the vast majority in Russia (563,000) and Kazakhstan (111,000). The ongoing regional economic downturn so far had little effect on migration levels from the Kyrgyz Republic. The number of Kyrgyz migrants in Russia remains stable, and even shows a 5%-increase from 2015 to 2016. Migration from Kyrgyzstan to Kazakhstan has increased as well, rising from 94,313 Kyrgyz citizens temporarily registered in Kazakhstan in 2014 to 114,385 in the following year. Women play a particularly important role in Kyrgyz migration: Female migrant workers make up close to 40% of the entire Kyrgyz migrant population in Russia.

Kyrgyzstan's accession to the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) in August 2015 is likely to be a decisive factor for ongoing migration trends despite the economic slowdown in the two main destination countries for Kyrgyz migrants. Simplified employment procedures within the EEU exempt Kyrgyz migrants from quota requirements and the obligation to obtain a work permit for employment in Russia and Kazakhstan. Strong migrant networks and the presence of Kyrgyz diasporas in these countries further contribute to the continuing trend of outbound migration from Kyrgyzstan.

Stable migration levels, however, did not spare the Kyrgyz economy and migrants' households from the negative effects of decreasing remittances. According to data from the Central Bank of Russia, remittances fell from 2.03 billion USD in 2014 to 1.08 billion USD in 2015, a sharp decline of 47%. The Kazakh National Bank's statistics on personal transfers from Kazakhstan to Kyrgyzstan show a similar trend, with money transfers dropping from 73.82 million USD in 2014 to 62.63 million USD in 2015. Much of this decrease, however, is due to the Russian ruble's and the Kazakhstani tenge's depreciation against the dollar. In relative terms, remittances as a share of GDP in Kyrgyzstan have remained stable at 25.6% in 2015 (compared to 26.8% in 2014).

The effects of the regional economic slowdown have been felt most strongly by those Kyrgyz migrant workers who became subject to re-entry bans in Russia ranging from three to five years. Because wage levels in Russia remain higher than in Kyrgyzstan and because returning migrants face difficulties re-integrating into the local labour market, receiving a re-entry ban can threaten the livelihood of migrants and their families. Through bilateral agreements with Russia, the Kyrgyz government successfully managed to lift the ban of 76,000 Kyrgyz citizens in February 2016, leading to a decrease of the total number from 194,000 to 118,000 re-entry banned migrant workers. This agreement, however, did not exempt Kyrgyz citizens from being subject to the ban, and at the end of the first quarter of 2016 the total number increased slightly to 119,000.

The lack of statistics on return migration of seasonal migrants makes it difficult to draw conclusion about the socio-economic situation of returnees. The increasing diversification of Kyrgyz migrant workers' countries of destination, with 111,000 Kyrgyz citizens working in Kazakhstan, 14,000 in South Korea and 8,000 in Turkey, can be seen as a reaction to the economic decline in Russia and remaining hurdles of Kyrgyz citizens' access to the Russian labour market like the re-entry bans.

Continued large-scale migration has a particularly strong impact on the welfare of the more disadvantaged regions of the country. The regions of Batken, Jalal-Abad and Osh, which are characterized by the lowest gross regional product (25,300; 36,400 and 36,900 som respectively compared to 146,800 som in the capital city) and high levels of unemployment, are also major areas of origin of migrant workers. Considering the limited opportunities for employment (either in quantitative or qualitative terms) that these regions currently offer, experts and officials do not expect major return flow of migrants to these locations.

Tajikistan

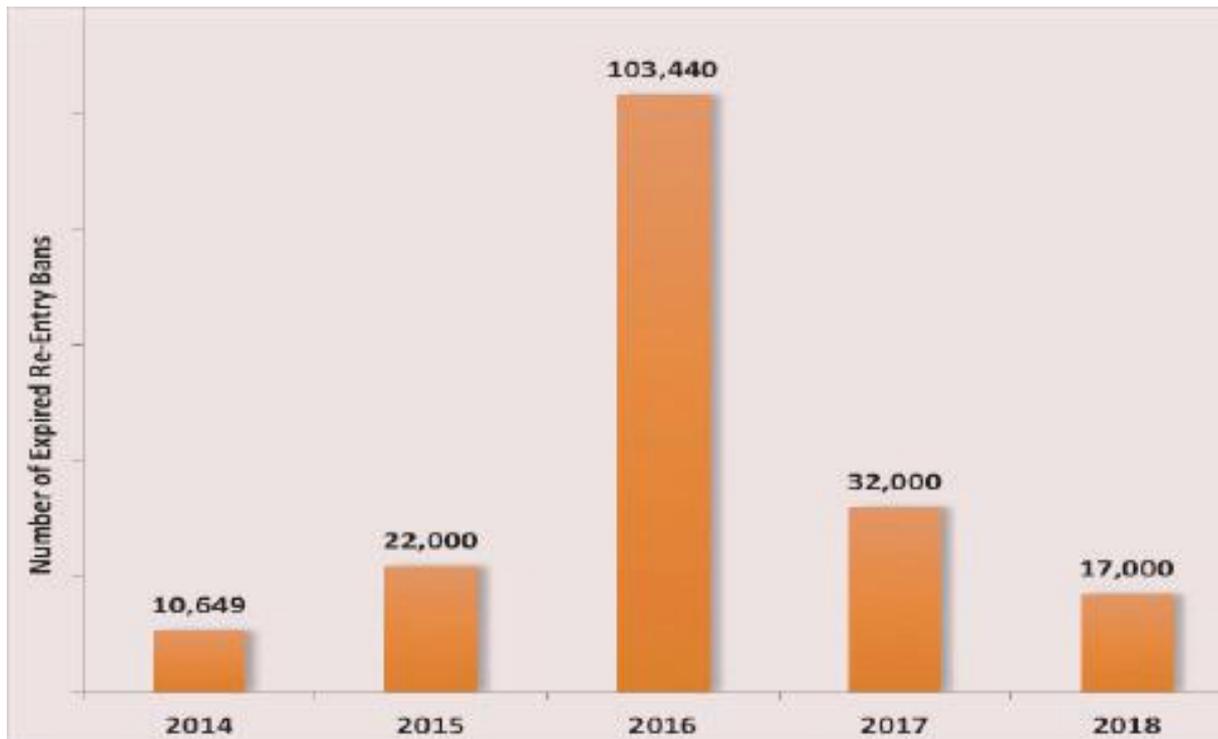
Among the countries that were studied in this report, Tajikistan was affected the most by the economic downturn in Russia and the tightening of migration regulations. Given the long history of Tajik migration to Russia that started in the 1990s and led to the establishment of widespread migrant networks and diasporas in the Russian Federation, seasonal labour migration has become one of, if not the main source of income of mainly rural Tajik households. This strong reliance on labour migration that made Tajikistan the most remittance-dependent country in the world has come under strain following the regional economic slowdown and the decreasing demand for foreign low-skilled labour in Russia. Migration statistics reflect this trend, with the number of Tajik migrants registered in the Russian Federation dropping from 1,034,000 in March 2014 to 963,000 in March 2015 to 879,000 in April 2016.

This decrease of 15% over a timespan of two years remains moderate compared to the steep decline observed among Uzbek migrants (exceeding 25%), which shows the resilience of Tajik migrant workers in the face of the economic downturn. At the same time, lack of alternatives has induced the vast majority of the Tajik migrants to continue to stay or seek to re-enter the Russian Federation, and the scale of movement has actually risen among women who either join or replace men in migration. Relatively few choose third destinations, such as Kazakhstan, which is increasingly becoming an alternative destination for Central Asian migrant workers who are banned from re-entering Russia. The lack of substantial migrant networks reduces interest in this destination. As a result, the relatively small outflow to Kazakhstan cannot make up for the loss of income by Tajiks who are unable to maintain seasonal migration to Russia due to a re-entry ban or a lack of jobs.

Migrant remittances to Tajikistan have accordingly also taken a hit. Money transfers from the Russian Federation have shown a steep decline, falling in the wake of the ruble's devaluation by 66% from a pre-crisis level of 3.8 billion USD to 1.28 billion USD in 2015 according to data of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation. Although the impact is less severe due to the parallel loss in value of Tajikistan's national currency, the somoni, remittances as a percentage of GDP have dropped from 49.6% in 2013 to 32.1% in 2015. Despite continuing GDP growth that is set to rise further in 2016, many households face a decrease of their disposable income and thus their standard of living due to the decrease in money transfers from migrant workers abroad.

Loss in revenue is particularly strongly felt by Tajik re-entry banned migrants. According to the Russian Federal Migration Service, over 330,000 Tajik citizens are currently under the ban and cannot return to Russia for a period lasting from three to five years. A large share of these bans are set to expire during 2016 (more than 100,000 according to the Tajik Ministry of Labour's estimates as shown in Fig. 14), but so far the imposition of new bans has cancelled out the expiration of old bans: Between 1 January 2016 and 1 April 2016, the total number of Tajik citizens banned from re-entering Russia decreased by 2,719 — less than 1% of all banned migrant workers.

Fig. 14. Schedule of expiry of bans on the re-entry of Tajik migrants to Russia, 2014-2018 (number of persons)



Source: State Migration Service of the Republic of Tajikistan, April 2016

The Tajik Migration Service's statistics show that only a small share of all banned migrants return home upon receiving a ban. Only 36,000 returnees registered with the state institution, which can lead one to assume that the majority of Tajik migrants with re-entry bans is remaining in Russia irregularly to wait out the expiration of their ban. The economic difficulties of returned migrants might explain the reluctance to return home. A mere 10% of re-entry banned Tajik migrants are registered as employed in their region of origin. Low wages and the deficit of permanent jobs remain a major obstacle to the reintegration of returned Tajik migrant workers.



4. INTEGRATION OF RETURNING MIGRANTS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Challenges and Opportunities: Regional overview

The impact assessment of the re-entry bans on Central Asian migrants' welfare, review of the measures facilitating their integration in home and transit countries as well as links between vulnerabilities and potential for radicalization have been conducted with reference to legal and strategic documents, existing surveys and studies as well as interviews carried out by the IOM expert team with 55 officials and 36 experts in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.³ Moreover, national statistics were received from state authorities through IOM's official request. This section presents general regional trends with regard to the challenges and opportunities for the integration of returning migrants. The legal and institutional developments in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are treated in respective sections of the country reports below.

According to the data of the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation, a total of 1,607,000 re-entry bans were issued between 2013 and 2015 and as many as 513,300 foreigners were expelled from Russia in that period. At the beginning of 2016 the total number of persons subject to the ban reached 1,650,000. An overwhelming majority of those affected have been citizens of Central Asian states – an estimated 1,000,000 Uzbeks, 330,000 Tajiks and 108,000 Kyrgyz citizens. Moreover, it is estimated that around 2,200,000 persons are at risk of falling under the ban while crossing Russia's border. Since by most accounts the majority of re-entry banned migrants chose to stay in Russia, the primary challenge is to protect their rights and cater to their vulnerabilities in the workplace, vis-à-vis the authorities and the host community.

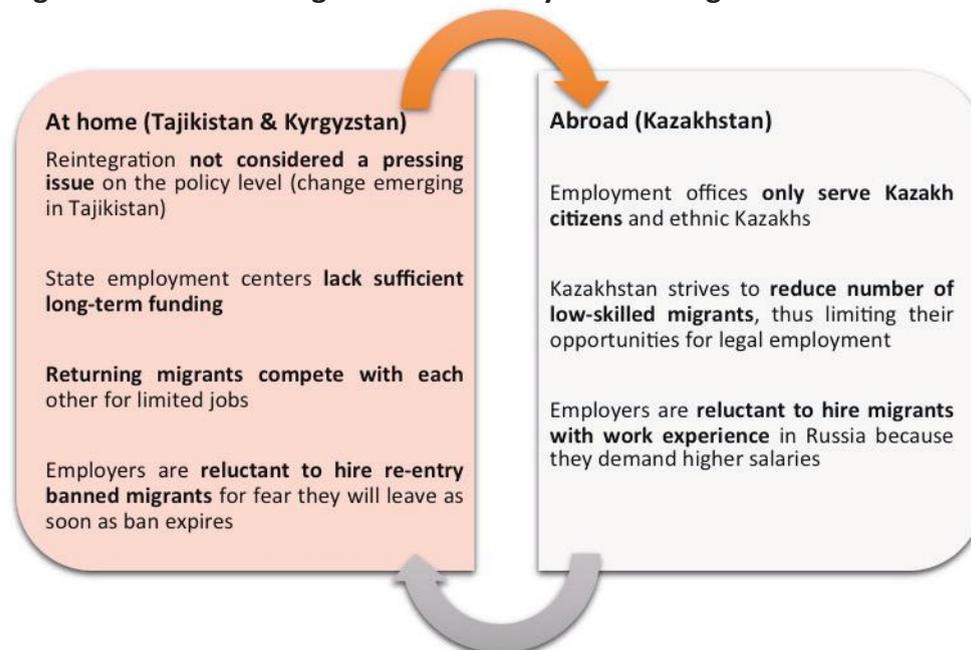
A major issue with regard to the protection of re-entry banned migrants' rights is the fact that especially in the initial period of application of the bans, many were unaware of being subject to them. The grounds could involve failure to comply with administrative procedures (late residence registration or receipt of work permits and submission of incorrect documents), often due to the negligence or fault of an intermediary. Thus, the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan sought in the first place to minimize the impact of re-entry bans by reducing the duration of the sanction for a significant part of its nationals. Through bilateral agreements, the number of Kyrgyz re-entry banned migrants was lowered by 39% by April 2016 while as many as 103,440 Tajik migrants saw their ban term expire in 2016 (in 2014 about 10,000 expired; in 2015 about 22,000 expired). Nevertheless, the number of the persons subject to the bans is not likely to drop significantly as new bans continue being issued to Central Asian migrants and both officials and experts expect a more restrictive turn of the Russian migration policy in the coming years.

Re-entry bans have a seriously disruptive character, reducing migrants' ability to deploy their usual strategies of coping with their precarious legal, economic and social status. Interviews with experts and interviews and focus

³ Respondents were selected from among representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Foreign Affairs, Internal Affairs, Economy and Finance, Migration Police/Service, Border Guards, Prosecutor's Offices, Agencies for Religious Affairs, Regional Employment Centers as well as officials at the Presidential Administration, the Parliamentary Committees, the Ombudsman's Office and the National Bank. Experts dealt with either the socio-economic impact of migration or the link between migration and radicalization.

groups with returning migrants confirm that the re-entry banned persons face primarily the challenge of re-establishing their economic standing, on which their community status and self-esteem are directly dependent. As Fig. 15 summarizes, this often proves difficult as migrants need to compete for scarce jobs. Although some successful precedents exist for integration programmes (e.g. work with returning ethnic compatriots) and local NGO initiatives have provided information on migrants' rights and employment opportunities, systemic solutions have not been put in place. The issues range from absence of dedicated definitions and mechanisms through insufficient or lacking funding to low awareness among migrants.⁴

Fig. 15. Barriers to integration of re-entry banned migrants



Source: IOM interviews with state officials and experts, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, February-June 2016

Both the review of legislation and strategic documents and interviews with experts, officials and migrants confirm that returning migrants with re-entry bans have so far not been the target of dedicated measures, which appear to be necessary given that this group faces re-integration difficulties on the legal, administrative and economic levels. This is an especially urgent issue in the new destinations selected by the returnees (such as industrial regions of Kazakhstan but also the urban centers of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) where there has been little experience of active integration measures for newcomers. Both the interviews with experts and sociological findings testify to the crucial role played by ethnic diasporas, which offer a variety of services—ranging from economic assistance through legal counseling to psychological and cultural support. Some of the successful initiatives, launched by governments of migrant-sending countries, have involved ethnic diasporas in providing migrants with legal information and running cultural activities. Nevertheless, the respondents admit that effective management of return migration and protection of migrants' rights requires elaboration of dedicated policies in this field and sustained state support.

Country findings: Mitigating measures and re-integration

Kazakhstan

The economic situation, which manifested itself in the contraction of the GDP growth to a mere 0.1% in 2015, has had serious implications for the management of Kazakhstan's labour market. 2015 was the first year when unemployment rates no longer declined even though the number of registered vacancies rose from 185,000 to

⁴ National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2013-2017, Program of Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic and Program of Facilitating Employment of the Population and of Regulating External Labour Migration until 2020.

287,000 compared to 2014. Although the interest in work in Kazakhstan has been on the rise among Uzbeks and Tajiks in particular, the economic downturn and the persisting unemployment of 444,000 own citizens have led to increased controls on foreign work in the country to ensure that irregular employment is reduced. The application of a more restrictive approach has resulted in the increase of the number of citizens of neighbouring Central Asian countries subject to administrative sanctions (up from 64,366 in 2014 to 78,451 in 2015) and expulsions (fourfold increase from 2101 to 8741 cases between 2014 and 2015).

Minimizing the negative impact of migration flows on the national economy and attracting migrant workers with qualifications and skills in demand have been among the long-standing principles of Kazakhstan's migration policy, as formulated in the national migration policy concept as well as basic legal acts, regulating the conditions of non-nationals' access to the domestic labour market. In recent years a number of instruments have been introduced to improve the management of foreign employment. Since January 2014 physical persons may hire foreigners for rendering domestic services but under new rules elaborated in 2016, the patents will be issued within a quota determined by local administration.

The interplay of economic (declining real wages) and administrative factors (more restrictive conditions of residence and employment) had the strongest impact on the group of migrant workers from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan who have been banned from re-entering Russia and either got stranded in Kazakhstan on the way back home or chose the country as an alternative destination for the duration of the Russian ban. While the size of this vulnerable group is not known, the mechanisms of their vulnerability are familiar to officials, experts and practitioners. Unaware of the legal requirements, stranded returnees have at times failed to register their residence within the allotted 5-day period. In turn, while the Uzbek migrants may rely on their extensive and well-established networks, the Tajiks have often lacked such support in the new destination.

Kyrgyzstan's accession to EEU has not removed all the barriers to their effective integration in Kazakhstan. This is attributed firstly to insufficient awareness of the new procedures among both migrants and their employers. Secondly, to be effective, the guarantees of equal access for Kyrgyz nationals to the labour market and to associated social rights need to be further elaborated in the Kazakhstani national legislation and in bilateral agreements.

A review of the conditions for integration of migrant workers in Kazakhstan has established barriers of legal, administrative and sociocultural types. On the legal plane, several key ILO conventions on labour migration as well as a range of technical conventions, regulating various types of labour (domestic work), remain to be ratified.⁵ Some of the guarantees, e.g. legal counsel, cannot be easily used by migrant workers due to a lack of state assistance in this regard (free dedicated services). With regard to the administrative procedures, the State Labour Inspection lacks sufficient competence to undertake unannounced checks on the contractual terms and actual conditions of migrants' employment. Finally, most migrant workers do not seek assistance from either state institutions or local NGOs, preferring to take advantage of their own ethnic support networks. This is a symptom of low sociocultural integration, which is on the one hand a result of poor accessibility and scope of services offered by various providers (see below) and the lack of trust between migrants and the host community (see sociological findings).

Apart from the restrictive terms for legalizing one's status, other issues limiting the opportunities for the socioeconomic integration of Central Asian migrants in Kazakhstan are the accessibility and scope of services offered by various providers. Neither the non-governmental organizations nor private employment agencies, which serve as important intermediaries between the migrants and the authorities and employers, are sufficiently accessible on account of either limited own funds (NGOs) or cost to the migrants (agencies). These shortcomings have frequently been addressed through the involvement of ethnic diasporas, which enjoy migrants' trust and have been successful in maintaining close informal ties with them.

5 See e.g. Conventions No. 97 (Migration for Employment) and 143 (Migrant Workers) or 189 (Domestic Workers Convention).

Kyrgyzstan

In view of the continued labour migration out of the country, the key objective of national migration services has been to protect the rights of Kyrgyz citizens abroad and seek to minimize the impact of re-entry bans. Kyrgyzstan's accession to the EEU was widely expected to be a major step toward improving the position of Kyrgyz migrant workers in Russia. However, the outcome is mixed. On the one hand, under new conditions legally employed Kyrgyz nationals are put on a more solid footing (extension of the registration-free period to 30 days, ability to conclude another work contract in case of termination of previous employment and a range of social guarantees). On the other hand, interviews with experts, officials and migrants reveal that a substantial part of the workers are still employed irregularly as the onset of the economic downturn induced Russian employers to cut costs. A survey, carried out by the State Migration Service of KR between 15 August and 15 September 2015, revealed that in the conditions of reduced income, Kyrgyz migrants in Russia actually feel more vulnerable to such threats as insufficient awareness of their rights, regular police raids and ID checks as well as difficulties in securing registration and delayed wage payments. The Ombudsman reports that Kyrgyz nationals working abroad turn to his office in connection with issues regarding employment, personal documents, rights of migrants' children, "black list", illegal detention, slavery and human trafficking. To address these issues, the Ombudsman's office intends to post its staff in the Russian Federation. The State Migration Service considers providing information and legal assistance in the destination country through opening its representative office as according to its officials only a fraction of migrants bound for a foreign country seek advice of the Service prior to departure.

At the same time, the accession of Kyrgyzstan to the EEU provided a framework for removing a significant part of Kyrgyz migrants from the "black list" and reducing the negative impact of the sanctions. In July 2015 the Russian Federation allowed the re-entry of Kyrgyz nationals banned for three years provided their ban expired in less than 18 months. The grace period that lasted until 1 November 2015 was applicable to over 174,000 Kyrgyz migrants in Russia although data on the actual number of those who made use of the scheme are not available. Nevertheless, the bilateral agreement did not establish a permanent mechanism for terminating the bans, and each new round of amnesties requires re-launching negotiations.

National legislation does not feature "return migrants" as a separate category, but the Laws on External Migration and Internal Migration declare equal access to rights as citizens residing in the country. Although legislation places responsibility for aiding returnees on several state agencies, strategic documents on development and migration management fail to specify dedicated re-integration objectives and measures.⁶ Nevertheless, these documents and key legislative acts contain norms that could form the basis for developing such programmes. Although reintegration of returning nationals is not among the legally specified competencies of the State Migration Service, a representative of the Service expressed interest in undertaking activities in this field on behalf of this institution. An essential step towards a more effective management of migration flows is the creation of a unified system for tracking external migration (ECYBM), which has been under development since 2014.

Migrants who return to Kyrgyzstan from abroad are likely to encounter integration problems similar to those experienced by internal migrants. Interviews with officials suggest that both categories have used available public services to a limited extent due to difficulties in securing residence registration and to low awareness of rights and of employment opportunities. Considering the growth of return migration (as a result of either the re-entry bans or the impact of uncertain economic situation), state activities in job creation need to be intensified – in 2015, out of the total 463,000 recipients of unemployment benefits, around 12,500 persons were provided with jobs and 6,200 undertook public work.

6 National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2013-2017, Program of Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic and Program of Facilitating Employment of the Population and of Regulating External Labour Migration until 2020.

Tajikistan

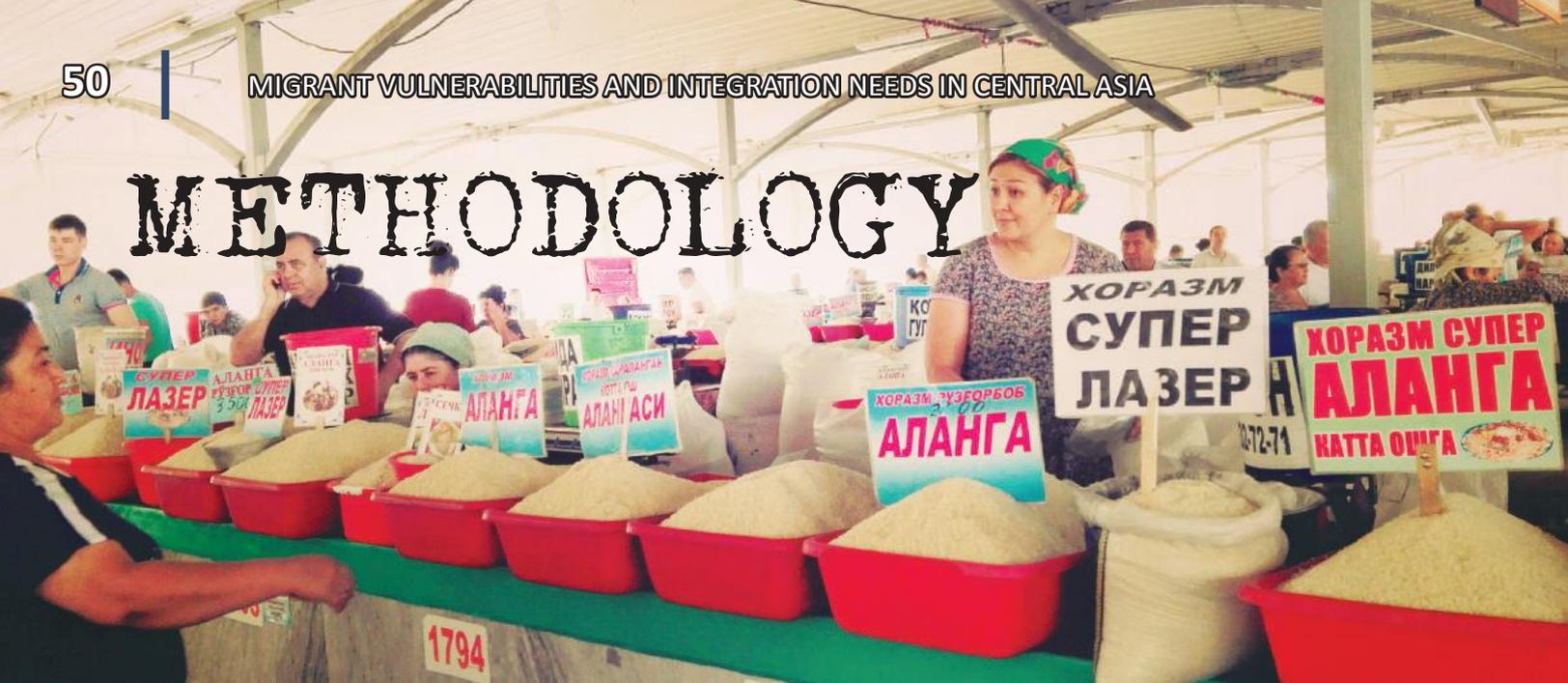
Tajikistan remains outside the Eurasian Economic Union while being a country of origin of a large diaspora in Russia. This position has made it imperative to seek protection of Tajik migrant workers through bilateral arrangements as well as through close collaboration with the diaspora. Under the terms of the Agreement between Tajikistan and Russia, Tajik nationals are exempt from the registration requirement for stays less than 15 days long while according to the Protocol to the Agreement they may be issued work permits for a period of up to three years. Work continues on an additional four bilateral agreements, including on cooperation in labour migration and social security as well as organized recruitment of migrant workers. Tajik authorities are also seeking to prolong the period of application for patents up to 90 days and the standard duration of work permits for up to three years. To facilitate the re-entry into Russia, the joint Tajik-Russian expert group receives applications from certain categories of migrants whose ban expires in less than 18 months and who have a clean criminal record. Besides, five categories of citizens were defined for those who may qualify for a lifting of their ban. By the end of 2015, over 5,000 applicants had been granted permission to re-enter Russia under this procedure.

A crucial component in protecting Tajik migrant workers' rights has been the legal assistance and provision of information, carried out by the representative office of the Tajik Ministry of Labour in the Russian Federation. Good practices include reclaiming migrants' salaries from their employers, contesting unlawful court rulings on various levels and organised employment of migrants, carried out with the support of the Embassy and consular offices of Tajikistan in Russia. The office also cooperates closely with NGOs and Tajik diaspora organizations, running information and awareness-raising campaigns among migrants on the issues of legal stay and labour in the Russian Federation as well as prevention of radicalization of migrant workers. Cooperation with 81 diaspora organizations in Russia has been given a boost through the implementation of the Concept on Engaging Compatriots in the Development of Tajikistan, whose objectives include stimulation of diaspora investment in the national economy and involvement of diaspora organizations in reaching out to migrant workers.

Surveys and interviews with returning migrants indicate that while psychological and sociocultural issues posed problems to a limited number of returnees, economic reintegration proved difficult for the majority. The challenge of securing adequate and stable employment by returning migrant workers has been recognized in the draft National Strategy of Labour Migration of Tajik Citizens for 2016-2020. Key integration issues range from the shortage of vacancies in depressed regions of the country and low wages to limited social assistance. According to a survey, nearly 97% of respondents do not have access to the pension or social security scheme as they either did not contribute to the national fund or their pension capital could not be transferred back home.

Notwithstanding the difficult economic situation, in 2015, over 205,000 jobs were created (9% of which in the public sector). However, the impact on the labour market remains limited as nearly 70% of the new jobs were temporary or seasonal. This may explain the fact that among the 36,292 re-entry banned migrants who returned to the country and registered with the Tajik Migration Service, only 3,692 were officially employed. A major barrier is also the migrants' unfamiliarity with job-creation schemes. Only 21.6% of the surveyed returnees were aware of the existence of state activities in the area of job creation, and only 29.7% of those who knew these programs, made use of them. At the same time, returning migrants proved over time to be more and more capable of securing employment on their own—46.2% of all returnees were employed in Tajikistan in 2015 (compared to 19.1% in 2009).

METHODOLOGY



1. Overall Research Objectives

The methodology was designed to allow for successful data collection on the migrant group under research. Following from the overall objective of the assessment to identify existing vulnerabilities among re-entry banned migrant workers and to establish under what circumstances these socio-economic vulnerabilities could become the grounds for radicalization among the most vulnerable groups, a qualitative and interview-based approach was chosen. Through a combination of expert interviews with government officials, NGOs and researchers who are knowledgeable in the field, and sociological interviews with members of the migrant population under research, the assessment furthermore sought to establish this migrant group's needs for assistance as well as what barriers there have been in providing such support.

Key Research/Assessment Questions

- What is the current and predicted scale of return of re-entry banned migrants to Central Asia?
- How vulnerable are the migrants in terms of legal, economic and social aspects?
- What impact has the application of bans had on the total level of remittances and which categories of migrants have been most affected?
- What are these migrants' life strategies for the duration of the ban period and beyond?
- What assistance is being provided to the re-entry banned migrants in the destination country, in transit and back home? How effective are various forms of assistance?
- What legal, administrative and institutional solutions have been proposed and put into force to minimize the negative impact of the bans?
- What are the implications of the return of re-entry banned migrants on their own socioeconomic and sociocultural situation as well as that of their families, local communities and countries of origin?
- To what extent is the group of re-entry banned migrants vulnerable to religious radicalization? What are the sources and mechanisms of religious radicalism among Central Asian migrant workers? Which groups are most vulnerable to radicalization?

The answers to the above questions were sought through a combination of desk research (legal acts, statistics, available reports and studies) and field research (interviews with officials, experts, NGO staff on the one hand and interviews and focus groups with migrants on the other).

The ultimate objective of the country assessment is to:

1. identify the main trends in the return of migrant workers to the country of origin (in particular, migrants with re-entry bans)
2. assess the level and mechanisms of migrants' vulnerabilities (legal, economic and social) and violations of their rights (exploitation, fraud, trafficking)
3. determine the actual and potential impact of the return on the country of origin (or of transit) with regard to local labour markets, communities and families.

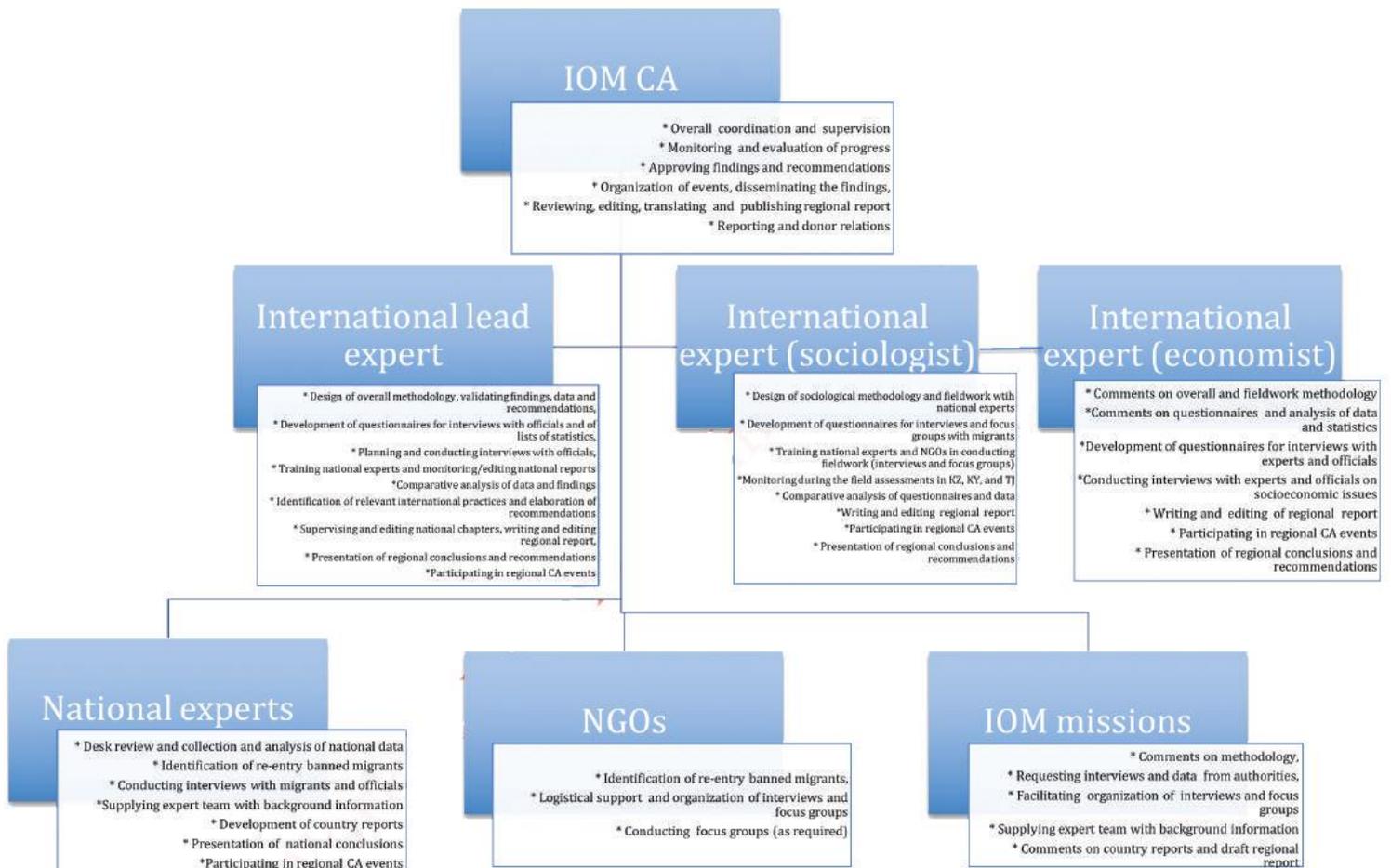
The assessment aims to:

- (a) define the priority areas for in-depth analysis
- (b) provide necessary evidence for elaborating recommendations for legal, institutional and operational changes
- (c) supply necessary legal, statistical and qualitative information for producing regional analysis of the scale, prospects, characteristics, factors and challenges related to the return migration of Central Asian workers.

2. Research Team and Components

The following organizational chart introduces the makeup and structure of the research team. Under the supervision and coordination of the IOM Sub-regional office in Central Asia, the international expert team designed and implemented the sociological, socio-economic and socio-political research components. National experts were tasked with assessing developments on the national level, while IOM country offices facilitated interviews and gave feedback on the overall research progress, and partner-NGOs provided support for the migrant interviews.

Fig. 16. Organization of the Assessment Team



Legal and policy developments (Lead International expert/International and National experts). This component investigates the legal and institutional framework regulating the return and reintegration of migrant workers in their countries of origin in Central Asia. It firstly consists of desk review of existing studies, official reports and other public information, which were subsequently complemented by interviews with officials and requests for references to legal acts and current initiatives. National experts and IOM missions played a key role in identifying respondents for interviews among government officials and in determining the sources required for the study.

Assessment of the scale and economic impact (Lead International expert/international expert Economist). Migrant routes, modus operandi and life strategies were ascertained through reference to existing studies on migration from and through Central Asia. Models of factors and impact were developed on the basis of available indicators, and additional statistics were requested. Particular attention was paid to the estimation of the level of remittances and to other indicators of impact on the well-being of migrants and home communities.

The scale and economic impact of return migration was assessed through analysis of statistics provided by various government bodies, as well as through interviews with relevant government officials and experts. Considering the lack of reliable data on number and composition of returning migrants, the statistics were essential for estimating the scale of the phenomenon and disaggregating it by gender and nationality. In combination with data collected through expert interviews, the statistics furthermore allowed to make a projection of the predicted scale of return migration, especially of re-entry banned migrants. Jointly with available economic and socio-demographic indicators, the statistical data helped to ascertain the socio-economic impact of return for Central Asia's national economies. A further focus of the statistical analysis and expert interviews was the range and effectiveness of various forms of assistance that are being provided to re-entry banned migrants.

Sociological research (Sociologist/International and National experts). Motivating factors influencing migrants' decisions were revealed through a combination of desk review (reference to surveys and existing qualitative studies) and fieldwork. Focus groups and in-depth interviews with migrants were organized in locations identified in consultation with international and national experts and IOM missions.

3. Sociological Research Component

Method

For the research, the *qualitative method* was applied, which helped to identify the characteristics of the target group (vulnerable returning migrants) and determine the types of vulnerabilities affecting this group. The qualitative approach aims at gathering *detailed* aspects of human life using a limited number of strategically sampled respondents through a holistic, deductive process. It helps exploring complex social questions about the vulnerability of migrants in connection with the re- entry bans and broader implications regarding, among others, the risks of radicalization of vulnerable strata of the population. The qualitative approach seeks to explain *why* and *how* certain factors or phenomena are particularly relevant in a certain socio-economic and political context, and for this reason it is considered appropriate for the goals of the present assessment.

Sociological research aims

1. The importance of social networks for resolving issues faced by migrants during their stay abroad and upon return;
2. The place that religious beliefs, practices and institutions occupy in migrants' lives in the country of destination and upon return;
3. The process of elaborating migrant strategies to cope with re-entry bans and other vulnerabilities;
4. The attitudes toward state institutions and legal arrangements.

Individual in-depth interviews with migrants. To address specific vulnerabilities and needs of migrants (in particular, re-entry banned migrants) and to better formulate the scope of discussion during focus groups, individual in-depth interviews were carried out with a sample of 113 migrants in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The interviews helped determine how the re-entry banned migrants manage to rebuild their lives for the period of the ban, and what are their own and their families' plans for immediate future. Migrants were asked about their needs for support, expectations for concrete assistance from state institutions and non-governmental organizations and international donors, and their use of social networks.

Goals of in-depth interviews

1. Identify various kinds of vulnerabilities, to which re-entry migrants are typically subject;
2. Identify the effects of these vulnerabilities on individual and group strategies of migrants;
3. Verify under what circumstances these vulnerabilities might lead to radicalization;
4. Determine possible ways in which radicalization can be defused at an early stage.

Focus Groups: Focus groups were conducted through a questionnaire which was administered by the mediator and his/her assistant. Female focus groups were conducted by women only. The meetings opened with five-minute testimonies from each of the participants, in which they presented their own "personal stories", covering their age, occupation, length of period of their stay abroad, the time since expulsion as well as activities since return and plans for the future. These served to "break the ice" for further targeted discussion of issues, led by the moderator as well as provide brief characteristics of the participants. Depending on the size of the group, this part lasted from 60 to 90 minutes. The questions were posed by the facilitator in an open-ended manner, and only in cases when participants had difficulties coming up with answers or when certain options needed to be explored or verified. They were to be rephrased to match the local realities (e.g. examples of religious activities could be provided) with the help of local experts and IOM missions. As overall noted, the sensitivity of the topics needed to be kept in mind.

The general goal of the focus group is the same as for the individual in-depth interviews. The focus groups, however, used the *perspective of the communities, analyzing group meanings, norms, and practices rather than individual experiences and practices*. Focus groups also allowed observing *what is acceptable within the communities and what is not and the social position of migrants through the eyes of the community*. In other words, focus groups help understand what communities expect from migrants, shedding light on the role of remittances not only in economic terms, but also in a socio-cultural context.

Goals of focus group interviews

1. Understand how migrants build their strategies to migrate, adapt, return and/or face difficulties and situations of risk or high vulnerability
2. Analyze the migrant communities' horizons of expectation in connection with migration and return
3. Assess how migrants are perceived by groups/communities/households
4. Analyze common practices and community meanings in connection with the use of networks, migration, relevant opportunities and dangers
5. Draw paths that lead migrants outside their usual networks and break links with their communities of origin, families and with the communities built abroad and groups' or communities' reactions to such cases.

Interview Locations

Kazakhstan – Interviews were conducted in the capital, Astana, where new cases of re-entry banned migrants were notified by the NGO partner. Additionally, information collected during a short survey among the NGO partners help select other cities covering the southern, western and northern areas of the country where migrants are expected to arrive during the high season to be engaged in agricultural and construction activities (Shymkent and Aktau) and where migrants are transiting through the boarder to reach Russia and might be sent back by the Migration Services (Petrovsk).

Kyrgyzstan – Interviews were conducted in Bishkek (north) and Osh (south). The NGO partner managed to organize interviews and focus groups in their office, scheduling meetings with migrants coming also from rural areas.

Tajikistan – Interviews were taken in three locations with the help of two NGO partners: Farkhor and Kulyab (south) and Tajikobod (east) were selected because of the high presence of re-entry banned migrants and because of the consolidated trust between the community and the NGO.

Fig. 17. Locations of interviews and focus groups with migrants



Sampling

The sampling goal was to match the key qualities of the sample (age, gender, citizenship, and where applicable ethnic origin) with those of the population under study. The proper identification of the characteristics (group profiling) and determination of their vulnerabilities are crucial for undertaking future *quantitative studies* that are much larger in scope.

Characteristics of interviewed migrants

They have a re-entry ban to the Russian Federation;

They have been categorized as vulnerable and needing assistance (legal, social, and/or economic);

Their countries of origin are Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan;

They were transiting through OR have chosen Kazakhstan as a country of destination, OR

They have returned to their home country (Kyrgyzstan or Tajikistan).

The sample has been selected with the aim of reaching the “saturation” point, i.e. the point at which explanations and visions stop emerging from the data. Considering that the qualitative method requires constant questionnaire revision, we have applied an iterative cyclical approach to data collection, sampling, and data interpretation. The team working in the field, consisting of the national experts and the sociologist, reported to the sociologist and the international expert, who guided the team during the field in order to make sure that the same approach was used in data collections and in the analysis in the field. The flexible research design, involving iterative sampling and analysis strategies, encouraged reflexivity and active collaboration within the team, ensuring the collection of a wide range of data.

Variation within the sample was important in order to make sure it included exceptional, *typical* and specific cases. It is for this reason that in-depth interviews were followed up by focus groups: in this way it was possible to consider first individual experiences and cases, then to compare them with the community perspective (which usually provided us with typical cases).

The NGO representatives’ contributions were also taken into consideration because of their specific expertise that enriched the international and national experts’ views and capacity to actively and critically observe. In order to ensure the appropriate support during the interviews and the focus groups, the involved representative/s of the NGO were briefed on the objectives and methods to be applied before starting the field activities.

Age: Focus groups were organized forming groups of predominantly young participants, aged between **18 and 35** with a few participants over **40** years of age (1 or 2). This decision has been taken on the basis of some sociocultural assumptions. Approaching 40 years of age and over, male representatives of traditional societies in Central Asia consider themselves as elderly or on the way to become so and are looking for a stable situation and mostly feel ready to “pass the baton” to younger members of the family and in the meantime they will fulfill their role of heads of the household and wise guides as expected in the traditional family hierarchy. Younger migrants are in the process of building their social position and of negotiating their role inside the household and the community of origin.

Gender: Although migration flows in Central Asia concern predominantly male migrant workers, the female coefficient is growing. At the same time, it is understudied, especially in connection with migration, vulnerability and risks of radicalization.

Tables 2 and 3 show a breakdown of the migrant sample according to the above characteristics.

Table 2. In-depth individual interviews with migrants

Category of respondents	Gender	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan	
Re-entry banned	Male	19	12	28	
	Female	2	8	3	
Re-entry banned assisted by IOM	Male	4	-	-	
	Female	-	-	4	
Vulnerable without re-entry ban	Male	8	9	4	
	Female	1	6	5	
SUB-TOTAL		34	35	44	TOTAL
					113

Table 3. Focus groups and group interviews with migrants

Category of respondents	Gender	Kazakhstan		Kyrgyzstan		Tajikistan	
		Focus Groups (FG)/ Group interviews (GI)	Number of Participants	Focus Groups (FG)/ Group interviews (GI)	Number of Participants	Focus Groups (FG)/ Group interviews (GI)	Number of Participants
Re-entry banned	Male	-	-	1 FG + 1 GI	5 + 7	2 FG	13
	Female	-	-	1 FG	6	-	-
Re-entry banned assisted by IOM	Male	-	-	-	-	1 FG	3
	Female	-	-	-	-	1 FG	4
Vulnerable without re-entry ban	Male	4 GI	17	2 FG	10	-	-
	Female	-	-	1 FG	6	1 FG	6
Mixed (re-entry banned+vulnerable)	Male	1 GI	3	-	-	2 FG	14
	Female	-	-	-	-	2 FG	7
SUB-TOTAL		5 GI	20	6 (5 FG + 1 GI)	34	9 FG	47
TOTAL		FG + GI: 20		Number of participants: 101			

Respondents were identified personally by local NGO representatives they trust and were given an explanation that they will be provided a safe environment in which they will be able to speak freely. It was absolutely essential that the **participants are assured of anonymity of their answers, which was coded through reference to their nationality, country of destination and gender (where relevant)**. The participants were informed of the anonymity guarantee ahead of the interviews. To facilitate the atmosphere of trust, interviews were, whenever possible, run in the native languages of the participants (Tajik, Kyrgyz or Uzbek) or in Russian. The respondents had the choice of the language they wanted to use. As a general rule, notes were not taken so as to encourage openness and build trust with the participants. Translation was provided either by IOM staff who speak the same language as the respondent, or by the NGO representatives who assisted the expert/sociologist. In-depth individual interviews lasted from 1 hour on and no arbitrary time limit was introduced. Also, respondents were guaranteed maximum protection and anonymity and were informed that the data and information collected during the meetings was used for the final report by the researcher who interviewed them and then destroyed.

4. Socio-Economic and Socio-Political Research Component

Interviews with Officials

Table 4. Respondents at state institutions

Institution/category of respondents	Kazakhstan	Kyrgyzstan	Tajikistan
Total	40	17	34
Presidential Administration/Parliament	-	1	4
Ministry of Labour	3	1	2
Ministry of Finance	1	-	-
Ministry of Economy	1	-	1
National Bank	1	-	-
Regional Employment Dept/Center	8	1	4
Ministry of Internal Affairs	1	2	2
Migration Police/Service	3	4	2
Prosecutor's Office	1	1	1
Border Guards	-	1	1
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1	1	1
Agency on Religious Affairs	1	1	2
Ombudsman		1	-
Experts, non-state actors & journalists	19	3	14

Conducting interviews with officials. Standard lists of questions were prepared for interviews with officials. Interviews were carried out by members of the research team following arrangements made by IOM missions and general agreement, expressed during consultations with the respective agencies. The interviews were carried out first in the capital cities with central-level agencies during which arrangements were made for interviews in the regional offices. Interviews concentrated on the awareness of the problems, record of activity of each institution to facilitate socio-economic reintegration and prevent radicalization, the identification of challenges in this area and the determination of specific needs and interests of the agency. Interviews were not recorded, and notes were only taken with permission of the respondents

Conducting interviews with experts and NGOs. Interviews were held by the national experts and the international consultant with experts in cultural and religious issues, in particular in the area of Islam, religious radicalization and with representatives of NGOs directly working to prevent and counter radicalization in the regions of Central Asia or assisting returning migrants in social, cultural or economic aspects of integration. Interviews were not recorded, and notes were only taken with permission of the respondents.

Requesting statistical data from government partners. International experts defined a common set of statistics, which is being collected from government counterparts in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The requests have been made officially by IOM missions to the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, which then administered the collection from the respective government agencies. When collected, the data will be analyzed by the international expert together with the expert team so as to produce comparative cross-country datasets. Analyzing data gathered through statistics and expert interviews will serve to test these hypotheses about the socio-economic impact of return migration that have been developed based on previous research.

List of topics for discussion at interviews with officials

Position on the labour market and re-integration measures (Ministry of Labour/Local employment centres)

- monitoring the socio-economic situation of returning migrants and the dynamics of return migration
- measuring the impact of emigration on the labour markets in the regions of migrants' origin: own reports and studies on the impact of emigration on the national/local labour market
- current and planned initiatives to protect migrants' rights (countering exploitation, fraud, trafficking)
- key problems in re-entry to the local labour market for returning migrants and possible ways of easing the re-entry
- existing measures for facilitating access to the labour market of returning migrants
- Is there a need for additional measures/instruments, which would encourage return/help integration of returning migrant workers?
- What are the most common issues that lead returning migrants to ask for assistance? What groups of returning migrants (age, gender, region, etc.) are most likely to ask for assistance?
- economic situation of migrants' families (impact of lower remittances, migrants' joblessness)

Needs and assistance to returning migrant workers (Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Government Body responsible for contacts with diaspora / Ministry of Economy)

- available statistics on consular registration and assistance rendered to migrants in Russia and other main countries of destination
- main issues of concern, with which the citizens turn in to the embassies and consular offices (Moscow and other main centres of emigration) for assistance
- state priorities in the area of emigration of own nationals, reducing the negative impact of emigration and promoting and facilitating their return.
- legal initiatives and activities of the state administration to maintain ties with the migrant workers abroad, to monitor the socio-economic situation of this group and to defend their rights.
- cooperation on return/expulsion of own and third-country citizens with the Russian Federation authorities (bilaterally)
- What changes has the Eurasian integration brought for the access of citizens to labour and business in RF and how in practical terms it has helped protect their rights in the workplace or in doing business?
- monitoring of entrepreneurial activity among returned migrants
- implemented and/or planned measures and instruments targeting returning migrant: developing entrepreneurship and the creation of small businesses among returned migrants
- assistance provided to returned migrants' small businesses

Migrants' remittances and use of financial services (Ministry of Finance / National Bank)

- dynamics of remittance inflows and outflows: current trends and developments related to the regional economic slowdown
 - projected scale of remittance inflows and outflows according to different scenarios of economic development
 - collection and monitoring of statistical data on migrant remittances with a breakdown by residence, economic sector, sender and beneficiary countries
 - legal and regulatory framework for sending and receiving remittances
 - monitoring of migrants' use of formal and informal remittance transfer channels: nature, trends and volume of formal and informal remittance transfers
-

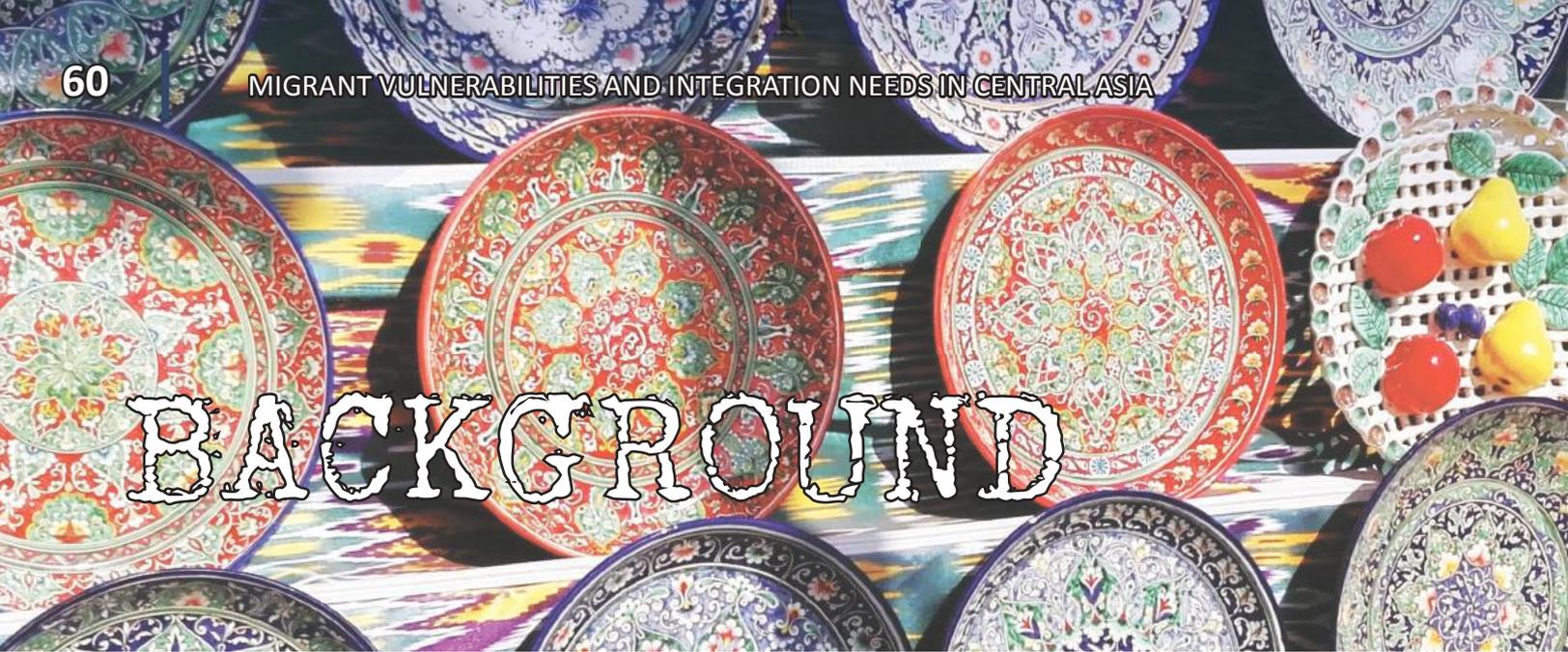
Cultural reintegration and countering religious radicalization (Agency for Religious Affairs / NGOs assisting migrants on socio-economic issues and/or countering radicalization)

- estimating the extent and recent change in the threat of radicalization: rise or decline – possible reasons
- Which regions/localities in the country have been more vulnerable to radicalization-related acts/rhetoric? What could be the reasons?
- Which social groups have been recently most vulnerable to becoming radicalized? Why?
- Who among migrant workers is particularly vulnerable to radicalization? Where and how do they become radicalized?
- application of preventive measures to deal with the threat of extremism/radicalization: trends and lessons learned
- types of activities carried out among the most vulnerable groups – which have been the most effective?
- cooperation with religious/community leaders on preventing and countering of religious extremism

Countering security threats and protecting migrants' rights (Ministry of Internal Affairs / Migration Police / Prosecutor's Office)

- available statistics on reception of persons expelled out of RF
- available statistics on the return and readmission of own and third- country nationals
- available registration and deregistration statistics on the residence and departure of own and third country nationals
- problems in tracing the movement, residence and employment of returning migrants (both own and third-country nationals)
- own competencies and cooperation with other agencies in the field of return and readmission of own and third-country nationals
- current and planned initiatives to protect migrants' rights (countering exploitation, fraud, trafficking)
- possible linkages between return migration and radicalization in the areas of transit and destination of returnees
- own activities and cooperation with other agencies on countering and preventing religious radicalization – recent changes to deal with emerging threats





BACKGROUND

Vulnerabilities of returning and re-entry banned migrants¹

Significance of the issue

Globally, as well as regionally, there has been an increase in complex mixed flows of migrants. Mixed migration flows are more specifically defined as, “complex population movements including refugees, asylum-seekers, economic migrants and other migrants, as opposed to migratory population movements that consist entirely of one category of migrants.”² Most often, these mixed flows involve irregular movements across borders, presenting particular challenges resulting from both protecting the state’s sovereignty to determine the conditions of entry for non-nationals, as well as the vulnerabilities of the migrants themselves, who are more likely to experience violations of their established human rights, as well as experience discrimination and other hardships.³

Many of the Central Asian countries are traditionally countries of origin for individuals migrating; however, as a result of rapidly shifting migration flows throughout the region, almost all countries within the region now face challenges related to being countries of origin, transit and destination. The profile of migrants within the region has become increasingly diverse. Migrants from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan continue to migrate to Russia and, to a lesser extent, Kazakhstan. Meanwhile, an increasing number of migrants attempting to reach Russia are stuck in their home countries or in transit in Kazakhstan because they have been issued a ban on re-entering the Russian Federation due to their irregular status. Almost two thirds of the vulnerable migrants assisted by IOM Kazakhstan between October 2015 and September 2016 were nationals of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan who had been banned from re-entering Russia.

As already noted in the *Mapping on Irregular Migration in Central Asia 2014* report, published by IOM Central Asia, a key challenge to protecting the rights of Central Asian migrant workers is the irregular status of their employment. The establishment of the Eurasian Economic Union, encompassing Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia officially envisions equality of access to the labour markets of its member states to all nationals of the parties. However, studies carried out following the accession of EEU’s newest member suggest that many barriers to effective enforcement of workers’ rights remain. According to a recent survey, the deteriorating economic position in 2015 and insufficient awareness of the new legal regulations exposed many Kyrgyz migrants in Russia actually to various violations of their rights, ranging from regular police raids and ID checks to difficulties in securing residence registration and delayed wage payments.⁴ Reports of the Ombudsman of the Kyrgyz Republic, shared in the course of this assessment in April 2016 also confirmed persistence of significant vulnerabilities, to which Kyrgyz nationals are still subject, and which were not removed in the wake of the country’s accession to the EEU.

1 The section was originally developed by IOM Regional Office in Vienna and Central Asia Sub-regional office in Astana as the brief, „A Comprehensive Approach to Assisting Vulnerable Migrants in Central Asia”

2 IOM (2011), Glossary on Migration 2nd Edition, International Migration Law No. 25, IOM, Geneva

3 For more information on Mixed Flows see IOM (2009), “Irregular Migration and Mixed Flows: IOM’s Approach”, Discussion Note, MC/INF/297, available at http://www.iom.int/jahia/webdav/shared/shared/mainsite/about_iom/en/council/98/MC_INF_297.pdf

4 A survey, carried out by the State Migration Service of KR between 15 August and 15 September 2015. See also section 1.4.8 for details.

Socio-economic factors remain one of the strongest drivers of migration in the region. Lack of opportunities due to the recent economic downturn in Russia as well as changes to the Russian migration law, have put pressure on the current established migration management systems. Demographic and labor trends in the region additionally indicate that Kazakhstan, as mentioned, is increasingly becoming a country of destination and transit for flows of migrants from within the region. Other trends in the region include on-going issues related to the trafficking, smuggling and exploitation of migrants; increased attention to the health of migrants and health risks associated with migration, as well as on-going concerns tied to trafficking in persons in and from the region. As a result, the Central Asian countries are paying increasingly attention to the protection of the human rights of migrants.⁵ As these trends continue, issues that are interrelated with the imperative of upholding the rights of migrants will also gain importance, such as the well-being of migrants, public perception of migrants and migration, and overall social integration and cohesion.

Understanding vulnerabilities

Within the international legal framework, there is no universally accepted definition of vulnerability, nor are there universally agreed upon categories of vulnerable migrants. According to the IOM Glossary in Migration a *vulnerable group* is defined as “any group or sector of society that is **at higher risk** of being subjected to discriminatory practices, violence, natural or environmental disasters, or economic hardship, than other groups within the State; any group or sector of society (such as women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples or migrants) that is at higher risk in periods of conflict or crisis.”⁶ In order to create effective policies and actions that address the specific vulnerabilities of migrants, this very broad definition needs to be further refined within a particular context.

Within the overall migration context, vulnerability is most often defined either within the scope of a **protection framework** or in relation to targeting the specific vulnerabilities of individuals to **prevent human trafficking and exploitation**. Within the Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) context, the concept of ‘vulnerability’ encompasses those “inherent, environmental or contextual factors that increase the susceptibility of an individual or group to being trafficked.”⁷ Such factors could include membership in a particular minority group, gender, lack of legal status, as well as age or diminished physical or mental capacities of a person. This prevention-oriented definition could also be applied further to include other forms of abuse and exploitation that go beyond the definition of THB. On the other hand, within the protection context, vulnerability traditionally relates to those forced migrants that fall within the scope of the 1951 Geneva Convention.

However, more recently, categories of vulnerable migrants requiring protection have begun to be identified that fall outside the intended scope of the convention. These include forced migrants who have fled their home countries for reasons other than those specifically listed in the Convention (e.g. climate change, natural disaster or severe economic or social distress), as well as irregular migrants **whose protection needs may have arisen as a result of their movement, rather than being the cause of it**. Examples of the latter may include migrants who were stranded along their migration route and those who experience physical violence (such as exploitation) along the migration route. Within this view, vulnerability is broadly seen as those aspects that may directly result in a threat to the fundamental human rights of an individual.⁸

5 IOM (2014) “Migration Initiatives 2015, Regional Strategies”, available at http://publications.iom.int/bookstore/free/Migration_Initiatives2015.pdf

6 IOM (2011) Glossary on Migration 2nd Edition, International Migration Law No. 25, IOM, Geneva (emphasis added).

7 UNODC (2013) Issue Paper: Abuse of a position of vulnerability and other “means” with the definition of trafficking in persons, Vienna.

8 UNHCR (2008) Betts, Alexander New Issues in Refugee Research: Towards a ‘soft law’ framework for the protection of vulnerable migrants, Research Paper No. 162.

Vulnerabilities of Central Asian migrants

IOM CA experience suggests that vulnerabilities are context-related and broadly can be seen as resulting from interrelated dynamics that develop along the migration route and in different phases (prior to departure, along the route towards a destination country, inside the destination country, and in the process of crossing the borders or transiting). In the course of IOM CA's sociological assessment, carried out among vulnerable migrants in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan between January and June 2016, it was revealed that the vulnerabilities to which migrants are most prone are inter-related, reflecting their low educational, and economic and social status. The most vulnerable migrants suffer from prolonged material deprivation and unstable jobs, networks that are not always effective and are very likely to live and work abroad under irregular status because of limited knowledge of their rights and of the assistance that could be provided by the State agencies and/or NGOs. A very important aspect is that their irregular status makes them invisible to authorities but easy targets for corrupt officials as well as human traffickers or criminal groups/individuals aiming at exploiting them.

Another recent issue that has significantly impacted the situation of vulnerable migrants from CA regards the re-entry bans to the Russian Federation. Re-entry bans tend to increase the pre-existing vulnerabilities of migrants and have significantly influenced the position of migrant workers in the Central Asian region: re-entry banned CA migrant workers either look for alternative destinations, like for instance Kazakhstan, or forcefully return home. In the process, they might become more vulnerable from the economic, social, and legal point of view, and mechanisms of legal and social protection might be needed for those who are the most affected on the socio-economic level.

Re-entry banned migrants' coping strategies

Some re-entry banned migrants might use their community resources trying to cope with the ban and impossibility to go back to the Russian Federation. Once more, the level of success of the migrant is an important variable. Those with a regular job in the Russian Federation and good relations inside the enlarged family are prone to send a trusted relative to occupy their work place for the whole duration of the ban, with the effect of preserving the relations with the employer and the networks in Russia. Those with limited success and willing to leave to new countries (like for instance Kazakhstan), might do this through mediators, with the high risk of being cheated, and finding themselves irregular and exploited in countries where they lack formal and/or informal networks that might help.

Typical coping mechanisms on the economic level include asking loans from kin, acquaintances or banks to face everyday expenses of the household, or unexpected expenses linked to forced return, as well as selling property acquired through migration (like for instance a land plot, or a car), with consequences on their social and economic status inside the community and the high risk of becoming indebted and dispossessed. Subsistence of the households might be granted by use of occasional, temporary and low paid jobs at home that most often are sufficient only to buy basic need goods. All these factors enhance a sense of frustration and loss of worth among re-entry banned migrants, with consequent withdrawal from their communities. Illegal coping mechanisms, on the contrary, put those migrants at higher risk of further prosecution or trafficking and exploitation. The most typical cases include the use of smugglers or the practice of making new passports with different family names.

Migrants' vulnerabilities and radicalization potential

Linking vulnerabilities and radicalization potential

Among the key concerns of the countries of origin of migrant workers is the challenge of re-integrating them. The process of religious radicalization in this group of migrants makes such re-integration an even more daunting task. Addressing potential radicalization of vulnerable individuals and/or groups, especially migrant workers with re-entry bans who are vulnerable in a variety of aspects (legal, economic and social) presents multifaceted challenges.

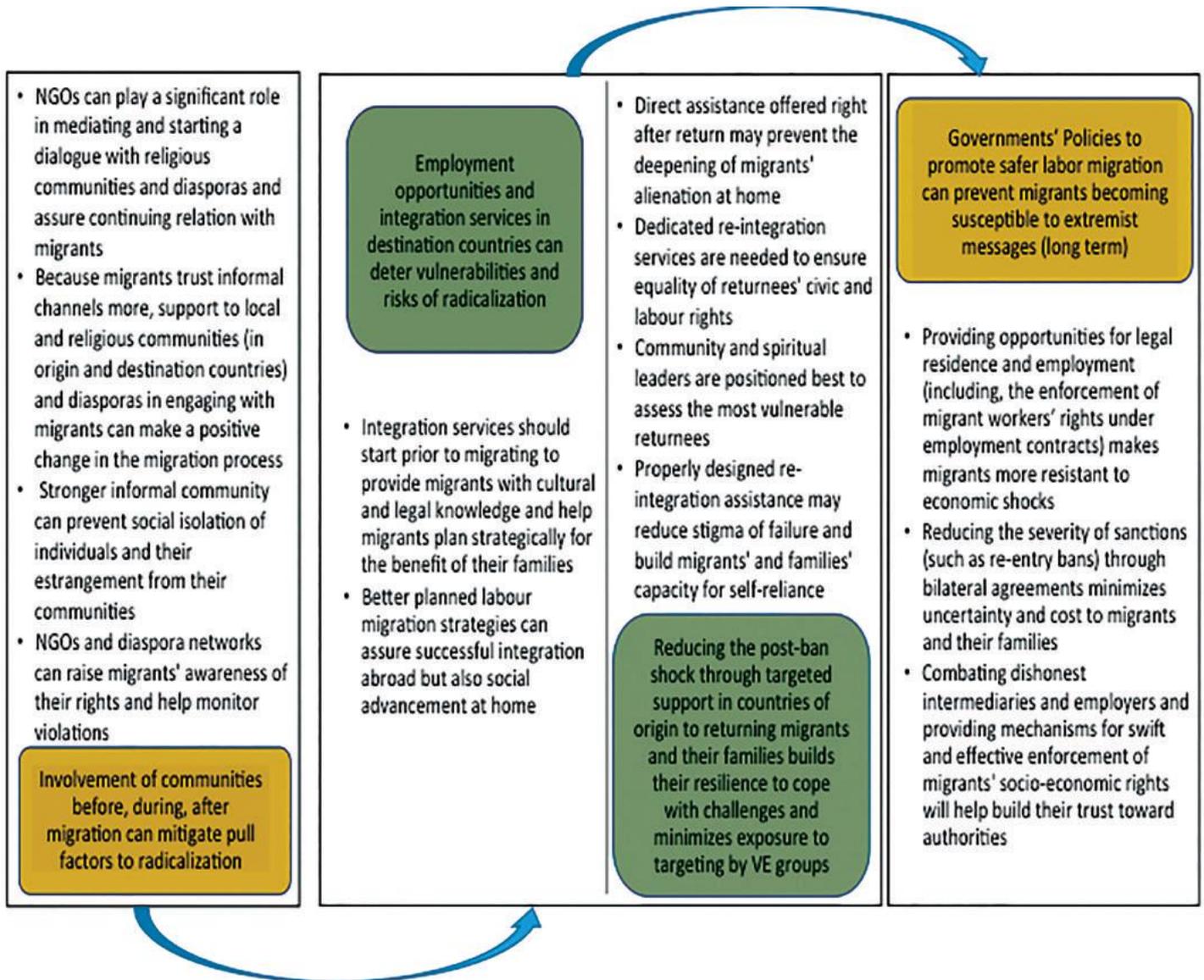
The regional field research/assessment "Migrant vulnerabilities and integration needs in Central Asia: Root causes, social and economic impact of return migration" is a comprehensive effort at exploring in greater depth the nexus between re-entry banned migrants to Russia, socioeconomic factors and migrants' rights, further assessing potential trends on religious radicalization and potentially countering violent extremism through (1) determining the risk factors, triggering the onset of radicalization, (2) identifying the segments of migrant groups and their family members that could be potentially particularly vulnerable to radicalization, and (3) elaborating policy recommendations for building resilience among migrants and their home communities to radical discourse and possible recruitment. In line with IOM's approach to preventing and countering violent extremism (PVE and CVE) and growing body of practice, this assessment seeks to understand trends and address potential drivers of radicalization that are specific to the socio-economic environment, within which Central Asian migrants function.

The assessment acknowledges the need to understand the issue of radicalization in the multidimensional context of migrants' group and individual strategies that serve to overcome various challenges associated with the economic livelihood, legal status, ethnic and cultural identity. The target group of the project, re-entry banned migrants returning to their home countries or seeking new destinations, is subject to a range of vulnerabilities, every one of which may be potentially exploited, when certain factors are triggered by violent extremist groups in their messages aiming at persuading, recruiting and motivating adherents. Identifying the links between these vulnerabilities and possible mechanisms of influence is thus an essential part of prevention activities, which then may help in selecting specific objectives and applying appropriate instruments for assistance.

It needs to be stressed that the report considers the risk of radicalization from the perspective of migrant rights, enshrined in international legal standards. Thus, it understands the importance of providing broad support to migrants on the part of the institutions of both the states of origin, transit and destination, ranging from supplying necessary legal information through socio-economic re-integration to defusing the force of radical messages. IOM global practice shows that these instruments may only be effective when they are carried out in the environment of rule of law and emerging and sustained trust between migrants and state institutions. Thus, throughout the study we seek to demonstrate that to be effective in the long run the de-radicalization activities must involve nuclear families, entire communities and social networks, which have been the main support structures for the Central Asian migrant workers. Through the gradual development of trust and cooperation, these activities may actually provide a "triple win" for the migrants, their communities and the states.

At the outset of the assessment, a framework of vulnerabilities has been adopted, in which migrants' radicalization potential may be reduced through addressing their socio-economic needs at all stages of migration (Fig. 18). According to the "theory of change", worked out by USAID and IOM Central Asia and applied by the assessment team, establishing relations with the most vulnerable categories of migrants and developing trust with them at an early stage (preceding departure and continuing in migration) are essential elements of long-term prevention strategy. Such strategy must involve community and diaspora networks, which enjoy migrants' trust, and it needs to be tailored to match the specific vulnerabilities of various categories of migrants (women, youth, economically disadvantaged groups).

Fig. 18. "Theory of change" underlying the assessment



Source: USAID/IOM Central Asia

The framework is built on the premise that by early detection and adequate response to specific socio-economic vulnerabilities (legal, economic and social) affecting returning migrants and their families, the potential for their radicalization may be significantly and durably lowered. It identifies three vital entry points for intervention: (1) establishing and maintaining contact with the vulnerable individuals and groups through ongoing support from NGOs and diaspora organizations, (2) the design and implementation of dedicated services for these groups to facilitate their socio-economic integration in destination countries and re-integration upon return to the home community, and (3) putting in place procedures for regularizing the status and effective enforcement of migrants' rights. Assistance to the vulnerable groups needs to be preceded at all stages with the identification of specific vulnerabilities, elaboration of matching measures and raising awareness of the beneficiaries about their entitlements and procedures for enforcing their rights.

Radicalization of Central Asian migrants: preliminary statement of the problem

Since mid-2014 various news reports and studies have connected the issue of religious radicalization, exemplified most strongly by the rise of Daesh⁹ (ISIS, aka “the Islamic State”), with the flows of migrants from Central Asia. In November 2014 a report by the Moscow-based National Strategy Institute claimed that there are “symptoms indicating that the Islamist threat is being fueled with external migration”, pointing to Central Asian migrants as the “main contingent for recruiting newcomers into the radical Islamist groups”.¹⁰ Migrant workers from Central Asia were also identified as “just waiting for a signal to attack”, constituting the main terrorist threat to Russia by Yevgeny Satanovsky, the president of the Moscow Institute of the Near East.¹¹

Such statements soon were followed by preliminary reports, investigating the link in more depth and seeking to identify the causes and mechanisms of alleged radicalization of migrants from Central Asia. It must be admitted that there was no agreement on the key aspects of the problem: the scale, root causes, modalities and threat assessment of the phenomenon. On the one hand, the International Crisis Group’s office in Bishkek issued a policy brief in January 2015, in which it argued on the basis of interviews with experts and officials and review of available statistics that up to 4,000 Central Asian *ihadists* may have left for Daesh (ISIS) and that the return of a significant portion of them to the region might risk “challenging stability and security throughout Central Asia”.¹² These claims were put to criticism by two Chatham House experts who were skeptical about the notion of “radicalization” with regard to Central Asian migrants, arguing that “an unknown but relatively small number of ‘radicalized’ Central Asians are in Syria as part of a global phenomenon” rather than as representatives of some long-standing regional movements.¹³ In their own report, published in November 2014, they had exposed the notion of “radicalization in Central Asia” as a “myth”, concluding that “there is little evidence to support the idea”.¹⁴

In the following months of 2015, search for evidence supporting or refuting the alleged link between Central Asian migration and radicalization continued. Two Warsaw-based think tanks published several reports on the subject. The Polish Institute of International Affairs released in June a comparative assessment of the scale of Daesh (ISIS) recruitment in Central Asia and some major regions of origin of foreign fighters in Syria. Acknowledging that a number of factors could potentially induce Central Asians to join the *ihad*, the authors of the study concluded that the five countries of the region “so far have not become an area of interest for Daesh (ISIS), although that may change”. The report investigated also the factors that might induce Central Asian citizens to embark on migration for radical purposes, noting that poverty was not a sufficient motive, but that “social exclusion and poor religious education” were at play as well.¹⁵

Another comprehensive report on the subject was issued by the Center for Eastern Studies in Warsaw in September 2015.¹⁶ In the *Homo Jihadicus* study, the researchers argue that the issue of the departures of *ihad* fighters from the area of former USSR “is being overestimated”. Although they warn that the “questions of combat emigration or Islamic fundamentalism” remain relevant, they believe that the flow is not significant and is rather limited to a relatively small number of radicalized individuals. In their view, Central Asian states are not yet integrated into the Islamic *umma* but rather maintain the strongest cultural, social and economic ties with the region of the former USSR—primarily Russia.

9 “al-Dawla al-Islamiya fil Iraq wa al-Sham” - Arabic language acronym of Daesh terrorist organization

10 National Strategy Institute (2014), *Migration as Challenge to the National Security of Russia*, Moscow, cited in: L. Alexandrova, „Migrants from Central Asia bring radical Islam to Russia”, ITAR-TASS, 5 November 2014.

11 P. Goble, „Central Asian Labor Migrants Guided by Middle Eastern States Now Main Terrorist Threat to Russia, Satanovsky Says, The Interpreter, 15 December 2014.

12 International Crisis Group (2015), *Syria Calling: Radicalisation in Central Asia*, Bishkek.

13 J. Heathershaw, D. Montgomery (2015), „Who Says Syria’s Calling? Why It Is Sometimes Better to Admit That We Just Do Not Know”, CEDAR Network.

14 J. Heathershaw, D. Montgomery (2014), *The Myth of Post-Soviet Muslim Radicalization in the Central Asian Republics*, Russia and Eurasia Programme, Chatham House.

15 A. Dwyer, A. Legiec, K. Rekawek (2015), *Ready to Go? ISIS and Its Presumed Expansion into Central Asia*, Policy Paper No. 19 (121), Polish Institute of International Affairs.

16 M. Falkowski, J. Lang (2015), *Homo Jihadicus. Islam in the Former USSR and the Phenomenon of Post-Soviet Militants in Syria and Iraq*, Center for Eastern Studies.



In sum, previous research has shown that returning migrants who are subject to re-entry bans in Russia form a vulnerable population that faces serious challenges with regard to reintegration in their country of origin. Existing studies, however, have treated the issue of religious radicalization among returning migrant workers separately from the broader question of socio-economic reintegration. The IOM CA field (rapid) assessment, based on interviews with officials, experts, and migrants, has concluded that there is a need for more detailed research on the nexus between re-entry banned migrants, socio-economic integration and religious radicalization, and the regional field assessment will serve to shed light on these issues.

Conceptualizing the link: results of IOM preliminary assessment

The field (rapid) assessment acknowledged the limitations in knowledge of the issue, evident in the literature on the subject. Firstly, most researchers until now had tackled the question from the security or geopolitical perspective, largely ignoring the broader context of existing migratory flows and motives influencing continued migration both out of the Central Asian region and within the region's frontiers. Secondly, the focus of the studies had been on the scale and root causes of the phenomenon itself and little attention was given to the activities carried out within the region to counter radicalization. Finally, the reports on the whole did not (with the notable exception of *Syria calling*) feature extensively the regional perspective, which would require giving adequate voice to national experts.

All these shortcomings were taken into account when carrying out the field (rapid) assessment. Firstly, the motive of religious radicalization was treated as one of the various factors influencing migration through and out of Central Asia, and a balance was sought between the socio-economic factors (highlighting the impact of currency devaluation and re-integration problems faced by returning migrants) and the socio-cultural factors on the role that religious convictions as well as conscious recruitment strategies could play in the process. Next, the format of open-ended interviews used in focus groups and face-to-face interviews, carried out anonymously, helped to identify some good practices and challenges in the anti-radicalization activities, implemented in various regions of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Finally, the assessment was done in such a way as to let the local national experts on the subject of religious radicalization offer a variety of explanations and suggest hypotheses, which were later confronted with the positions of other respondents. This approach enabled the team to acknowledge a broad range of views while seeking to produce a coherent line of argument.

The assessment revealed a number of vulnerabilities to which migrants might be prone. Preliminary findings of the study established that despite the alleviation of the impact of sanctions towards some categories of migrants (most notably nationals of Kyrgyzstan), the combination of the more stringent rules for entry and exit from the Russian Federation, the devaluation of the rouble and the contraction of the Russian economy might put strong pressure on some Central Asian migrants to return to the region. While most Kyrgyz and Tajik migrants still do not consider Kazakhstan as an alternative location, interviews with Uzbek migrant workers indicate that a number of them might choose Kazakhstan as a new destination, at least temporarily.

Interviews with experts on religious radicalization indicate that, while migrants returning to Central Asia as a whole are not a target group for radical propaganda, some of the Central Asian migrant workers may be more vulnerable. Interviews with experts lead us to conclude that the threat of radicalization is higher among those migrants who are individually mobile and no longer associated with the members of their home community. Radicalization among migrants may be determined by the combination of the change in their own beliefs/worldview and a stimulating environment in which radicals occupy positions of authority and pursue certain recruitment strategies. While experts agree that there is little immediate security threat emanating from the return of radicalized migrants to Central Asia, there is a concern that the agenda of global jihad might become intertwined with those of existing radical groups operating in Central Asia and Afghanistan. Interviews with officials in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan have revealed a number of good practices for countering radicalization, including the raising of quality of religious education, awareness-raising activities targeting the most vulnerable groups, and sanctions against persons with links to Daesh (ISIS) or other extremist/radical groups.

Return migration and sustainable development

Conceptualizing the socio-economic impact of return migration

This section proposes a view of the socio-economic impact of return migration, starting from a definition of the key terms and concepts, and a summary of major scholarly insights on the impact of return migration on development and offering some good international practices aiming to maximize its positive impact. Return migration is defined as “movement of a person returning to his or her country of origin or habitual residence usually after spending at least one year in another country”.¹⁷ Return, however, might not be followed by permanent settlement in the migrant’s country of origin, and various scenarios can follow the return that holds different implications for its socio-economic impact. Return can be temporary or definitive, it might be followed by migration to a third country, or it could be one step in the process of circular or seasonal migration that is especially prevalent among Central Asian migrants. **Measuring** the extent of return migration is often difficult because many countries do not gather data on exits and returns, and the lack of statistics on return migration has been a main impediment for research on the subject. Even in cases like Russia, where authorities gather statistics on migrant inflow and outflow, this ratio is a poor approximation of actual return rates because they do not necessarily relate to the same individuals. The impact of return can be defined as the sum of the material and immaterial resources migrants transmit before and during their return. These remittances can be economic, social as well as political. While the direct impact of **economic remittances** has received by far the most attention by policy makers, and its impact on development has been widely analyzed, **social remittances** in the form of the transfer of skills, aspirations and ideas, and **political remittances** as the transfer and diffusion of ideologies through migration also play an important role for socio-economic development, and promise potential benefits to be reaped as well as challenges that need to be addressed through effective migration policy.

The socio-economic impact of return migration depends both on the **groups** that return predominantly, and on their **reasons** for return. A comprehensive study on return migration conducted by the OECD has shown that return rates by level of education produce a U-curve: Rates are generally higher at both ends of the skill spectrum, i.e. both high- and low-skilled migrants are much more likely to return from extended spells abroad than the average-skilled.¹⁸ Especially during an economic downturn such as the current one in Russia, it is likely that the return rates among low-skilled migrants will be highest because they are employed in the most precarious jobs. The same OECD study has found that the impact of migrants’ return depends on the reasons for their coming back to their country of origin. If migrants have to leave before their migration goals have been accomplished or because their migration project has failed, as is the case with many re-entry banned and administratively expelled Central Asian migrants, they are likely to incur difficulties with re-integration upon return. An earlier study on the socio-economic re-integration of Tajik migrants who have received re-entry bans to Russia has shown that this group is particularly vulnerable due to their difficulties of finding work on the domestic labor market and the suspension of remittances as the source of their and their families’ livelihood.¹⁹

Taking these variables into consideration, it follows that the relationship between socio-economic development and return migration is not a straightforward one. Although high levels of development usually lead to fewer people migrating because they enable them to find employment closer to home, research has shown that increasing development initially leads to more migration because more and more people have the funds available to make the move.²⁰ Any form of sustained economic growth in developing Central Asian countries, particularly Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, is thus likely to lead to increasing rates of emigration. Development and migration are in a reciprocal relationship: For low-income countries such as Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, economic development through migration is likely to lead to rising emigration rates because people’s capabilities and aspirations to migrate

17 IOM (2011), “Glossary on Migration”, 2nd ed., p. 46.

18 OECD (2009) „Return Migration: A New Perspective“, International Migration Outlook. Available from: <http://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/43999382.pdf>

19 Alexander Maier (2014) “Migrants with Re-Entry Bans to the Russian Federation”, IOM Dushanbe.

20 Castles, Miller and de Haas (2013) “The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World”, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

increase, and strong migration networks between country of origin and country of destination reduce the risks and costs of moving and make it easier for aspiring migrants to find employment and accommodation.

If this trend toward increasing emigration falters, such as is now the case with the economic downturn in Russia and the introduction of stricter migration policies vis-à-vis many Central Asian citizens, the potential for economic development is likely to come under strain. Due to the dependency of many households in particular in rural parts of Central Asia and the high share of remittances of the GDP in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and, to a lesser degree, Uzbekistan, the socio-economic impact of return migration is thus likely to be negative, especially in the period immediately following the increase of return. Rising return rates, although they bring with them an economically productive population with new and improved skills, might have an impeding effect on development because returnees are economically less successful at home where they do not have the same access to the labor market as abroad, and where many of their skills cannot be applied because of lacking infrastructure and a suboptimal economic climate. It is thus probable that high rates of return in the wake of the continuing Russian economic crisis and the introduction and widespread application of re-entry bans will have a negative socio-economic impact if structural economic problems that are not within the purview of returning migrants are not addressed by Central Asian countries. There is furthermore a risk that returnees who have been exposed to extremist ideologies during their stay abroad might embrace an extremist cause at home as a result of their socio-economic vulnerability and lack of opportunities that cause frustration.

Several policy implications result from this. Countries of emigration have tried to actively attract migrants to return from abroad, but it is doubtful if such measures will be successful in the Central Asian case. A study on re-entry banned migrants from Tajikistan has shown that the overwhelming majority of respondents wished to return to Russia as soon as possible, and it is thus unlikely to be effective to target migrants abroad to return.²¹ Rather, focused measures aiming at the reintegration of returned migrants should be at the core of a targeted policy response. Providing assistance to unemployed and vulnerable migrants who were unable to realize their migration projects because of re-entry bans or lack of economic perspective in their country of destination should have highest priority in order to ensure a positive impact of these migrants' return. Many of them return with improved and new skills that they earned while working abroad, and vocational trainings and certification systems are an internationally well-established and successful way to harness this potential. Thailand and Bangladesh have created government agencies that oversee skill development and assessment, and specifically target returned migrant workers in order to ease their entry into the local job market through the recognition of prior learning.²² Especially in a context where a large part of remittances and savings are spent on household consumption, and income-generating investments are rare, more sustainable measures that help to match returnees' skills with labor market needs promise to be effective, but require a resolute policy response on the part of Central Asian countries. Socio-economic reintegration is furthermore key for a positive impact of return migration because returnees' vulnerability could make them prone to entering Russia irregularly with the help of smugglers or take up irregular employment. Using reintegration programs as a means to prevent irregular migration should be coupled with an effort to support migrants in finding employment in countries other than Russia, such as for example Kazakhstan. The lack of widespread migration networks outside Russia calls for the coordinated effort of Central Asian countries to establish organized recruitment programs, and especially the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union should work to collaborate on this issue in order to profit from the freedom of movement of labor that is one of the treaty's core tenets.

21 Maier, op.cit.

22 International Labour Organization (2014) "Skilling the workforce: Labour migration and skills recognition and certification in Bangladesh", ILO Country Office for Bangladesh. Available from: http://www.ilo.org/dhaka/Whatwedo/Publications/WCMS_304402/lang-en/index.htm

OECD (2012) "Harnessing the Skills of Migrants and Diasporas to Foster Development: Policy Options", OECD and French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Available from: http://www.oecd.org/migration/Policy_Brief_Migrants_En_BD_DEFINITIF.pdf

Stella P. Go (2012) "The Philippines and Return Migration: Rapid appraisal of the return and reintegration policies and service delivery", International Labour Organization. Available from: http://www.junima.org/resources/pdf/2_Philippines_and_Return_Migration.pdf

SDGs and Migrants' Rights

Nowadays migration reached the top of global agenda. In September 2006, the General Assembly hosted the first ever in its history High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD).²³ The Dialogue set the series of state-led, voluntary and non-binding Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)²⁴ where issues related to effective management of migration contributing to development are discussed. The GFMD is hosted by developed and developing, origin and destination states, which reveals high interest in the topic from the side of all nations.

In October 2013, the General Assembly's 68th Session hosted the second HLD titled "Making Migration Work".²⁵ It adopted the Declaration on International Migration and Development.²⁶ The document in its first section states: "... international migration is a **multidimensional reality** of major relevance for the development of origin, transit and destination countries, and in this regard recognize that international migration is a **crosscutting phenomenon that should be addressed** in a coherent, comprehensive and balanced manner, **integrating development** with due regard for social, economic and environmental dimensions and **respecting human rights**"²⁷ (emphasis added). The second HLD served as the illustration of the global recognition of the relation between migration, development and human rights.

In the same year, the group of leading international organizations working in the area of migration²⁸ called Global Migration Group joined their forces to propose integrating migration into the post-2015 UN Development Agenda²⁹ and agreed to a concrete set of actions to be fulfilled. With the support of the GFMD, a number of related targets were included under the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) replacing the Millennium Development Goals.³⁰ Human rights of migrants, their protection and implementation take an important place there, too, and are linked closely with development.

SDGs consist of 17 goals and 169 targets aimed towards the enhancement of development and reduction of poverty.³¹ IOM identifies nine goals that have direct links to migration and a number which have strong relevance to migration. There are Goal 4 and its Target 4.b. on students' mobility and scholarships, Goal 5 and its Target 5.2. gearing towards prevention of trafficking in human beings. The rights of migrant workers are mentioned in Goal 8 and its Target 8.8. Furthermore, Goal 10 and its Target 10.7. focus on well managed migration policies and migration governance. Together with its partners, IOM has developed the Migration Governance Indicator (MGI) to support states in measuring progress in reaching this target. Goals 16 and 17 and their Targets gear towards improvement of migration related data, ending trafficking, enhancing partnerships, etc. and present important basis for ensuring and measuring the extent to which migrants' rights are guaranteed and fulfilled.³²

23 United Nations General Assembly, High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, 14 – 15 September 2006: <http://www.un.org/esa/population/migration/hld/> (last accessed 17 February 2014).

24 Global Forum on Migration and Development: <http://www.gfmd.org/> (last accessed 23 July 2015).

25 Detailed information on High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development: "Making Migration Work": <http://www.un.org/en/ga/68/meetings/migration/> (last accessed on 17 February 2015).

26 United Nations General Assembly, Declaration of the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, A/68/L.5, 1 October 2013.

27 *Ibid*, section 1.

28 18 International Agencies formed Global Migration Group the purpose of which is "...to promote the wider application of all relevant international and regional instruments and norms relating to migration, and to encourage the adoption of more coherent, comprehensive and better coordinated approaches to the issue of international migration", more information can be found on GMG's official webpage: <http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/> (last accessed on 26 February 2015).

29 See more details in Global Migration Group (GMG), "Integrating migration in the post-2015 UN Development Agenda, Position Paper", 2013: <http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/sites/default/files/uploads/news/GMG-position-paper-Migration-and-post-2015-Development-Agenda.pdf> (last accessed on 25 February 2015).

30 United Nations Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, available on <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/> (last accessed on 20 August 2015).

31 Please see <https://unmissionny.iom.int/2030-agenda-sustainable-development> for the list of all SDGs.

32 As per International Organization for Migration, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, How Migration is Reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: <https://unobserver.iom.int/2030-agenda-sustainable-development> (last accessed 26 September 2016).

There are several goals which have significant relation to migration. For instance, Goal 1 is meant to end poverty and its Target 1.5. is focusing on building resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduction of their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters. Goal 3 gears towards healthy live and well-being of all, including migrants, Goal 11 towards making cities and human settlements inclusive, resilient and sustainable and Goal 13 envisages action to combat climate change and its impacts.³³ All mentioned Goals are relevant to the development and migration situation in Central Asia.

Fig. 19. Migration in the SDG framework

HOW MIGRATION IS REFLECTED IN THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



As stated by the Resolution adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development “[t]he new Agenda is guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including full respect for international law. It is grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights treaties, the Millennium Declaration and the 2005 World Summit Outcome. It is informed by other instruments such as the Declaration on the Right to Development”.³⁴ The Resolution further underlines the importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments relating to human rights³⁵ and emphasized “... the responsibilities of all States, in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, to respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status”.³⁶

33 Ibid.

34 UN General Assembly, Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, A/RES/70/1, 21 October 2015, paragraph 10.

35 Ibid, paragraph 19.

36 Ibid, paragraph 19.

There are a number of other references underlining the link between the international law and the SDGs. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights emphasized in many instances how strongly human rights are reflected in SDGs. This especially concerns economic, social and cultural rights for which the SDGs serve as an ultimate objective. A number of initiatives were taken to link existing goals and targets with the concrete provisions of the international human rights and other international law instruments.³⁷ Furthermore, the indicators for the goals and targets are being developed both on international and national level, which would assist the states in meeting them and evaluate success.³⁸

The Governments of the Member States of the Almaty Process, based on their commitments to the SDGs, may pay attention to the importance of inclusiveness of migrants alongside all other categories of population into development process and labour market, support small and medium business opportunities, assurance of social cohesion and participation, access to education and highest achievable level of health services as well as all other economic, social and cultural rights. This becomes a crucial aspect contributing not only into the re-integration but also into prevention of radicalization and criminalization of migrants facing re-entry bans or coming back to the countries of their origin.

Practical mechanisms through which migrants will be able to protect their human, labour, migration related and other rights, access to state support and assistance are very important. The availability and functioning of such rights-protection mechanisms would help states meeting their international commitments and Goals outlined in 2030 Development Agenda. Another important factor relates to the rights-based approach in development of corresponding legislation and policy in the area of migration and mainstreaming migrants' rights into development and other states policies.

International Migration Law and Rights of Migrants³⁹

Human mobility has grown considerably within the last couple of decades. People are moving between countries in search of employment, business opportunities, education, protection, settlement, etc. All the stakeholders in the area of migration and primarily the states, recognizing the need for effective migration governance, are coming to understand the importance of the international legal framework that sets the standards for national systems. For many years migration has been considered solely an internal issue falling almost entirely under state sovereignty. Now, when many countries share similar migration challenges, when migration becomes a recognized factor of development and economic growth, there is growing understanding of the need to cooperate, coordinate and interact. This in turn raises the question of a common basis, i.e. international standards on which the relation and cooperation can be built.

The international law in the area of migration plays a key role in setting these standards. It is quite challenging to define it and put its boundaries as it lies in the branches of many international laws. This legal framework is referred to as "international migration law" (IML). One of the recent definitions of the IML states that "[it is] an umbrella term for the complex web of legal relationships among persons, groups and States that together regulate the movements of individuals. It is a branch of law that has developed over time and, indeed, continues to develop with the ever-increasing need for international cooperation and regulation involving States, migrants and international civil society in general".⁴⁰

37 For instance see The Danish Institute for Human Rights, Human Rights Guide to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): <http://www.humanrights.dk/our-work/sustainable-development/human-rights-sdgs> (last accessed 26 September 2016).

38 Please see Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators: <http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/> (last accessed on 26 September 2016).

39 This section was written by Vassiliy Yuzhanin, IOM Regional Office in Vienna

40 Opeskin, Perruchoud, Redpath-Cross (2012), "Foundations of International Migration Law", Cambridge University Press, p. 6.

IOM developed a Compendium of IML Instruments⁴¹ that provides an extensive list of instruments regulating migration. They are coming from a number of international legal sources: human rights, international labour law, nationality and statelessness, transnational criminal law, international maritime law, state security, detention, diplomatic and consular law, international trade law, development, minorities, international refugee law, internally displaced persons and international humanitarian law. However, the above list is neither exhaustive nor comprehensive⁴² and other legal sources may well be added. One can therefore conclude that IML may include the norms and provisions of all international law that relates to migration, evidently also including regulations coming from business law, business and human and labour rights law.

International human rights law, one of the sources of the IML, acquires particular importance for the protection of migrants' rights. According to key human rights instruments and primarily the two Covenants, one on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the other on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), states are required to extend all rights without discrimination to all individuals under their jurisdiction⁴³; hence to migrants too. Therefore, as a general rule all human rights apply to migrants. Similar to the human rights instruments that relate to specific categories such as women⁴⁴ and children⁴⁵, and which require states to take additional steps in protecting the rights of such groups, there is a specialized instrument – the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) that specifies in detail the human rights. The instrument sets the standards or emphasizes the existing ones in detail in areas of particular importance to migrants: documentation, employment, detention and expulsion.

Further, international labour law, represented mainly by ILO conventions, sets the standards for work and social policy, and these standards apply to migrant workers as well. One can mention, for instance, freedom of association and protection of the right to organize⁴⁶, collective bargaining⁴⁷, abolition of forced labour⁴⁸, establishment of minimum age of admission to work⁴⁹, equal remuneration⁵⁰, prevention of discrimination in employment and occupation.⁵¹

Two conventions that directly relate to migrants are: the Convention (C) 97 Migration for Employment⁵² and C143 Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention.⁵³ The first concerns only migrant workers who legally stay in the country. It supposes treatment of migrant workers equally with nationals of the destination country with regard to wages, working conditions, trade union rights, social security, etc. The Convention provides rights for accommodation, and also rights to apply to courts and tribunals. It is supplemented with Recommendation 86 that includes a sample bilateral agreement concerning labour migration. C143 concerns migrants in irregular situation

41 Perruchoud, Tomolova (2007), "Compendium of the International Migration Law Instruments", International Organization for Migration, T.M.C. Asser Press.

42 Ibid, Introduction.

43 Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, G.A. res. 2200A (XXI), 21 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 16) at 52, U.N. Doc. A/6316 (1966), 999 U.N.T.S. 171, entered into force March 23, 1976 and Article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, G.A. res. 2200A (XXI), 21 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 16) at 49, U.N. Doc. A/6316 (1966), 993 U.N.T.S. 3, entered into force January 3, 1976.

44 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, G.A. res. 34/180, 34 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 46) at 193, U.N. Doc. A/34/46, entered into force September 3, 1981.

45 Convention on the Rights of the Child, G.A. res. 44/25, annex, 44 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49) at 167, U.N. Doc. A/44/49 (1989), entered into force September 2, 1990.

46 C87, Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention (No. 87), adopted in San Francisco, 31st ILC session, 09 July 1948, entered into force 04 July 1948.

47 C98, Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention (No. 98), adopted in Geneva, 32nd ILC session, 01 July 1949, entered into force 18 July 1951.

48 C29, Forced Labour Convention (No. 29), adopted in Geneva, 14th ILC session, 28 June 1930, entered into force 01 May 1932.

49 C138, Minimum Age Convention (No. 138), adopted in Geneva 58th ILC session, 26 June 1973, entered into force 19 June 1976.

50 C100, Equal Remuneration Convention (No. 100), adopted in Geneva, 34th ILC session, 29 June 1951, entered into force, 23 May 1953.

51 C111, Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention (No. 111), adopted in Geneva, 42nd ILC session, 25 June 1958, entered into force 15 June 1960.

52 C97, Migration for Employment, 1949, (No. 97), adopted in Geneva, 32nd ILC session, 01 July 1949, entered into force 22 January 1952.

53 C143, Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, adopted in Geneva, 60th ILC session, 24 January 1975, entered into force 09 December 1978.

too and protects their fundamental human rights. The Convention protects the rights related to previous work and recognizes the right to wages despite of being employed in violation of local legislation. C143 examines the principle of equality with nationals of the countries of employment.

While having wide discretion to define who qualifies to be a national, states are allowed to make differences between them and non-nationals. It is possible if differences serve legitimate objectives and are proportional to reach these objectives⁵⁴ In some cases international law also provides fewer rights to migrants than to the nationals of the country of destination. As an example, one can take the limitation of the right to enter and remain.⁵⁵ The same applies to the right of settlement. Despite the fact that regular migrants have access to procedural rights against expulsion, there is still no obligation on a state to keep a non-national on its territory.⁵⁶ There are even more divisive lines between regular and irregular migrants. The latter have limited access to procedural rights for not to be expelled from the territory of a country.⁵⁷ They will not be able to enjoy the full extent of certain rights like to move freely and choose the place of residence within the territory of a state.⁵⁸

On the national level, states go even further and migrants are often divided into short and long term. Depending on the category, states and employers choose to allocate more or less rights related to family unification, and access to social, economic and other rights. States often restrict certain rights depending on the skills of a migrant worker, such as for instance access to labour market and duration of stay. In addition to common grounds for detention applicable to all, migrants may also be detained because of their immigration status or lack thereof. Migrants may depend on employers for their right to choose the place of work, quit from work or even depart.

While there are limitations on the rights of states to expel non-nationals, such as the principle of *non-refoulement* applicable to refugees⁵⁹, or people under threat of torture⁶⁰, the principle of the best interest of the child⁶¹, a lot of jurisprudence illustrating how individual right of a person may supersede a state's right in the area of admission or expulsion in certain circumstances⁶², international hard law regulating states' authority in this area is quite limited. The same applies to the regulation of sojourn and detention.

This is a starting point of legal vulnerability of migrant workers, which comes with immigration status as one of the factors leading to precarious work and exploitation. This vulnerability was attempted to be resolved through the adoption of the ICRMW that may be considered as an advanced step in framing human rights and those relating to employment and migration. The Convention prohibits collective expulsion⁶³ and requires establishing procedural safeguards in the expulsion process. Moreover, Article 20 provides that a migrant worker may not be expelled merely on the basis of failure to fulfil obligation arising from work. Article 56 provides additional protection against expulsion for the purpose of depriving a migrant worker or a family member of the rights arising from their residence status or work permit.

The document further states the equality in remuneration, conditions of work, terms of employment and provides that private (i.e. service provider) contracts should respect this principle too.⁶⁴ It specifies the right to participate

54 Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Rights of Non-Citizens", United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2006, p. 7.

55 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, G.A. res. 2200A (XXI), 21 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 16) at 52, U.N. Doc. A/6316 (1966), 999 U.N.T.S. 171, entered into force March 23, 1976, Article 12.

56 Ibid, Article 13.

57 Ibid, Article 13.

58 Ibid, Article 12.

59 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 189 U.N.T.S. 150, entered into force April 22, 1954, Article 33

60 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, G.A. res. 39/46, entered into force June 26, 1987, Article 3.

61 Convention on the Rights of the Child, G.A. res. 44/25, annex, 44 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49) at 167, U.N. Doc. A/44/49 (1989), entered into force September 2, 1990, Article 3.

62 International Committee of Jurists, "Migration and International Human Rights Law, A Practitioners' Guide", Updated Edition, 2014, Chapters 1 and 2.

63 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, GA. res. 45/158, annex, 45 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49A) at 262, U.N. Doc. A/45/49 (1990), entered into force 1 July 2003, Article 22.

64 Ibid, Article 25.

in trade unions or form them.⁶⁵ The Convention provides for social security on equal basis with the nationals of the country of employment⁶⁶ also including access to social health services and housing.⁶⁷ It sets the right to transfer earnings⁶⁸, to enjoy proper documentation both for residence and employment.⁶⁹ It grants the right to migrant workers to know in advance the conditions of admission and employment, have access to vocational training and to choose the type of work or remunerated activity freely.⁷⁰ There are provisions related to the documentation of family members for residence and employment purposes, also in the situations of dissolution of marriage.⁷¹ The ICRMW contains provisions obliging states to prevent migrants falling into irregular situation and provide rights related to protection against dismissal, the right to enjoy unemployment benefits, access to unemployment services and alternative employment.⁷² The Convention also stipulates exemptions from customs duties and fees for migrant workers' personal household belongings and employment related equipment.⁷³ Importantly, the Convention requires cooperation between states to prevent irregular migration and exploitation of migrants.⁷⁴

The above-mentioned rights require states to regulate admission, sojourn and departure / expulsion of non-nationals. Importantly, the whole Part VI of the Convention is devoted to the promotion of sound, equitable, humane and lawful conditions in connection with international migration of workers and members of their families. It is perhaps the first international document of a binding nature, which goes as far as requiring states to cooperate on setting and formulating migration policies, promoting adequate economic conditions, returning migrants or providing social and cultural integration, informing the employers on migration related laws and practices, and providing assistance to migrants in learning their rights and responsibilities. This part of the Convention also requires states to impose effective sanctions on individuals and legal entities providing false information to migrant workers, intimidating them, benefiting from migrants being in irregular situation and exploiting them.

In a number of events conducted within the Almaty Process and devoted inter alia to rights of migrants, re-integration and access to protection mechanisms for migrant workers including those who faced re-entry bans, the government representatives emphasized the importance of adherence to international standards, including those in the area of human rights, international labour, transnational criminal and other branches of relevant international law. Therefore, accession to the international instruments mentioned above that provide an excellent framework for the development of national legislation and policy may be considered a primary and most important recommendation. Furthermore, studying the implementation of best practices and experiences remains a crucial component of capacity building process. The importance of the availability of protection, legal assistance, access to justice and grievance mechanisms was discussed and identified as a priority for migrants also as part of their successful adaptation, integration and re-integration. Particular attention shall be paid to the category of re-entry banned migrants. It may also be underlined that it should not only be a priority of countries of destination but also of transit and origin.

The increase in governments' knowledge and ability to apply international standards, develop and/or effectively implement national legislation is vital. Further work in this area to respond better to current and developing situations is needed. Additionally, the capacity of relevant authorities to better regulate the activities of private sector partners is important as well as involvement and partnership with the civil society, social partners and other stakeholders. IOM initiatives in this area focusing on training and capacity building on International Migration Law were successful and should continue as well as initiatives focusing and empowering partners in legal assistance for migrants.

65 Ibid, Articles 26 and 40.

66 Ibid, Article 27.

67 Ibid, Article 43.

68 Ibid, Article 47.

69 Ibid, Article 49.

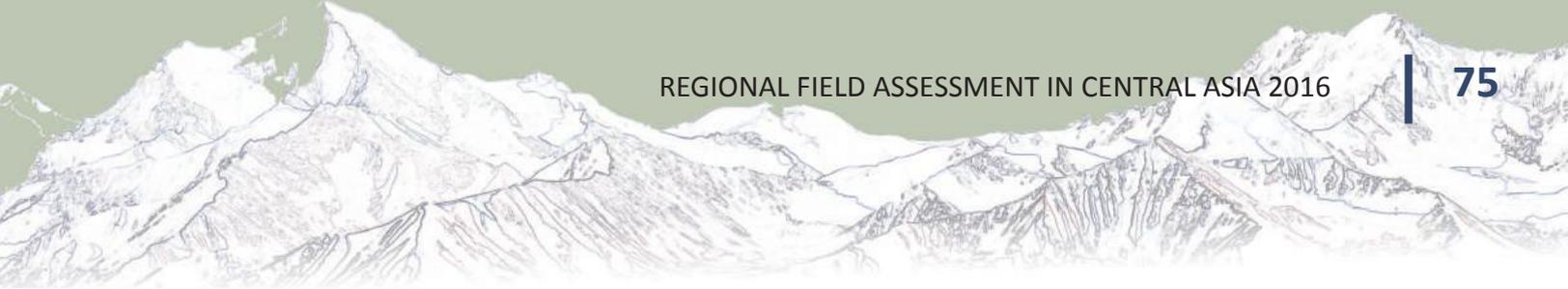
70 Ibid, respectively Articles 37, 43, 45, 52.

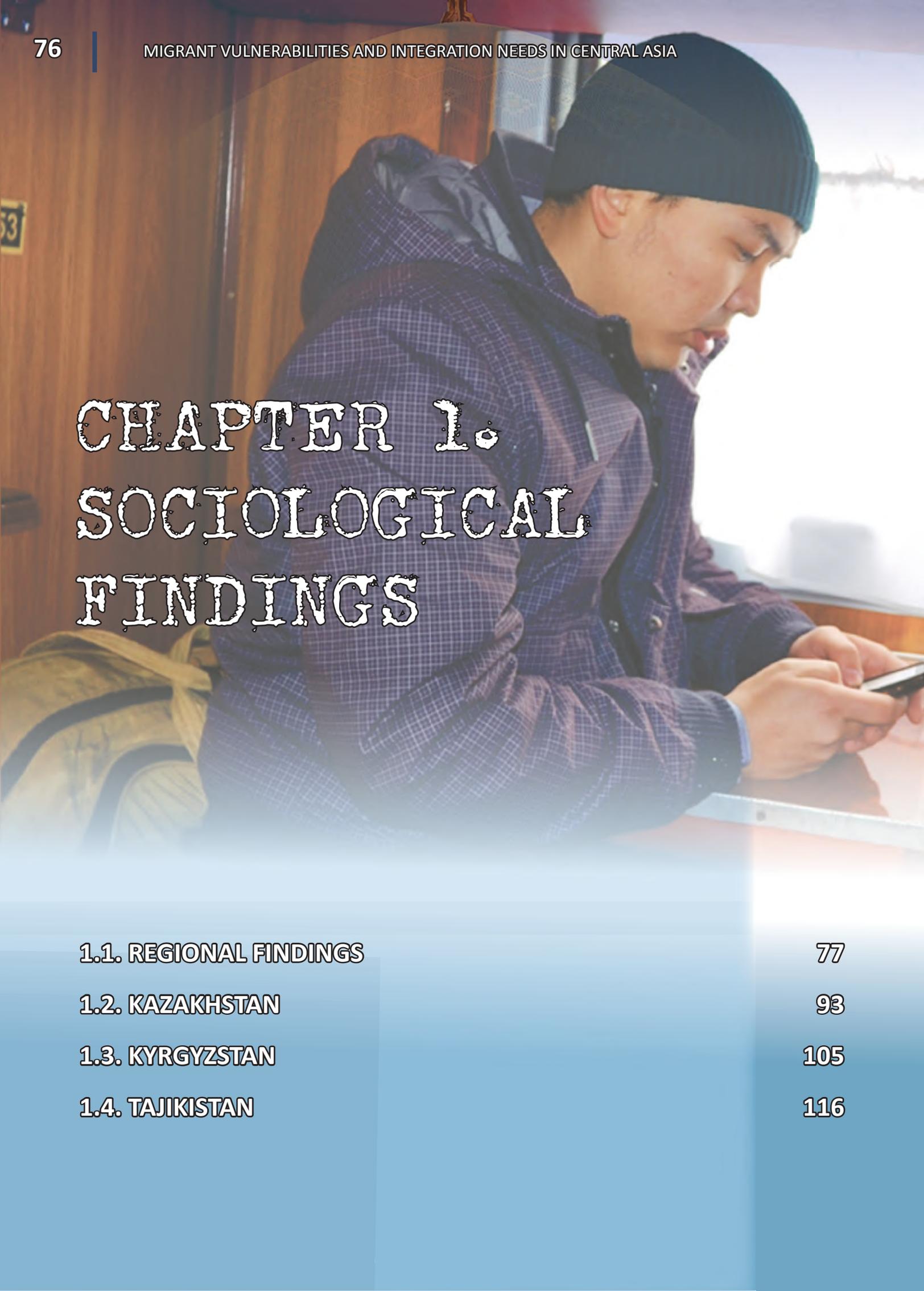
71 Ibid, Article 50.

72 Ibid, Article 54.

73 Ibid, Article 46.

74 Ibid, Article 67.



A photograph of a man wearing a blue beanie and a blue checkered jacket, looking down at a smartphone in his hands. He is sitting at a table, possibly in a train or bus, with a window in the background showing a bright outdoor scene. The text 'CHAPTER 1. SOCIOLOGICAL FINDINGS' is overlaid on the image in a white, distressed font.

CHAPTER 1. SOCIOLOGICAL FINDINGS

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1.1. REGIONAL FINDINGS

1.1.1. Objectives and scope of the sociological assessment

The present sociological assessment focuses on the re-entry bans imposed by the Russian Federation and shows how they are impacting on migrant workers' lives and opportunities for a decent life in their countries of origin, i.e. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, interrupting for medium-long periods of time the migration route towards Russia, which is since the early 1990s the main destination country and recipient of Central Asian migrant workers. The impact of re-entry bans by the Russian Federation on Central Asia is assessed through focusing on two main areas: emigration towards an alternative country of destination (Kazakhstan) and unplanned return to the countries of origin (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan).

The assessment uses a qualitative approach, consisting of 113 individual interviews and 20 focus groups and group interviews (with the total of 101 respondents). Interviews were conducted in 5 locations in Kazakhstan (Astana, Almaty, Aktau, Petropavlovsk and Shymkent), 2 cities in Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek and Osh) as well as 6 locations in Tajikistan (Dushanbe, Farkhor, Kulyab, Qurghonteppa, Tajikobod and Yovan) (see Fig. 1.1).¹

Fig. 1.1. Locations of interviews and focus groups in the sociological assessment



Source: Sociological assessment team analysis

¹ For the sampling and composition of respondents, see the Methodology section of the report

The assessment addresses an issue that is reflective of some long-standing socio-economic trends in the region, identifying the interplay between vulnerabilities that formed initial “push” factors for labour migration and the disruptive nature of re-entry bans on migrants’ ability to cope with multiple legal, economic and social challenges. Although a relatively small part of re-entry banned migrants returns home, they still form significant groups in absolute numbers, highly impacting the economic and social welfare of households and communities back home.² In the target region migration has become, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the main strategy to escape poverty and social stasis³, and also a panacea for states that since the 1990s have been experiencing unemployment in the domestic market and a growing young population.⁴ The study shows that re-entry bans do not only impact the economic situation of migration-dependent households, but also the relation of returned migrants with their communities in their country of origin, consolidating and enhancing a feeling of alienation towards a state that interviewees feel is not offering any solution to their unplanned return. This appears to be the main reason why they avoid addressing official channels to ask for help.

As for re-integration in the communities of origin, particular attention is paid to migrants’ use of networks. Literature on Central Asian migration indicates an extensive use of informal networks in all phases of the migration cycle: organization of departure, job search, return. Informal networks are an important component in international migration and are seen as part of migrants’ strategies to overcome legal and bureaucratic obstacles, touch base in the destination country, and maintain a relation with the country of origin.⁵ In Central Asia they seem to be one of the main factors influencing transnational movement.⁶ It is important to notice, though, that informal migrant networks bear a temporary character as they work as long as the members have good connections to exchange, or information about available jobs to offer in exchange of present or future favours, as well as a good reputation. As it will be shown farther, the re-entry bans seem to negatively influence the ability of migrants to strategically use networks, and such factor seems to hinder both their re-integration and their resilience in the long term.

Such aspects have not been yet extensively studied and the present assessment aims at providing qualitative data in order to fuel further research. The present study aims to answer the following questions:

- How do the re-entry bans impact migrants’ ability to build strategies in order to cope with their economic situation back home?
- What scenarios can be drawn by observing the impact of re-entry bans in the long period?

The issue of re-entry bans is studied first by assessing those enduring vulnerabilities for which migration is a time-bound coping mechanism for most respondents. Further, an analysis is carried out on how re-entry bans end up impacting respondents’ coping mechanisms, ability to plan, find strategies in order to deal with poverty, limited education possibilities for youth, and social disadvantage. Vulnerabilities have been studied under three main aspects: rights-based and legal, economic and social; the assessment of the impact of re-entry bans follows the same scheme.

2 Abdulloev, Ilhom, Gang, Ira N., Landon-Lane, John. “Chapter 6 Migration as a Substitute for Informal Activities: Evidence from Tajikistan” In *Informal Employment in Emerging and Transition Economies*. Published online: 09 Mar 2015; 205-227. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/S0147-9121\(2012\)0000034009](http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/S0147-9121(2012)0000034009)

3 Laruelle, Marlene. “Relative living standards in new market economies: evidence from Central Asian household surveys”, *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, Volume 5, No. 3 (2007) p. 101-119; Delovarova, L., Kukeyeva, F. (2014). *Regionalisation and Integration in Central Asia: Migration Issues*. *Politické vedy*. [online]. 17:2, pp. 134-149, <http://www.politickevedy.fpvmv.umb.sk/userfiles/file/2_2014/DELOVAROVA_KUKEYEVA.pdf>; Eliza Isabaeva (2011) “Leaving to enable others to remain: remittances and new moral economies of migration in southern Kyrgyzstan”, *Central Asian Survey*, 30:3-4, 541-554.

4 Tynaliev, Urmat and McLean Gary M. (2011). *Labour migration and National Human Resource Development in the context of post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan*, *Human Resource Development International*, 14:2, 199-215 [211].

5 Castles, Stephen (2002), “Migration and Community Formation Under Conditions of Globalization”. *Centre for Migration Studies* 36:4. 1143-1168 [1146]; Boyd Monica (1989) *Family and Personal Networks in International Migration: Recent Developments and New Agendas*. *The International Migration Review* 23:3, 638-670.

6 Tynaliev, Urmat and McLean Gary M. (2011). *Vinokurov, Evgeny, Pereboyev, Vladimir (2013). Labour Migration and Human Capital in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: Impact of Accession to the SES*. *Centre for Integration Studies*. <https://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/62087/>

1.1.2. Overview of pre-existing vulnerabilities

Earlier IOM assessments revealed that migrant workers from countries like Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan are subject to various socio-economic vulnerabilities that stem from their precarious position in the labour market and legal status. They find employment in low-skilled jobs in sectors such as construction, household work or services, where a substantial part of the workforce is irregular.⁷ For instance, migrants often accept work assignments without a written contract, due to the unwillingness of the employers to engage in all procedures requested for the legalization of their workers.⁸

Studies have also shown that migrants' irregular status compounds their pre-existing vulnerabilities in the countries of origin, such as poverty, social and cultural disadvantage. Migrant workers from Central Asia usually come from rural areas and backgrounds, where educational opportunities and social services are limited or out of reach. Seasonal work abroad becomes for them a life-long strategy to provide themselves and their families with basic goods but also to try and improve their social situation in the long run by granting their children a better education, or their nuclear families property and better quality of life.⁹ Seasonal labour migration has over the years been beneficial also to communities at home, alleviating economic distress and potentially contributing to long-term local development.¹⁰ Nonetheless, migration remains a fragile life strategy for the most vulnerable families and the households left behind, the migrant worker's remittances often being the main or only income of families back home. Some vulnerabilities are constant as seasonal migrant workers rarely find stable jobs and are often not paid on time. Further challenges are associated with their irregular status. Migrants are at constant risk of fines, sanctions, harassment from dishonest police officers, exploitation of employers and mediators, and expulsion from authorities. Moreover, some unforeseen and abrupt events can have dramatic consequences on the wellbeing of migrant workers and their families, including: injuries at the work place, deteriorating health, or death of the migrant worker, reduced or discontinued flow of remittances sent home, sickness of a member of a family requiring to invest savings in her/his recovery, unplanned return caused by a re-entry ban impeding to leave to the Russian Federation for 3 to 5 years.

For most respondents, migration was a response to economic needs and social conditions that in their view could not be solved at home. Although most respondents ended up being highly dependent on remittances, through the consolidated use of informal practices (networks, mediators, illegal standing), they managed to guarantee in the past years the subsistence of their households and slightly improve their economic situation when they managed to purchase a property.

7 IOM. (2014). Mapping on Irregular Migration in Central Asia. Astana: IOM Kazakhstan; Davé, B. (2014). Keeping labour mobility informal: the lack of legality of Central Asian migrants in Kazakhstan. *Central Asian Survey*, 33(3), 346-359.

8 IOM. (2014). Mapping on Irregular Migration in Central Asia. Astana: IOM Kazakhstan; Maier, A. (2014). Tajik Migrants with Re-Entry Bans to the Russian Federation. Dushanbe: IOM.

9 Laruelle, Marlene (2013). Household Members' Migration and the Education of Children 'Left Behind': Empirical Findings from Tajikistan and Reflections for Research Practice. *Population, Space and Place* 19, 1-14.

10 See for instance Eliza Isabaeva (2011) Leaving to enable others to remain: remittances and new moral economies of migration in southern Kyrgyzstan, *Central Asian Survey*, 30:3-4, pp. 541-554

Factors of pre-existing vulnerabilities

Overall, respondents involved in the present study showed common factors of vulnerability (Table 1.1). These can be grouped into three main categories: legal, socioeconomic and sociocultural.

Table 1.1. Overview of vulnerabilities faced by respondents

Vulnerabilities shared by all migrant workers* *Percentage estimated from a total of 113 respondents with and without a re-entry ban who participated in individual interviews, group interviews and focus groups.	Specific vulnerabilities of re-entry banned migrants† †Percentage calculated from a total of 80 respondents (included in the sample of 113 individual interviews) with a re-entry ban who participated in individual/group interviews and focus groups.
Unaware of their rights at home and abroad: 70% of respondents	Unaware of the reasons and the duration of the re-entry ban: 67% of respondents
At high risk of becoming irregular in host country: 80% of respondents	Stranded in transit (Kazakhstan)
Unaware of role of State institutions and non-State agencies: 70% of respondents	Avoiding contact with authorities/NGOs: About 60% of respondents
Have very low income or irregular income; 80% of respondents	At high risk of medium/long term unemployment: 78% of respondents Reduced chances to earn enough to support families: 88% of respondents
Networks offer limited protection against discrimination in the workplace and irregularity of status vis-à-vis the authorities: 80% of respondents	Likely to lose contact with networks (family and extended) in Russia: 70% of respondents Harder to integrate back in families and communities: 45% of respondents
At high risk of being exploited, trafficked or harassed by police: At least 50% of respondents	At high risk of being exploited, trafficked or harassed by police (Kazakhstan)

Source: IOM findings from the interviews and focus groups in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Jan.-June 2016

Legal status. The primary factor affecting migrants' ability to enforce their rights is their irregular status. About 80% out of a total of 214 respondents who participated in individual/group interviews and/or focus groups had been working and or living illegally, about 60% of them did it consciously, attempting to avoid contacts with authorities, and at least half of them did experience cases of exploitation (non-payment of salary, withdrawal of documents, physical and/or psychological violence) and harassment of the police at least once. Irregular status tends to reflect certain socio-cultural characteristics. The majority of re-entry banned respondents of individual interviews (84% of a sample of 80 respondents) had a lower level of education, ranging from secondary to professional education, a small part had studied 1 to 2 years at university and had not finished it because of economic reasons. Moreover, most of them were of rural origins and had left their villages for the first time to go to Russia.

Irregularity is firstly associated with migrants' low level of awareness of their human rights. Low awareness of the role of state and non-state institutions in providing protection and assistance leads them to high risks of becoming irregular in the host country. Individual interviews confirmed that when interviewees migrated to the Russian Federation they rarely knew where and how they should register and under what circumstances they could get a patent or would need a work permit. Secondly, respondents attributed their lack of registration to the fact that it was too expensive and they lacked money (about 26% out of 113 respondents with and without a re-entry ban from individual interviews) in the first period of migration or to the fact that it was difficult and time consuming (41% of the same sample).

Irregularity was perceived to be a condition that was forced onto migrant workers by employers. A significant number of respondents (38% of all 113 respondents, with and without a re-entry ban) used mediators to obtain a registration. About 30% of those who asked a mediator to arrange their documents admitted that they had been cheated at least once during their stay in the Russian Federation, although focus groups showed that the number might be higher. During focus groups, the participants were indeed more open to admit that they had been cheated, especially in the first years of migration. In contrast, all respondents tended to avoid authorities as they considered them corrupt or feared to be punished, also in cases of fraud and exploitation from mediators and/or employers.¹¹

Economic vulnerabilities include pre-existing conditions of relative or extreme poverty and limited economic outcomes of labour migration. Findings show that vulnerable migrants coming from economically deprived families tend to improve their economic situation to a limited extent through migration. Fewer than half (about 40% of the total of 113) of respondents in the three countries declared that they earned enough to support their families back home and provide them with basic needs, and 16% managed to buy a house or a plot of land. The most vulnerable ones changed jobs very often and as many as 85% did not have a stable source of income, which reduced their ability for long-term planning through saving up money, buying some land or paying for their children's education.

Most respondents stated that remittances were not sent at regular intervals and only by those who managed to make a better use of remittances and purchase property, had more experience in labour migration, an older age and better individual qualities. If the number of dependents was high, it was harder for respondents to achieve their goals, as everyday needs would absorb most of their earnings.

Finally, respondents were found vulnerable on the **social level**. Social vulnerabilities that were reported during the interviews and focus groups related to the knowledge of the language of the destination country (in this case Russian or Kazakh) as highly impacting the chances of integration in the destination countries. During focus groups in Tajikistan and in Kyrgyzstan, the most perspective migrants were characterised by good networks and knowledge of Russian, as it made it possible for them not only to get more easily informed, but also to expand the networks by building relationships with locals. Informal networks were developed and consolidated over the period of their stay abroad so that these became more extended and effective over time.

90% or more of the 214 respondents who participated in interviews and focus groups in all three countries made extensive use of networks to find jobs and get help in case of difficulties (such as being stopped by the police). In case of extreme needs, such as lack of funds, or the unexpected illness of the migrant or of one member of the family back home, migrants obtained money offers or loans from their networks in order to face extraordinary expenses. In case of money offers, it seems that mostly this was a one-time kind of help. In case of arrest, or abuse from employers, about 65% of 113 respondents of individual interviews admitted that they tried to solve problems by contacting their acquaintances, kin, or co-national who were known among the community for "solving problems". Focus groups also confirmed this trend. This was also due to negative experiences with some Russian police officers who extorted money from the respondents on more than one occasion.

11 Cf. Sadovskaya E.Y., "Labour Migration and its Impact on Social Stability in Central Asia", in Mozorova, I. (2005). "Towards Social Stability and Democratic Governance in Central Eurasia", IOS Press, pp. 206-230 [225].

1.1.3. The gender perspective – comparative findings in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

The assessment investigated the question whether re-entry bans were having a different impact on female and male returned migrants. For this reason, separate interviews and focus groups were conducted with women. Upon return, female migrants were subject to the same vulnerabilities as prior to departure (unemployment, possible debts).

Levels of vulnerability differed among female respondents. The marital status was an important variable that affected the way in which women migrated, returned and reacted to the ban. Considerable cultural differences were also noticed between women in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In Kyrgyzstan, single women seemed more independent and willing to migrate alone, although under the protection of close relatives (siblings and cousins) or other kin, whereas women respondents in Tajikistan migrated only if accompanied by parents (at a younger age), or husbands. Those among the respondents who migrated alone were of an older age and thus more immune to typical social stigma that accompany single women through migration, such as the issue of abandoning their children or the idea that working abroad might mean to engage in discredited kinds of work (such as prostitution) or in less controlled behaviour and interaction with men.¹² Such stigma was found both in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and confirmed by women themselves during 4 focus groups.¹³ It is worth noticing that 90% of a sample of 14 women interviewed in Kyrgyzstan were of rural origins but had moved to bigger cities (the capital Bishkek), whereas all women interviewed in Tajikistan were living in rural and thus more traditional contexts.

In both countries, however, it appears that married women could count on the networks of their husbands, whereas women who had been abandoned, had divorced or were widows, had to count mostly on their own capacities, in case no one in their original families was supporting them. Among young respondents, the following groups were found particularly vulnerable socially and economically:

- **Married women with children** with a re-entry ban were more willing to stay in their country of origin and re-adjust because they feel more reluctant to leave their children behind;
- **Abandoned women** felt the need to migrate for economic reasons, despite the ban, as no-one was supporting them back home.

Qualitative data showed that re-entry bans affected the men's position inside the family in that they lose economic power, and their authoritative position of breadwinners is questioned by wives and families, causing a feeling of shame. In the case of women, the re-entry ban did not affect their social position, but rather their economic power, with serious repercussions on women and their children for whom they could barely afford basic needs (food and clothes).

Returned re-entry banned women who were abandoned or divorced, especially at a young age, had no strategies and no help at the moment of the interviews. In the same way as their male counterparts, they were not addressing state entities or NGOs as they did not trust them or did not know about them.

12 See UN Women Гендерная повестка в миграции. Взаимосвязь трудовой миграции и развития в контексте гендерного подхода [Gender Agenda in Migration. Interrelatedness of labour migration in the context of gender approach]. Almaty, 2015, pp. 23; 41.

13 2 focus groups were conducted in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) and 2 in Kulyab (Tajikistan) in April 2016 with a total of 24 women of an age ranging from 20 to 50.

1.1.4. Impact of re-entry bans on returned migrants' strategies back home: the cases of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan

Upon return to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, the most immediate effect was the economic deterioration of re-entry banned migrants. Indeed, remittances were for them the main and, at times, the only source of income for family and/or households. The situation was aggravated by the limited possibilities of employment with decent salaries as well as the lack of strategies of respondents who saw in migration their only way out of poverty and lack of perspectives back home.

Chances of employment back home

Most re-entry banned migrants in both Kyrgyzstan and in Tajikistan were unemployed. In Kyrgyzstan, those who were working were unhappy with their current economic situation (5 respondents out of 20). In Tajikistan, a very small number of respondents claimed that they had found a stable job back home (6 respondents out of 35). Among the employed returned migrants, 4 women respondents were self-employed through an integration program ran by a local NGO with IOM. They claimed that the income was enough to provide them with basic goods, but not to provide their children with healthcare (1 respondent had a sick child) or education (3 out of 4 respondents). On the other hand, unemployed male migrants with a re-entry ban had no choice but to accept low-paid jobs as handymen that were offered at bazaars close to their villages. In Kyrgyzstan all 5 respondents (4 male and 1 female) who were employed claimed that their salary was too low.

Unemployed respondents tried to cope with the lack of income in the following ways:

- Asking for money from acquaintances and/or relatives:
 - o Kyrgyzstan – 9 respondents out of 20
 - o Tajikistan – 15 respondents out of 35

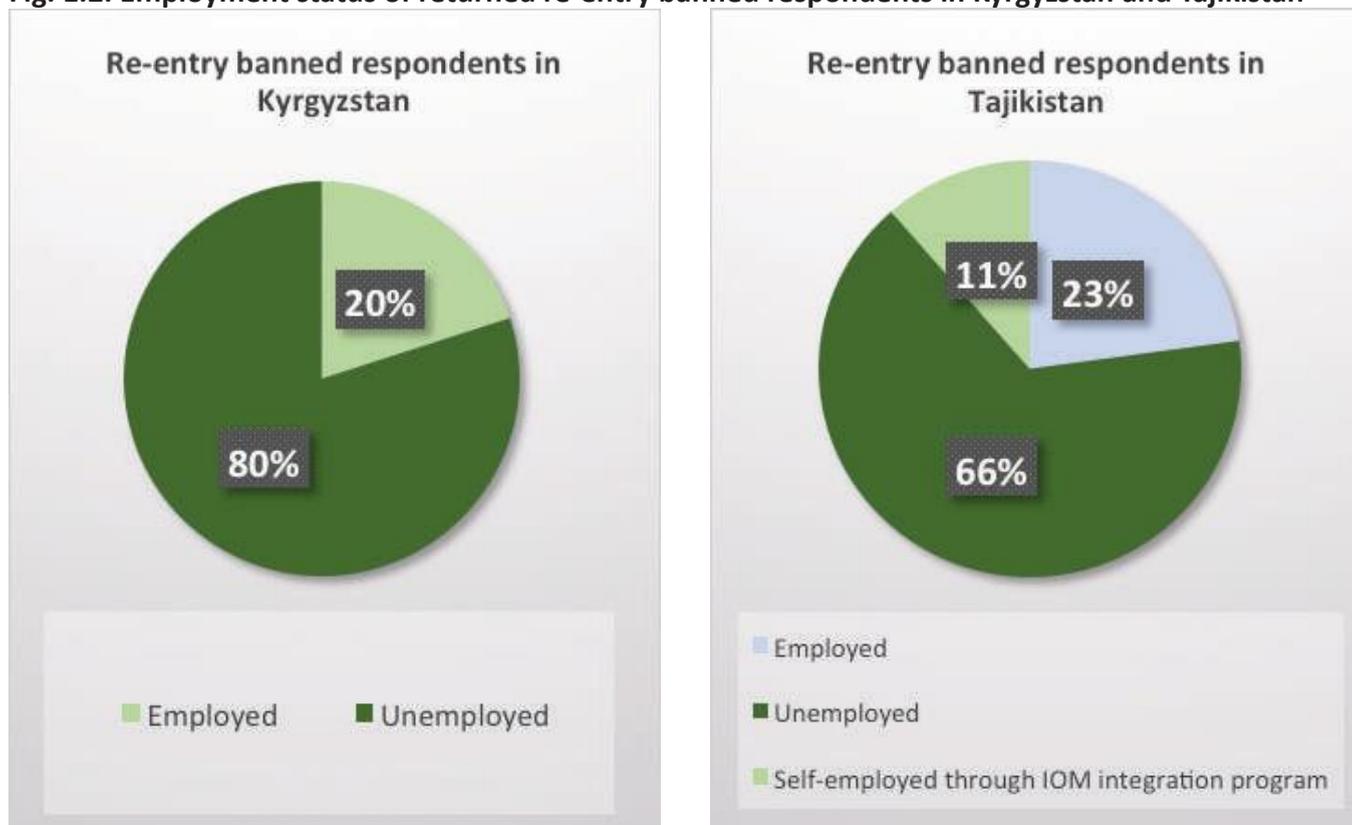
Of them, 6 out of 9 in Kyrgyzstan and 10 out of 15 in Tajikistan admitted that they had not paid the debts back yet.

- Using their savings – all respondents in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan;
- Selling what they had acquired through remittances:
 - o Kyrgyzstan – 5 respondents out of 20
 - o Tajikistan – 10 respondents out of 35.

The fact that a relatively high number claimed having sold their property during the period of the ban, shows that returned re-entry banned migrants did not have enough funds in order to face everyday expenses or pay back debts. Furthermore, those respondents who had not sold their property claimed that they had nothing to sell. On the other hand, in 2 focus groups conducted in Yovan and Qurghonteppa (Tajikistan), selling property was declared as one of the first coping mechanisms used during the first year of unplanned return, together with the practice of asking for loans from neighbours, banks or relatives.¹⁴ The focus groups showed also that return was considered by the majority of re-entry banned migrants (70% of 101 participants) and some of the migrants had to return due to the impossibility of finding a job in the Russian Federation (10% of 101 participants). Those participants who had come back because they gave up finding a job in Russia, presented indeed the same economic issues as re-entry banned respondents.

¹⁴ 2 focus groups conducted with male returned re-entry banned migrants and vulnerable migrants without a re-entry ban, Yovan and Qurghonteppa, June 2016.

Fig. 1.2. Employment status of returned re-entry banned respondents in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan



Source: Findings from the individual interviews conducted in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan with re-entry banned returned migrants. Apr.-June 2016

Overall, economic re-integration was not seen by the respondents as a possible long-term strategy. Mostly they complained about the low salaries that were not sufficient to guarantee their families more than basic needs; at times, especially in Tajikistan, even less. Among the unemployed respondents, some were looking for a job.

- Kyrgyzstan: 8 out of 20 respondents;
- Tajikistan: 14 out of 35 respondents.

These respondents declared that working back home was a mostly temporary relief to pay back debts and provide for their dependents during the duration of the ban, as at least 80% of respondents who claimed being employed back home (Fig. 1.2.) were still willing to leave at the end of the ban.

As for the possibility to find a job back home, the researchers noticed that a lack of job opportunities were accompanied by a feeling of lack of help and interest from the state. Such topics were common especially in the focus groups.

“Here no one needs us. So many healthy men and no one needs us.” – commented one participant in Yovan.

“When you are in Russia, you feel that someone needs you (your family), but when you go back, you feel that no one needs you anymore. You feel you are useless” – replied a second participant.

“In the region there is no work. It’s not important how educated you are, you stay without work.” – reflected another participant in Qurghonteppa. *“Go to the villages around here, you will see groups of men, healthy men, just sitting and doing nothing. What do they have to do? They just gather, talk, try to endure the stress of the moment. They have no jobs!”*

In Kyrgyzstan, focus groups raised similar questions as the difficulty of finding a job without the right contacts, as well as the frustration of getting lower salaries.

The economic impact of the bans, finally, was measurable through the number of indebted people, those who had to sell their property, and the high number of unemployed returnees, suggesting not only the quick economic deterioration caused by the sudden lack of remittances, but also social factors influencing (1) the unwillingness of these people to build strategies at home due to the frustration of lower salaries and (2) the need of having the right contacts to economically re-integrate back home.

Relation with State entities and NGOs

Findings show that in both countries (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) respondents who had been subject to a re-entry ban for at least one year contacted state entities with the exclusive purpose of reducing the ban period. For instance, respondents in Kyrgyzstan turned to employment centres only to find out about the possibility of being removed from the “black list” and not with the purpose of finding employment (13 respondents out of 20; the other respondents, 6, had not tried to contact state entities as they considered it useless).¹⁵

About 95% of 214 respondents (among respondents in individual interviews and focus groups) did not think about addressing the state to get help. Focus groups showed that returned migrants were reluctant to address state institutions. The main reason given during debates was that the state cannot help or is not interested in “helping people like us”.¹⁶

Migrants’ unwillingness to turn in for help to the state could be interpreted as their reaction to the perceived lack of state support in their lives, materialized in limited education opportunities for their children, limited access to quality healthcare, and other kinds of social assistance. Under this perspective, the fact that upon return almost all respondents did not address state entities is in a certain way a natural continuation of this kind of attitude.

Awareness of NGOs as potential sources of assistance was low among the respondents. In Kyrgyzstan, 13 out of 20 respondents and in Tajikistan 25 out of 35 did not know which NGOs could help them. Although among those who knew about their existence and role (8 in Kyrgyzstan and 10 in Tajikistan), about 85% had received information during information campaigns and 15% had been involved in re-integration programs (in Tajikistan) or were suggested by a friend working in the NGO (in Kyrgyzstan). On the other hand, awareness was higher among migrants who had taken part in re-integration programs managed by NGOs (in Tajikistan) in cooperation with IOM.

Relation with the community, families, and use of informal networks

While official channels were not used to secure employment, both in Kyrgyzstan and in Tajikistan, jobs were being searched by word of mouth, asking neighbours, friends and kin about possibilities of employment. During the focus groups, respondents in both countries accounted for this by stating that through contacting acquaintances it was possible to bargain more on the salary and get better employment conditions. Nonetheless, the direct results of this strategy could not be observed as none of the unemployed respondents had been able to find a job through their acquaintances. Occasional jobs, such as home repairing and collecting fruits and herbs during the harvest season, were among the main jobs that contacts could grant.

The use of informal contacts had further ambiguous effects. While they were also used for obtaining money loans, they did not help to deal with the underlying problem of long-term unemployment of most respondents, which in the long run produced strong embarrassment resulting from the inability to pay off debts in a period of one year

¹⁵ A similar fact was found in the city of Qurghonteppa (Tajikistan) by one researcher, who observed that the Ombudsman for the Protection of Human Rights of the city administration was being contacted by re-entry banned migrants with the only purpose of verifying when the ban was going to expire and the possibility of being removed from the “black list”.

¹⁶ Focus group in Yovan, Tajikistan, June 2016.

or more. During focus groups in the two countries the participants described situations in which returned re-entry banned migrants would:

- Retreat from communal life because
 - o they had little or nothing to offer during big feasts or to potential guests (Tajikistan);
 - o they were trying to spend as little money as possible avoiding traditional obligations (Kyrgyzstan)
- Stop addressing their acquaintances and family to ask for help or money because
 - o they were embarrassed and felt like they were imposing (Tajikistan)
 - o those they knew were in the same situation as theirs (both countries).

The effects of the re-entry ban in the communal life were described both in Kyrgyzstan and in Tajikistan in similar terms, underlining the necessity dictated by cultural practices of spending money to honour guests and relatives. One participant in a female focus group in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), for instance, stated:

*“When you [migrant] come back from Russia, you see people spend money for toy (feasts), people look for you. But if you don’t have money anymore, you are no-one, people stop looking for you or you don’t go out anymore”.*¹⁷

In similar ways, in Yovan (Tajikistan), another participant stated:

*“When you run out of money you stop calling the people as you have nothing to offer. Here everyone respects the others. But when you have nothing, you cannot afford to see people.”*¹⁸

Such dynamics were leading respondents to a state of depression: the material impossibility of showing off the outcomes of their work as migrants, embarrassment due to debts and retreat from public life where individuals show their social prestige were leading some of them to isolate themselves further, entering the most vulnerable group of population: individuals dispossessed and abandoned by their own family.

1.1.5. Migrating to alternative destinations: the case of Kazakhstan

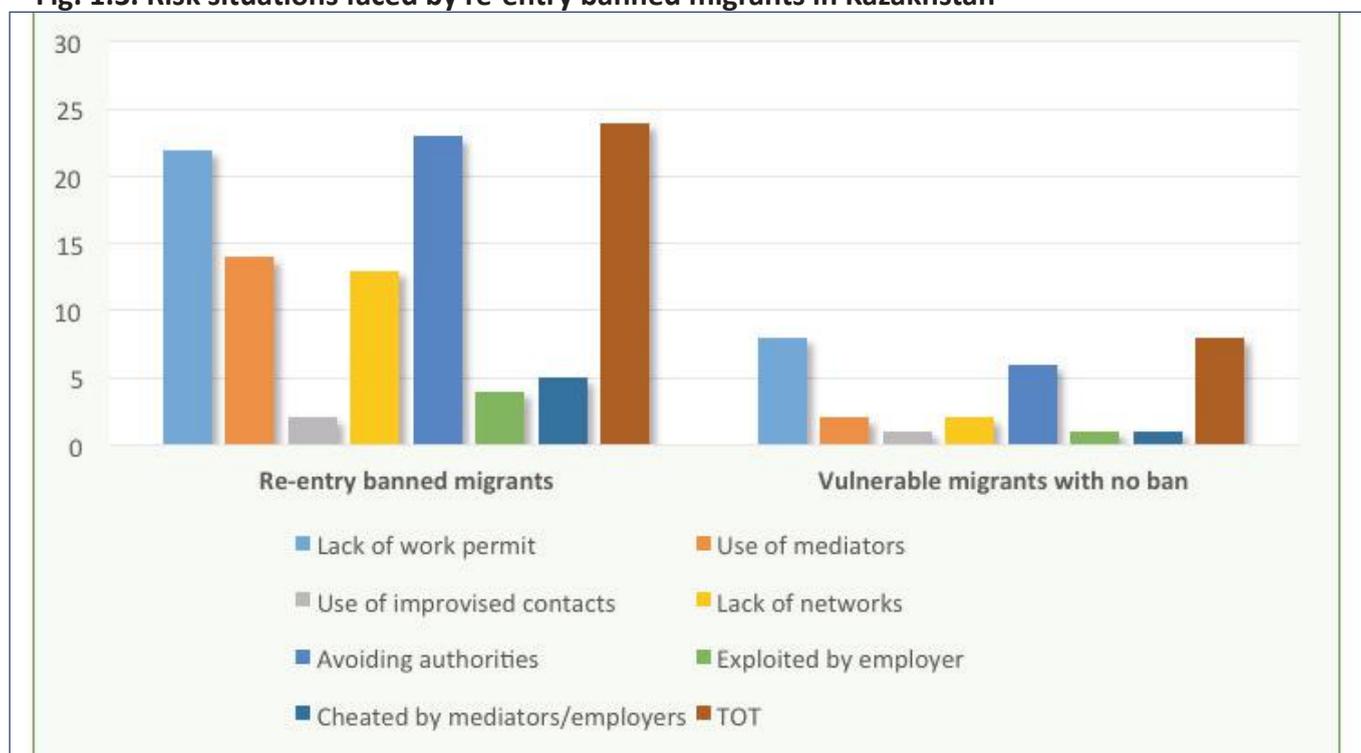
In alternative to integration back home, re-entry banned migrants were trying new destinations. One of these destinations is Kazakhstan. No statistics are available about the presence of migrants with a re-entry ban working in Kazakhstan. Difficulties were also encountered during the field assessment in approaching them, although the local NGOs in the visited locations did confirm that re-entry banned migrants had been transiting from the Russian-Kazakh border and were also looking for jobs in Kazakhstan. Nonetheless, 18 respondents were found with the help of NGOs who claimed to have been issued a re-entry ban (only a small number could prove it through a stamp in their passport).

Risks of exploitation, fraud and harassment in Kazakhstan

All respondents who had a re-entry ban (18 out of 24) or were suspected of having one (6 out of 24) reported being at risk in various ways (Fig. 1.3). 22 respondents lacked a work permit and four respondents admitted to being exploited by the employer while five of them reported being cheated by mediators and/or employers. The irregular nature of their employment may be attributed to the preponderant use of mediators (14 respondents) or improvised contacts (2). Respondents felt alienated in the new environment as 13 of them stated that they lacked social networks. None of them turned to authorities for assistance, fearing negative consequences of their irregular status.

17 Focus group in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 20th April, 2016.

18 Focus group in Yovan, Tajikistan, 12th June, 2016.

Fig. 1.3. Risk situations faced by re-entry banned migrants in Kazakhstan

Source: Findings from the interviews and group interviews in Kazakhstan, Jan.-June 2016

Such features could be found also among vulnerable migrants without a re-entry ban, who had left behind very poor family contexts and had a low level of education and limited networks in Kazakhstan. Part of these vulnerable migrants chose Kazakhstan as a destination country, as they had not enough money to reach the Russian Federation and made thus a strategic choice: moving to Kazakhstan making use of the proximity of the borders was a strategy of migrant workers from Uzbekistan to stay and work without either registration or work permit. Borders were crossed every 30 days in order to avoid prosecution. Such cases were encountered in Aktau and Shymkent.

Furthermore, re-entry banned migrants who arrived to Kazakhstan for the first time from their countries of origin (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) delegated all aspects regarding their documentation to employers or mediators, with the open purpose of being not seen by the authorities. Mostly, the factor of time was used by them as an explanation, showing that they were “rushing” to being employed and eager to start sending remittances to their households/families again. Other common explanations among the re-entry banned respondents included their wish not to lose face and to re-establish their position as breadwinners and family heads at home. This attitude also led them to accept critical working and living conditions, and a dependency on mediators and employers. The invisibility of respondents was both a strategy and a consequence of their failed commitment to become acquainted with the host country’s requirements to legalize. Respondents came to Kazakhstan and delegated their regularization to employers or mediators, who either registered them in a place that was convenient for them (which often was not their real place of residence), or deceived them by taking their money and/or documents and did not provide any registration.

The most important findings pertain especially to this aspect of invisibility of re-entry banned migrants in Kazakhstan: NGOs were not prepared to provide migrants with tailored assistance to (1) help them legalize within the legal terms in case of rejection at the Russian-Kazakh borders, and (2) find employment or assistance for return through safe channels. Re-entry banned migrants in Kazakhstan were rarely aware of NGOs and diaspora organizations and, therefore, addressed primarily other migrants in search for help. Improvised contacts were the main instrument through which migrants eventually came in contact with an NGO. In a few cases, the migration police informed

vulnerable migrants about the existence of diaspora organizations to prevent them from becoming an irregular migrant. However, the provision of such information is not streamlined as this aspect lies beyond the migration police's scope of responsibility.

In this sense, findings show the lack of dialogue between authorities and vulnerable migrants, including re-entry banned migrants. In Petropavlovsk, the Tajik diaspora financed tickets home because of ethnic solidarity and the religious duty of *sadaqah*¹⁹ despite a shortage of funds. The local NGO co-operated actively with the local migration police unit and conducted effective information campaigns that enhanced the migrants' knowledge concerning their rights and obligations in the destination country.

Although the assessment was based on observations of a limited number of respondents, the most vulnerable migrants in need of assistance upon arrival to Kazakhstan can be grouped into two major categories:

1. Migrants rejected at the border: although only 2 cases were detected among respondents, an interview with a local NGO in Petropavlovsk supported this thesis. The 2 respondents with a re-entry ban who were rejected at the border faced problems in paying the trip back home and the coping mechanisms included: asking for money from other unknown migrants, looking for information on available jobs in Kazakhstan among new contacts. Misinformation about the law on migration in Kazakhstan, avoidance of official channels of information are also common;
2. All interviewed re-entry banned migrants who moved to Kazakhstan as an alternative labour migration destination appeared to be vulnerable on the legal level (without a work permit or registered in a place of stay different from the real one) and on the social level, as they tended to count on mediators and new contacts. Therefore, the risk of being cheated or exploited can be considered high, as among 24 interviewed re-entry banned migrants, 4 fell victim of exploitation, and 5 were deceived by mediators.

1.1.6. Assessing the long-term effects of re-entry bans on returned migrants

It must be considered that re-entry banned migrants have planned migration in terms of years, in order to achieve goals, like the purchase of a house, or a land plot, or saving up for the university education of one or more children, or for their own wedding. During the migration cycle, new financial needs can come up, postponing the achievement of goals, such as paying back debts that were used for the first trip to Russia, paying for the healthcare of a sick family member, or for their own deteriorating health.

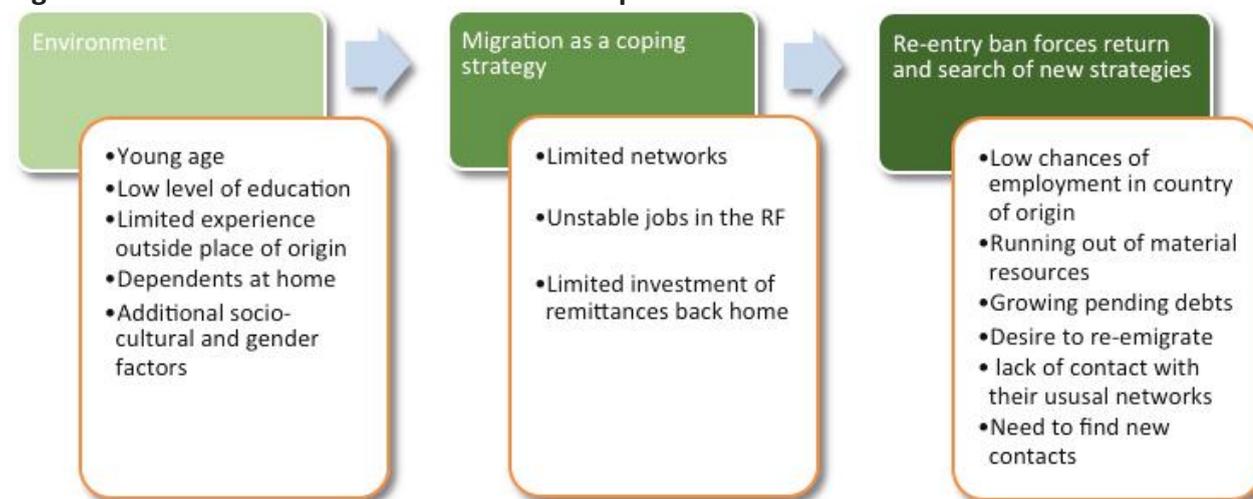
As shown, re-entry bans interrupted the migration cycle, and through unplanned return force the migrant to evaluate new strategies to achieve his/her goals. But both qualitative and quantitative data of individual interviews and focus groups have shown that returned, re-entry banned migrants fail to build new strategies back home and consider re-integration only as a possible, temporary remedy.

According to focus groups, those who have more money, foreign language skills (other than Russian) and higher education levels can opt for new countries more easily (the most frequently mentioned being the UAE and Turkey). In the present study, those who did not have the needed resources to migrate to other countries opted for Kazakhstan as a closer, Russian speaking, and culturally more similar destination. As shown above, however, alternative destinations for the most vulnerable re-entry banned migrants are often the result of an improvised strategy, and lead them into difficult and dangerous situations in case they trust the wrong persons. Focus groups confirmed that those with sufficient funds and willing to risk it make a new passport with a different name, often asking for money loans, and return back to Russia, or pay to be smuggled into the Russian Federation. The associated risks are very high and do not guarantee that these migrants can improve their situation.

On the basis of the collected data, the most vulnerable groups of re-entry banned migrants have the following characteristics (Fig. 1.4):

- Young migrants (under 40 years of age) with a high number of dependents, living outside cities, where services and jobs are limited;
- Women without husbands (abandoned or divorced), with children at a young age and with no jobs or support in their home country.

Fig. 1.4. Characteristics of most vulnerable respondents

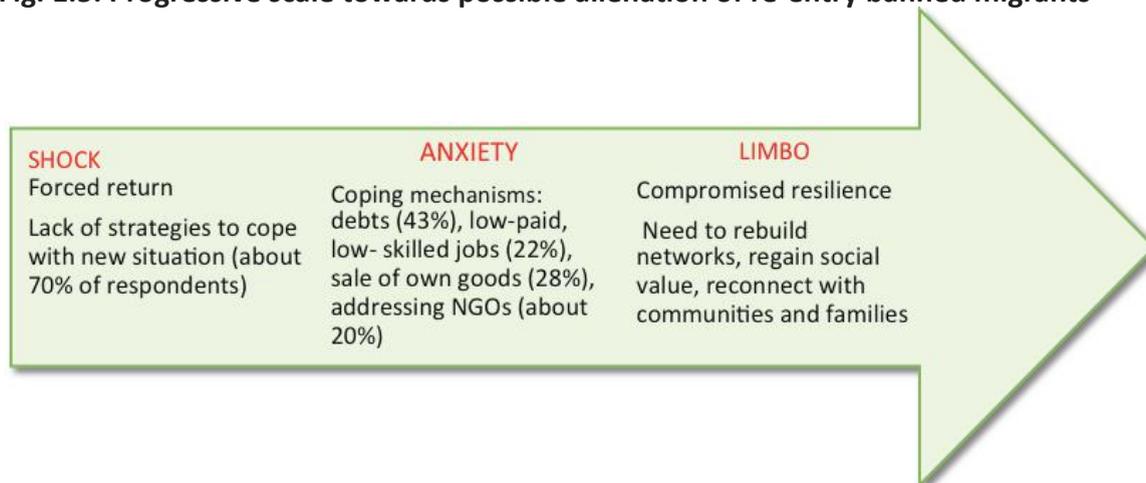


Source: Findings from the interviews and focus groups in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Jan.-June 2016

In-depth interviews enquiring about the life of re-entry banned migrants in two countries of origin (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) showed that the bans issued in the Russian Federation limited the chances of integration back home in the first year. Considering that among 160 respondents of interviews and focus groups in the two countries over 70% of them were unemployed after 6 months or more after their return, and considering that at least half of them were between 20 and 40 years of age, we can assume that they fall into the above category of vulnerable returned migrants.

The situation of re-entry banned migrants who returned to their country of origin (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) can be summarized in the following framework (Fig. 1.5).

Fig. 1.5. Progressive scale towards possible alienation of re-entry banned migrants



Source: Findings from the interviews and focus groups in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Jan.-June 2016 ²⁰

20 Percentage calculated out of the total of 113 individual interviews.

The present framework shows how multiple factors (unplanned and sudden return, impoverishment, unemployment and limited support from the state, civil society and communities), combined with the limited coping mechanisms used by re-entry banned migrants (low-paid occasional jobs at home, failed migration to alternative countries of destination, indebtedness and dispossession), lead to migrants' gradual alienation from families, communities, and state bodies through 3 main phases:

- **Phase 1 – Shock** relates to the first months after the migrant learns about the ban and makes a sudden return to his country of origin or stays in the country of transit (Kazakhstan), after being rejected from the Kazakh-Russian border.
- **Phase 2 – Anxiety** relates to the most crucial moment of adaptation to the new situation, and three scenarios have been identified: 1) the re-entry banned migrant has to go back home and abruptly change his/her plans, he/she hardly re-integrates back home, and becomes increasingly frustrated by the impossibility of returning to his/her job in the Russian Federation, or finding suitable jobs back home, with serious repercussions on his/her ability to sustain the family and/or the household; 2) the re-entry banned migrant is rejected at the Kazakh-Russian border and stays in Kazakhstan with high chances of becoming irregular because of the lack of time to obtain a registration, and he ends up accepting a low-paid and low-skilled job; 3) the re-entry banned migrant tries a new country option through mediators, lacking networks and more detailed knowledge of the country of destination. In all three cases, the re-entry banned migrant is at high risk of being trafficked (in new country of destination or trying to go to an alternative destination for more lucrative jobs), exploited or abused.
- **Phase 3 – Limbo** signifies the long-term impact of the re-entry ban: if integration is unsuccessful, the migrant's resilience is highly compromised as the economic situation comes to a very critical stage (debts, dispossession, lack of income for a long period of time), and the loss of self-worth and social capital push the migrant to withdraw from community life, and family engagement.

Among respondents of individual interviews, it was revealed that after about one year of stay in the country of destination:

- Migrants feel that relatives are not helping them
 - o Kyrgyzstan – 10 out of 20 respondents (50%)
 - o Tajikistan – 18 out of 35 respondents (51%)
- Migrants feel that acquaintances are of little or no help
 - o Kyrgyzstan – 12 respondents (60%)
 - o Tajikistan – 20 respondents (57%)
- Migrants admit that they lost contacts with their networks in Russia
 - o Kyrgyzstan – 7 respondents (35%)
 - o Tajikistan – 18 respondents (51%)

Thus, it can be assumed that after the end of the re-entry ban the returned migrants will be poorer than at the outset, and he/she will have less chances of safely migrating to the Russian Federation and finding job opportunities through traditional strategies, most of all the use of networks.

Focus groups further confirm the thesis that as a result of unplanned and sudden return, relations with relatives and community become harder and networks become weaker because of psychosocial factors (the gradual voluntary withdrawal of respondents from communal life because they do not feel at ease and they consider that their status is diminished and feel ashamed), as well as cultural factors (the impossibility of taking part in typical communal gatherings such as *toj*, due to the need to save up money). At least half of respondents among the re-entry banned migrants ceased to contact their networks in Russia in the first year of ban. Focus groups revealed that re-entry banned migrants were losing their networks in Russia upon their return home.

1.1.7. Conclusions

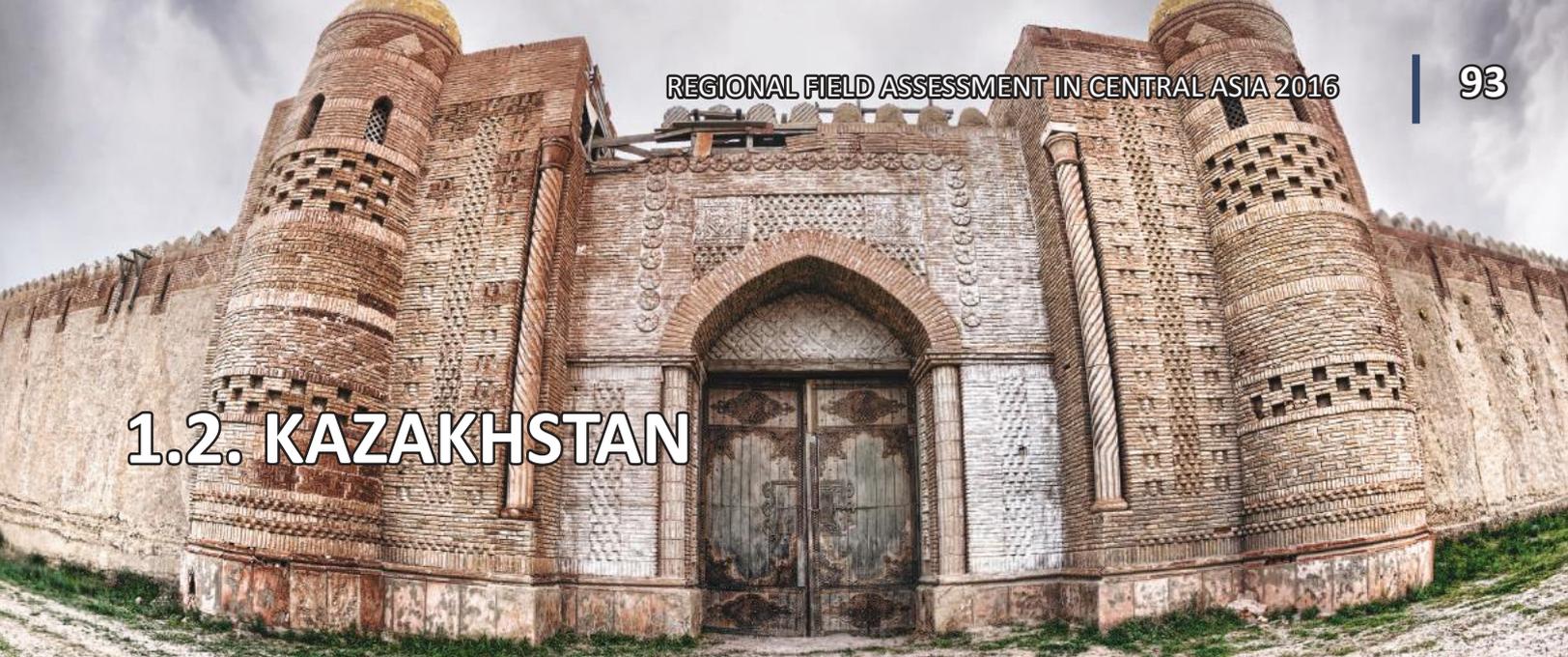
The present assessment has provided some qualitative data about the negative impact that re-entry bans are having on return migration chances of re-integration, highlighting some important, correlated factors:

- Economic deterioration is the first direct consequence of the unplanned and sudden return caused by re-entry bans and in the long run leads families and households of the re-entry banned migrants to extreme poverty.
- Economic deterioration is also the main vulnerability found among re-entry banned women migrants, whereas feelings of isolation might derive from their marital status (divorced, abandoned) or previous migration experiences. Nonetheless, a broader study would be needed in order to extract statistical data about re-entry banned women and related vulnerable categories.
- Loss of self-worth is to be seen in connection with the capacity of the returned migrant to be the breadwinner in communities where a patriarchal system presupposes that the male head of the family provides for his dependents and when expectations from migrant workers are rather high. At the same time, recurrent comments of migrants on their lack of strategies (“we don’t know what to do”) and the fact that at home they lose value (supported by expressions such as: “no one needs you” “they stop looking for you”)²¹, associated to the observation that they do not have income back home, have reinforced this thesis. Nonetheless, a broader study would be needed in order to extract statistical data about re-entry banned women and related vulnerable categories.
- Social isolation from families and communities, such as migrants’ experience of growing conflicts inside their families, tendency of male migrants to spend more time outside the households and withdrawal from communal traditional celebrations such as toj for economic reasons.
- Finally, alienation from state bodies is an additional factor characterizing re-entry banned migrants. This factor is not new, considering that migration itself has become through the years a strategy to compensate the lack of state involvement and limited development in the countries of origin. Nonetheless, the lack of interaction with the state is reinforced by the re-entry bans when migrants return, and contact state bodies only to find ways of getting their ban removed. The fact that this strategy has not reduced the number of re-entry banned returned migrants might in the long-run increase the sense of frustration towards the state.

Thus, interventions are needed in order to better address the needs of re-entry banned migrants, limit their economic losses and reinforce their resilience, especially when considering that re-entry bans will continue to grow with more and more people becoming unemployed, dispossessed and gradually isolated. An example from an NGO in Tajikistan has proved that addressing the economic re-integration of returned migrants might help mitigate the impact of the return on the economies of households and in the long run might also help migrants to build strategies to re-integrate in their country of origin.

21 Expressions extracted from focus groups conducted in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Kulyab, Yovan, Qurgonteppa (Tajikistan) and recurrent in individual interviews conducted in the two countries, April and June 2016.





1.2. KAZAKHSTAN

1.2.1. Profile of respondents and methods used

Visited locations

Interviews were conducted with the help of NGO-partners of IOM. The target locations included Shymkent (South), Aktau (West), Petropavlovsk (North), and Astana and Almaty as the main urban centres and urban destinations. All locations are typical destinations of migrants who are most often employed in construction sites, services, domestic work, or in the agricultural sector²²; furthermore, local NGOs had reported the presence of migrants banned to the Russian Federation in Kazakhstan.

The selected locations were part of migration routes that comprehended transit to the Russian Federation, return or relocation in Kazakhstan in case of rejection from the Russian border authorities. Shymkent and Aktau, in particular, appear to be destinations of Uzbek migrants because of their proximity with Uzbekistan and because they attract a foreign workforce to be employed in the service sector, trade and the agricultural sector. Petropavlovsk, also a border city, is relevant because of its proximity to the Russian border. As a local NGO reported, migrants try to cross the border, and it is the place where they might find out about their re-entry ban and be rejected from entering the Russian Federation. In Petropavlovsk, then, re-entry banned migrants might decide to return to their home country or try to get information from other migrants or co-nationals about available jobs in Kazakhstan.

Typical migration routes crossing Kazakhstan towards Russia include the Uzbek-Kazakh borders, involving the area of Shymkent, and the Western-Northern region along the railway to Orenburg and Samara, through the cities of Uralsk and Aktobe and up north, through Astana and Petropavlovsk, on the way to Omsk and Ekaterinburg. Through transit check points in the regions of Aktobe, Atyrau and Western Kazakhstan, migrants return to their countries of origin in Central Asia. On the same routes, migrants might be transiting once they find out about their re-entry bans and decide whether to return to their countries of origin or stay in Kazakhstan to work.

Methods used

In Kazakhstan, migrants were interviewed either at the local NGO office, or outside the workplace. Indeed, it was not always possible to agree with them and meet in a more neutral place as they were working long hours and because of their irregular status (like for instance lack of a work permit) they would not feel at ease to meet for longer than 30 minutes. For this reason, interviews often lasted less longer than planned; at times the respondents were interviewed more than once, and focus groups were replaced by group interviews with small groups of participants (2 to 3 persons) and a limited number of questions that were focused on common coping strategies under the ban, and integration challenges for their community of reference. In this way, migrants could acquire little by little more confidence and motivation and use their own experience as an example.

²² According to data of the Migration Police Department of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Kazakhstan, dated 4th August 2016, most work permits were issued in the Southern regions of Kazakhstan, namely 20,4% in the Southern Kazakh Region, 14,8% in the Almaty region, and 12,3% in Almaty.

Other interviews involved employers, who expressed their views and attitudes towards foreign labour force, especially low skilled workers, and NGO representatives on their experiences, best practices and gaps in working with vulnerable migrants and re-entry banned migrants.

Because of difficulties in identifying re-entry banned migrants, who tend to hide from circles outside their working and living places, not all respondents admitted to have a re-entry ban and at times would claim they returned voluntary, although their stories suggested that they could not return to Russia. 19 respondents were confirmed as re-entry banned, whereas 6 more were suspected of having a re-entry ban. Unlike the other visited countries (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan), in Kazakhstan it was not possible to find enough female respondents in order to develop a proper gender-based analysis and thus further research is needed in this perspective, requiring more time and presenting more difficulties related to the access to female respondents especially in case they have a re-entry ban.

1.2.2. Vulnerabilities of re-entry banned migrants working or transiting through Kazakhstan

Re-entry banned migrants who transited through or worked in Kazakhstan appeared to be among the most vulnerable groups and yet the most invisible ones to authorities. Interviewees' vulnerabilities stemmed in part from their deteriorated economic situation after they returned home, very weak or non-existent networks in the host country and high chances of being irregular because of limited knowledge and experience in attending to administrative procedures in Kazakhstan. Finally, interviewees often accepted unfavourable terms of employment, such as the lack of contracts and delayed payments, considering that their degrading status in their country of origin after the route to Russia was closed, put them in no position of bargaining better conditions. An irregular standing seemed to have become a compromise to get a job, and avoidance of authorities was increased by interviewees' consequent heightened fears of prosecution even in case of violation of their rights (such as exploitation).

Table 1.2. Overview of vulnerabilities of various categories of re-entry banned migrants

Country of origin	Route		Impact on employment chances
	Rejected on the RUS/KZ border	Going from home to KZ as alternative destination	
Migrants from Uzbekistan rely on existing well-developed networks in Kazakhstan	<p>High risk of indebtedness.</p> <p>At high risk of be stranded in Kazakhstan.</p> <p>Limited time/knowledge to legalize their status.</p> <p>Low trust towards authorities.</p>	<p>High risk of indebtedness.</p> <p>Limited legal knowledge.</p> <p>Low trust towards authorities.</p> <p>Contacts mostly through kin networks (60% of Uzbek respondents).</p>	<p>Finding relatively secure employment.</p> <p>Still high chance to be irregular.</p>
Migrants from Tajikistan rely on new networks	<p>Occasional help from diaspora organizations depending on where they are.</p>	<p>High risk of indebtedness.</p> <p>Limited legal knowledge.</p> <p>Low trust towards authorities.</p> <p>Contacts through mediators, employment center back home.</p>	<p>Irregular employment (risk of not getting paid, and/or being exploited).</p> <p>High chance to be irregular.</p>

Source: Findings from the interviews and group interviews in Kazakhstan. Jan.-June 2016

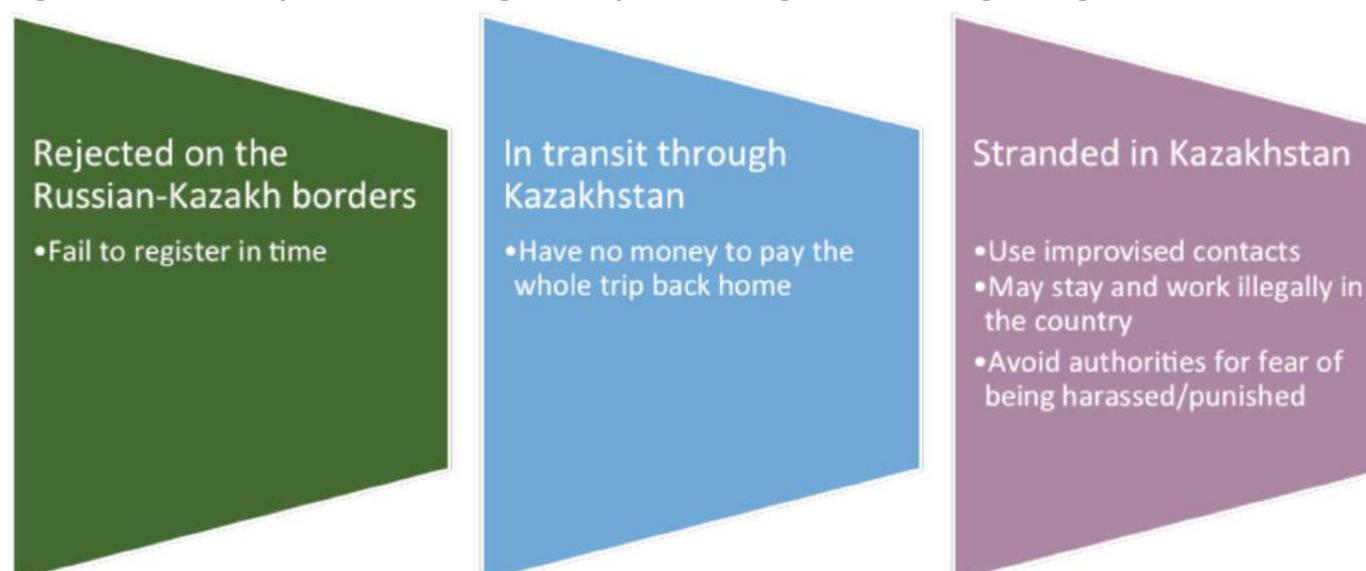
Seventy-four percent of 54 migrants interviewed in Kazakhstan (individual and group interviews) had or were suspected to have a re-entry ban to the Russian Federation. With the exception of 2 respondents who found themselves in Kazakhstan after being rejected at the Russian-Kazakh border, the others had chosen Kazakhstan as an alternative destination either re-emigrating from their countries of origin, or while transiting through the country on their way back home. Most respondents who were classified as re-entry banned (confirmed or suspected making up a total of 25 respondents) were working and living in Kazakhstan illegally (92%), and in isolation, having no contacts with state entities or NGOs (68%).

In the following sections, two scenarios of re-entry banned migrants transiting through or going to Kazakhstan are shown on the basis of qualitative data collected during the interviews.

Vulnerabilities of migrants transiting through Kazakhstan with a re-entry ban

Scenario 1 includes cases in which migrants were rejected at the Russian-Kazakh border or were forced to leave Russia because of the ban. In such cases, migrants found themselves without the possibility to pay an unexpected trip back home, and at high risk of fraud or exploitation increased by a lack of strategies and networks in transit. All such correlated factors increased their chances of being stranded in Kazakhstan. Coping mechanisms included the use of improvised networks and illegal employment in the country of transit (see Fig. 1.6).

Fig. 1.6. Vulnerability factors affecting re-entry banned migrants transiting through Kazakhstan



Source: Findings from the individual and group interviews in Kazakhstan. Jan.-June 2016

Among all re-entry banned migrants, 2 respondents who were rejected from the border and found themselves in extreme economic needs upon arrival to Kazakhstan explained:

"We travelled through all of Kazakhstan and at Aksaray (border checkpoint in the Astrakhan Region, RF) I was not let in and was sent back to Atyrau. I started looking for work straight away because I did not have much money, only enough to get to Moscow. I met some of my countrymen at the train station, they couldn't help immediately, so I spent several nights at the train station." (Abubakr)



"[...] I was told I should leave the country. I found myself in Kazakhstan. It was cold here, I did not know anyone. Somebody gave me money for a coach trip to Astana, there I looked for Uzbeks or Tajiks hoping somebody might help [...] I had nothing. Only the clothes that I had on me when I came to Kazakhstan from the border] and that's all! I didn't even have a coat! And it is winter here, very cold!" (Pulod)

It is worth citing another case in which a migrant was stranded in Kazakhstan not following rejection from the border but on his way back to his country of origin (Uzbekistan). Bakhram stayed in Kazakhstan, instead of going back home, because of lack of money to cover for the whole trip expenses. He had known in Moscow, back in 2015, that he had a re-entry ban and for this reason left the Russian Federation earlier than planned. His decision to stop in Kazakhstan became for him a "plan B": working in Kazakhstan would help him avoid long-term unemployment at home and stay closer to the Russian border. The Uzbek migrant explained:

"We were on the train on our way home from Moscow but I knew I did not have enough money to get home and to live on at home, so I was texting my friends looking for work. Guys said there are our people in Aktau ... So I went there from Aktobe at once using my last penny."

He also noticed that some migrant workers in the same situation would work illegally in Kazakhstan to earn enough to pay for the trip back to Uzbekistan:

"They earn a little bit of money here and then go home." (Bakhram)

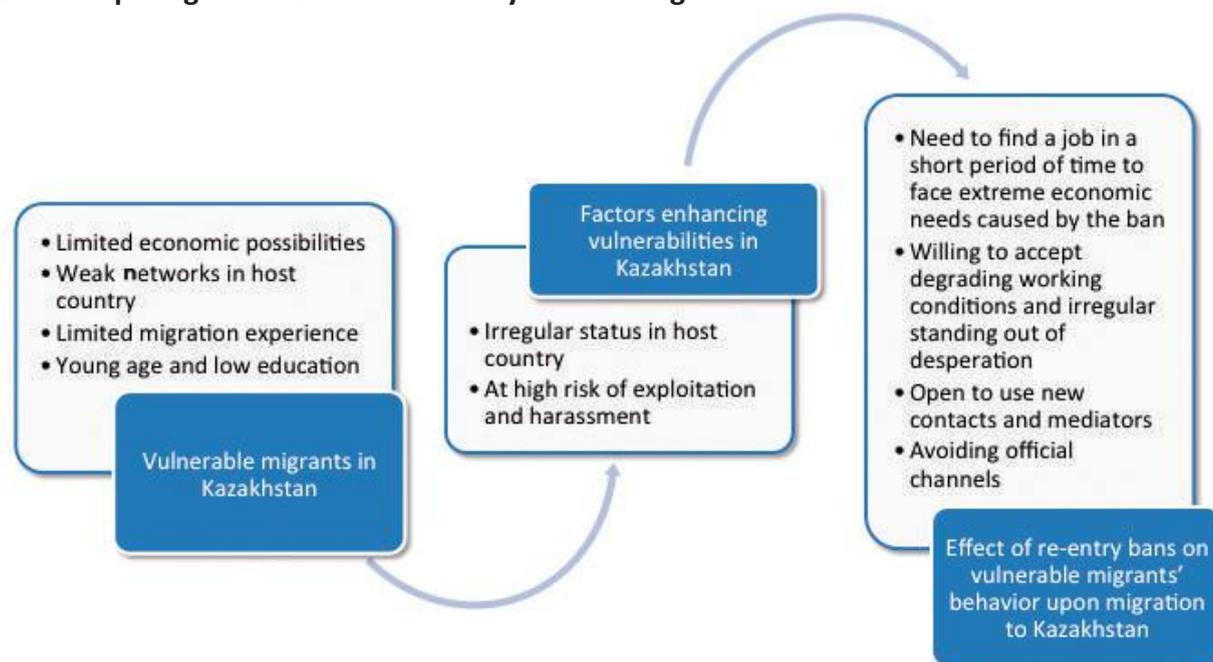
Respondents noticed that while in transit through the country, it was hard for them to become acquainted with the legal rules, failing to get duly informed while passing the border, and relying on information spread among migrants by word of mouth. All cited respondents were irregular in Kazakhstan, in that two failed to register in time and one was working without a work permit, which put them at high risk of harassment from the police. For this reason, they were trying to hide from authorities and used only improvised contacts among migrants or, as in the case of Bakhram, acquaintances to get the necessary help. The respondents also explained that those who manage to find a better paid job in Kazakhstan end up staying in the country, whereas those who do not succeed work and save up the necessary amount of money to complete their journey back home.

Vulnerabilities associated with migrating to Kazakhstan to cope with re-entry bans to the Russian Federation

According to scenario 2, interviewed re-entry banned migrants who had arrived to Kazakhstan from their country of origin during the period of the ban had been unemployed at home for medium/long periods of time. The difficult economic conditions caused by such situation, combined with inexperience and misinformation about the new host country not only limited interviewed re-entry banned migrants' chances of success but also put them at risk of exploitation.²³ In this way, re-entry banned migrants in Kazakhstan entered the category of the most vulnerable migrant workers (Fig.1.7).

23 At least 6 cases were detected among interviewees, in a total of 25 respondents

Fig. 1.7. Comparing vulnerable and re-entry banned migrants in Kazakhstan



Source: Findings from the individual and group interviews in Kazakhstan. Jan.-June 2016

The study shows that re-entry banned migrants appeared to be acting out of desperation, accepting risky trips with no networks and unverified mediators and degrading working conditions, and their legal status placed them in a voluntary isolation from authorities.

1.2.3. Legalizing in a new country of destination: comparing re-entry banned and vulnerable migrants' experience

Finding themselves in Kazakhstan for the first time, interviewed re-entry banned migrants had no experience on how to legalize. A part of them claimed it to be hard to get acquainted with rules and quick ways of legalizing, and some even thought it to be expensive but showed no knowledge of local legal procedures. A young Uzbek migrant interviewed in Astana, suspected of having a re-entry ban, claimed:

"Getting all documents is a loss of time. In Russia I learned how to do it, where to go. Here I don't know where to go. I don't know the city, never go out, as the police harass us [Uzbeks] continuously. No one helps with documents, neither the employers, nor the mediators... Legally working in Kazakhstan is expensive! I didn't even try." (Khasan)

The study shows that legalization was an issue both for re-entry banned and for other vulnerable migrants who had limited migration experience in the country (combined with the young age of the migrant), and lacked networks. One respondent claimed that avoiding administrative procedures was a commonly accepted practice among migrants; Dastan, 22 years old, no re-entry ban, migrated to Aktau as his first migration experience. He never made it to Russia, as he claims he had not enough money to pay for the trip, nor contacts who might have helped him. When asked about his irregular status, he answered:

"It's too expensive to get a work permit in Kazakhstan. No one does it." (Dastan)

At the same time, though, Dastan was unaware of the possibility of getting a patent in Kazakhstan. Findings also showed that working illegally in the country was at times the result of a compromise between migrants in extreme economic needs and employers or mediators exploiting the situation to their advantage. In this way, both re-entry banned migrants and migrants who had not been able to find employment in the Russian Federation for a long time were easy targets. Together with his companion, Murat, re-entry banned, and Yasir, long-time unemployed in the Russian Federation, made use of a mediator to find a job in Kazakhstan and relied on him to help them legalize. Both migrants were focused on finding a job as quickly as possible to escape a feeling of frustration and stasis back home, so that they did not take into account safety issues and were ready to accept the risk of being irregular in the host country in exchange of a job. Murat said:

"I stayed home. Did nothing... There was nothing to do. Somehow I worked sometimes, at least to have something to eat... My mother and my sister provided for the family..." (Murat)

In a few days, Murat accepted a job in Astana offered by the mediator whom he did not really know. Once arrived at his destination, Murat and his colleagues, included Yasir, gave their passports under the promise they would get a registration, and started working without a work permit. As a result, though, they had their documents taken from them and were never paid for their work.

"We told the guy [Uzbek mediator] that we don't know where to go for the documents, [asked] if he could help." (Murat)

A factor perpetuating the irregular standing of vulnerable migrants was the unwillingness of employers to assist or invest in legalizing their workers, as they see no advantages and find it easier and cheaper for the latter to cross the border every month, and for the employers to agree with the local police. One employer admitted it:²⁴

"When the migration police come, we come to an arrangement with them somehow [illegally]. I haven't looked into the new laws yet. I've heard they want us to pay 7 thousand tenge a month. That's a lot; if it was less I would probably pay in full."

On this purpose, Khasan noticed about himself:

"I don't have a registration, nor a work permit. If I meet the police, I call my employer, he says that I'm working for him. They let me go."

Declarations of interviewed migrants and employers confirmed the idea that in general low skilled workforce is a profitable business both for employers and mediators, when facilitated by corruption among police officers, and illiteracy and needs of migrants. As a consequence, an irregular standing put migrants at the mercy of employers and mediators, who decide unilaterally the issue of salaries and enforcement of unwritten contracts. Cases of cheating were detected among respondents and included removal of ID documents (Murat and Yasir), non-payment of salaries (Murat, Yasir, Salmon, Ibrakhim, Ismoil) and threats from the employer (Ismoil).

Another important aspect relates to the isolation of re-entry banned migrants from the outside world caused by a correlation of preponderant use of third parties to interact with authorities and irregular status. Some migrants during the interviews noticed for instance:

24 Interview with anonymous employer in Shymkent, April 2016.

"A friend of my classmate was working there, in Aktau, he said they could take on more workers, so we jumped into the taxi and went straight to the house where we are working now, nobody saw us [...] We try not to go outside the gates, there are lots of Uzbeks working at building sites here. The police car drives along the street at times, if they see us... The migration police were here once, they came into the house, the landlady [employer] was out. They took me, kept me all afternoon. Then the landlady came to fetch me..." (Bakhram)

"The employer received all the documents for us outside the house. We didn't even leave the yard." (Group interview – Bilal and Sherali)

Also in this case, a similar attitude was noted among young migrants without a re-entry ban, with limited experience abroad, like for instance Rashid and Dastan, both 22 years of age and at their first experience of migration:

"The employer settles all the questions with the police, we have never spoken to the police." (Rashid)

"I found once a job through an Uzbek, he does it for money [mediator]. It didn't work. The employer took our passports and didn't pay us. He forced us to work and blackmailed us. Those people [mediators] deceive their own co-nationals. It happened to me, it happened to my friends." (Dastan)

Another factor enhancing difficulties in legally hiring migrant workers in Kazakhstan regards the fact that the lack of an official professional certificate makes it difficult for employers to legalize foreign workers. This is typical for instance among private companies working in the field of services and transportation. On this purpose, one Uzbek migrant, working in a café in Aktau who was legally registered in the country but had no work permit explained:

"At the moment I am registered as working for a private individual. I pay tax every month. If you apply for a three-month permit, you pay tax for all three months up front. Then, at the end of those three months, you file all the documents once again, pay the tax and renew the permit for another three months. You can repeat this up to four times. I am not allowed to work for a legal entity but I stay here absolutely legally. I do it just for my own convenience, so as not to have to cross the border [...]"

The fact that migrants cannot be easily legalized at their place of work makes them even more vulnerable in that they are not entitled to receiving medical or social assistance and that illegal employment heightens the risks for them of being exploited. Among all interviewees, only four had a regular contract and only one had properly registered the address of the place where he was employed. All re-entry banned migrants, with the exception of two assisted by IOM, were hired illegally.

Interviewees with an irregular status would rarely go out and try not to attract the attention of the police. In particular, they seemed to hide from Kazakh authorities as they might be kept under strict control of the employer. In case they were cheated by mediators/employers, they also feared they would be seen as perpetrators rather than victims. Finally, they were concerned that having a re-entry ban to Russia would make Kazakh authorities suspicious.

Although irregular status was a common feature also among other migrants, those with a re-entry ban seemed more scared of getting in contact with the police. Irregular status limited respondents' chances of success as they could not protect themselves from cases of violation of their rights, as the following section will show.

1.2.4. Dealing with economic issues after the ban

Limited success in Kazakhstan was visible in the fact that since their arrival in Kazakhstan, a part of the respondents had not been able to pay back their debts. During the interviews, three migrants noticed:

"I asked my neighbour to lend me money. It's normal in our neighbourhood [to ask for loans]. I haven't given it back yet. It's been a year." (Salmon)

"I would never ask people for loans, but I have a debt with the bank, I don't know how to pay it back." (Ibrakhim)

"I have debts with my acquaintances and relatives... If I can earn, I give them the money back as soon as I can." (Muslim)

All mentioned respondents did not receive salaries on-time and were paid less than agreed at the beginning or were not paid at all. As mentioned above, vulnerabilities described so far (irregular status, limited economic profit and risks of fraud and exploitation) are not unique for re-entry banned migrants, but are found also among other vulnerable migrants. What is peculiar among re-entry banned migrant workers is that abrupt changes in their coping strategies caused by the ban, and enhanced economic needs after their return back home lead them to leave within few days, as soon as they heard about job opportunities in Kazakhstan. Salmon and Ibrakhim, for instance, explained:

"I wasn't working back home. I needed money. When I heard about Kazakhstan, I checked my passport and just left. The following day." (Salmon)

"I left after one week or so... I didn't start thinking too much about it." (Ibrakhim)

With the same dynamics, a young Kyrgyz re-entry banned migrant left for Astana within a few days since he learned about a job at a construction site in the Kazakh capital:

"I came to Kazakhstan through a Kyrgyz guy, he was gathering a group of workers for a construction site in Astana. I decided to try. As it didn't work out at the construction site, I look for jobs anywhere, on ads, internet. Nothing. I don't know anyone here" (Aydar)

Findings show also that in the case of migration to Kazakhstan as an alternative destination, the risk of being cheated and exploited is very high because migrants do not plan their trip properly, with official information and through safe channels. A part of them incurred debts in order to pay for their trip to Kazakhstan (11 respondents), and some used mediators to plan the trip, falling into a dependency trap (6 respondents). For instance, Salmon and Ibrakhim were both victims of one mediator who attracted migrant workers to Astana. The employer at the construction site where they were hired never paid them the promised salary and they ended up in extreme need, which left them incapable even of buying food or paying for a phone call home to ask for help. Also Murat had his passport

taken away from him and was not paid for his work at another construction site. When the three interviewees were asked about their situation back home, a feeling of embarrassment and signs of stress were apparent. Ibrakhim, for instance, explained:

"It is a difficult situation. I feel awkward... I am a healthy guy and I cannot feed my family... A man should be earning money..."
(Ibrakhim)

An interviewed mediator who attracts foreign workforce in construction sites in the Southern Kazakh Region noticed that people in critical situations, such as re-entry banned migrants, were willing to accept even worse working conditions, compared to other vulnerable migrants. He claimed:²⁵

"I sent those who came back from Russia to the furthest site, 60 km from here, only this lot agreed to work there."

It is important to notice that re-entry banned migrants in Kazakhstan behave as if they were "racing against the time" to make up for heavy economic losses back home, outstanding debts, and "to save face" vis-à-vis families and communities. This is particularly relevant for male migrants, who feel the burden of patriarchal practices assigning the ability of providing for the family mainly to male family members.²⁶ Therefore, respondents' "rushing" behaviour was explained through the fact that they tended to think that working illegally in Kazakhstan was a better option than staying at home without a job.

1.2.5. Use of informal networks in Kazakhstan

Unlike in the Russian Federation, re-entry banned migrants in Kazakhstan could not rely on strong networks, except for about 60% among Uzbek respondents who did make use of ethnic networks, also due to the geographical proximity and ongoing trans-border relations among co-ethnics in areas like Shymkent. In those cases, Uzbek re-entry banned migrants managed to find relatively safe employment, although they kept having an irregular status. The other re-entry banned migrants relied mainly on mediators and employers. As shown above, in such cases fraud and exploitation were common, and those migrants lived isolated from the outside world, invisible to authorities. Among the Tajik migrants, networks were not used in Kazakhstan, which was one factor of vulnerability, because in case of need they did not know whom to address. As a result, they asked for help among unknown co-nationals on the basis of "ethnic solidarity". One Tajik re-entry banned migrant in Petropavlovsk said:

"I went to Oral, then to Kostanay to look for a job [...]. Got to know a few people, some of them helped me ... In Kostanay I met my fellow countrymen, they helped with work, with a flat, with the documents."
(Abubakr)

Improvised contacts, even among co-nationals were considered risky by other migrants. For instance, a representative of a Tajik diaspora organization in Petropavlovsk noticed:²⁷

"We have recently helped several of our people to go back home. They worked at a building site for six months, somewhere in the district, some Tajik man whom they knew fixed this job up for them, promised decent work and conditions but then disappeared. We've been looking for him for two months now, but he is nowhere to be found."

25 Interview taken in Shymkent, April 2016.

26 This factor is highlighted in more details in the following chapters on Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

27 Interview in Petropavlovsk, May 2016.

In Astana, no one among the interviewees had networks and communicated within the community of migrant colleagues and occasionally with employers with whom they had established good relations.

"I am now staying at my employer's place I work for him [at a shashlik café], although I have no passport now. He's a good person, helps me, he understands that we all need help." (Murat)

In Shymkent, Uzbeks as well as Tajiks could count on networks among historically consolidated communities of about 500,000 Uzbek Kazakhstani citizens and 40,000 Tajik Kazakhstani citizens, living there since Soviet times. Nonetheless, they often used mediators to find a job, as diasporas were not actively involved in migration-related issues. In Aktau, Uzbek migrants relied mostly on close acquaintances or relatives, but could not count on larger networks. In Petropavlovsk, Uzbeks had no networks whereas Tajiks found occasionally help among the diaspora, made up of long-term Tajik migrants engaged in trade. Here, the Tajik diaspora seemed to help both Tajiks and Uzbeks. Finally, in Almaty, only two respondents from Tajikistan were interviewed and according to their experience, they had no networks in the city. This shows that there is no clear pattern when it comes to networks in Kazakhstan, they mostly remain of informal and ad-hoc nature (with an exception of the Tajik diaspora in Petropavlovsk).

A common factor among interviewed migrants in all locations was a feeling of isolation and loneliness, enhanced by constant fear of authorities due to irregular status and at times strengthened by the idea that re-entry bans might attract attention from authorities. One female Tajik migrant with a re-entry ban, who was working as a cook in a construction site where her own husband was employed, told the researcher:

"I got a re-entry ban in Russia, also my husband. He found a job here in Astana through a friend of his. But we are alone here. The employer registered us in a place outside the city, I don't know why. I was so scared the police would stop us, you know, it's easy to be taken for a terrorist: migrants, Tajik, with a ban, all this doesn't help... We don't know anyone here in Astana. When the police caught me and told me I must leave the country, we just went, my husband and I, to construction sites, looking for Uzbeks or Tajiks... We sat with them, told them, and asked where we could get help."

Re-entry banned migrants' integration needs and the role of State and NGOs in Kazakhstan: a case study in Petropavlovsk

Migrants with a re-entry ban to the Russian Federation and transiting or working in Kazakhstan are in need of legal and economic assistance for safe return home and of legal assistance in case they decide to stay and work in the country. Besides authorities, a crucial role might be played on the community level, involving diaspora organizations and NGOs in (1) identifying the re-entry banned migrants; (2) putting them in contact with authorities or providing them with the necessary information on how to legalize and where to get assistance. In this regard, the experience of the Tajik diaspora and a local NGO in Petropavlovsk could serve as an example showing good practices and gaps. The Tajik diaspora in Petropavlovsk is actively engaged in providing assistance to migrants rejected at the border and it is well known by local authorities. Those migrants who are not allowed to enter Russia because of a re-entry ban find themselves in Petropavlovsk without any knowledge of the place, nor acquaintances or relatives who might help, and have 5 days to legally register or leave the country. Usually they ask other migrants for information at the train station and mostly are directed to the bazaar in the Southern part of the city, where a community of Tajik migrants working in trade is well-known. A representative of the Tajik community explains:

"Every two to three days a Tajik would come to us, sometimes with children, no women as yet though. They are usually turned away at the Russian border. They find us following advice from the migration police, or asking for Tajiks at train stations and markets. Only those who have no means of going home are looking for us. Maybe there are some who managed to go home on their own. But those who come to us ... we have to help them."

The Tajik community helps re-entry banned migrants to return home by collecting the necessary money, following the Muslim principle of "voluntary charity" known as sadaqah. When possible, the diaspora community also helps those migrants to find a temporary job in Kazakhstan, as it was noted by one of the respondents, Abubakr:

"I was lucky, one of our countrymen was building a shop and needed somebody to finish the interior, I helped him and lived in his house. He even got me registered." (Abubakr)

According to the representative of the Petropavlovsk Tajik community, about 50 people from January to April 2016 have received help from them to safely return home. Nonetheless he also notes:

"Not everyone wants to go home, they say there is no work there and so on. So they leave to look for jobs by themselves, disappear for some time, then come back with the same story – please help: I was not paid for six months' worth of work and so on. How can we help them though? They didn't sign contracts and have no registration."

The Tajik community is in close contact with a local NGO in Petropavlovsk and it is well known by the migration police. In the past, information campaigns organised by the NGO have proved to be quite effective in ensuring migrants could get access to protection mechanisms and/or be put in contact with the Kyrgyz and Tajik diasporas in the city. Brochures were distributed and direct contact was established with migrants gathering at the train station and closer to the Russian-Kazakh borders.

The same NGO works actively with the local authorities that also inform migrants about the presence of the Tajik diaspora, showing that mistrust barriers can be lifted through a joint action of state and non-state actors coming in contact with the migrant community. Nonetheless, limited funds make the NGO's efforts less effective and temporary as the NGO works on short-term projects. In this way, it is not possible for the NGO to reach out to a larger number of migrants, and joint actions bear a temporary and ad-hoc character. As a result, many migrants end up coming in contact with the NGO only when they find themselves in extreme needs and improvised contacts have failed to help them or have worsened their situation. It is very significant that among migrants interviewed between April and May 2016, only two were acquainted with the activities of the NGOs upon their arrival (one in Petropavlovsk and another one in Aktau), and that those who eventually addressed NGOs, did it when their documents had already expired, or when they were in very critical economic conditions and had been working for free in hard weather conditions, in some cases beaten up, or presented health problems related with work conditions. For this reason, NGOs meet difficulties in finding suitable solutions or granting material support in short periods of time, enhancing among migrants the idea that official entities cannot help.

Another important finding revealed by the above-mentioned NGO in Petropavlovsk regards the difficulties that the NGOs encounter in guaranteeing that migrants are legally hired, especially for low-skilled jobs or services, where in fact there is a high demand but the local legislation does not provide suitable quotas. The interviewed NGO reported that private agencies remain reluctant to serve migrant workers as they find it too problematic on the bureaucratic level. Similar observations were collected in Oral and Shymkent through expert interviews with other local NGOs.

1.2.6. Conclusions and recommendations

The present study has shown that migrants with a re-entry ban who transit or go to Kazakhstan as an alternative destination exhibit similar vulnerabilities as those with limited migration experience, pre-existing economic difficulties worsened by long periods of unemployment at home and/or in the Russian Federation. Vulnerable migrants in Kazakhstan tend to work illegally, count on limited networks, with high risks of ending up in the hands of dishonest mediators or employers. In case of violation of their rights (exploitation, withdrawal of ID documents, etc.), re-entry banned migrants find themselves in the position of not being able to pay back debts they used for travel to the country, and incapable of addressing official channels because of their irregular status and because they fear to raise apprehension in relation with their ban to the Russian Federation. This last aspect, in particular, pushes re-entry banned migrants to make use of unofficial channels and avoid contacts with authorities, with a double effect: on the one hand they are invisible to the state; on the other hand, NGOs that notice their presence do not have sufficient funds at their disposal or capacity to reach out to them and develop suitable services and grant re-entry banned migrants access to protection mechanisms.

The interviews suggest that those migrants who transit through Kazakhstan or choose it as an alternative destination need assistance in legalizing their stay in the country in due time. For this reason, enhanced information activities in border and transit points are necessary to reach out to re-entry banned migrants and encourage them to address official state and non-state channels. NGOs need to classify re-entry banned migrants as a distinctive vulnerable category in order to develop tailored assistance, as well as formulate ways of cooperation with community (diasporas) and State (migration police) and overcome fears of this target group related with their status of re-entry banned to the Russian Federation.

The actual legislation seems not to provide for low-skilled foreign workers, but the present sociological assessment has shown that migrant workers are the most needed category for such spheres as construction, services, seasonal and domestic work. These facts should be taken into consideration in order to facilitate and encourage legal employment of foreign workforce. In this regard, NGOs might enhance their cooperation with private hiring companies and become a reference point for newly arrived migrants, in joint cooperation with the migration police and diasporas, combining typical information means of migrants, such as word of mouth among migrants and communities, with more official sources of information.

Good practices in Petropavlovsk show that it is possible to use informal networks and diaspora organization in order to establish contact between migrants and authorities and build trust with officials, and also spread information not only on how to legalize, but also on the advantages of working and living legally. More funds should be directed towards this direction, making NGOs' efforts and activities more continuous and present in strategic points of aggregation of migrants. Furthermore, enhanced and more solid information activities and ongoing communication with migrants will reinforce risks prevention activities, limiting the hazards for migrants of falling in the hands of criminal individuals or organizations. Information should not only contain legal and human rights material, but also practical aspects such as the advantages of having vocational training certificates to facilitate their integration in the Kazakh job market and enhance their capacity to plan and improve their strategies.

NGOs' experiences in cooperating with community and diaspora organizations should be included in special programs widening the scope of supplied services and facilitating the integration of migrant workers in short term jobs, such as seasonal work, by use of private job placement companies. NGOs and diaspora organizations have a deep experience in reaching out to migrants in difficult situations.

1.3 KYRGYZSTAN

1.3.1. Profile of respondents and methods used

Visited locations

In Kyrgyzstan in-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted in the cities of Bishkek and Osh. Despite the lack of statistics on migrants returned from the RF with a re-entry ban, through consultations with NGOs it was possible to obtain the following quality information:

1. Migrants subjected re-entry bans tend to accumulate in these two cities. Banned migrants prefer to stay there during their ban while they try to find a way to be removed from the “black list”. Many banned migrants get stranded in these cities being in a desperate situation.
2. These areas are places of destination for internal migrants. Large numbers of them gather in the city of Bishkek and new housing estates in the suburbs. Migrants come from rural areas to Bishkek and Osh, especially to Bishkek, the capital and economic centre of the country where urbanization advances at a faster pace.
3. The cities of Bishkek and Osh serve as a transit point for migrant workers bound for abroad. Experts highlight that an unsuccessful experience of internal migration in these two cities pushes migrants to go to other countries.
4. The cities of Bishkek and Osh are leading among other regions and cities of the country in diversity of ethnic groups living in them. In Osh and the Osh Region there are migrants of Uzbek ethnic origin, whereas Bishkek and the Chuy Region are mainly inhabited by Russians, Uyghurs, Dungans and others.

Methods used and objectives

The respondents included returned migrants who presented vulnerabilities during migration under all or part of the used categories: economically (they had no jobs at the moment of being interviewed or they had insufficient income), socially (isolated with weakened networks; as for women, they were abandoned, divorced or widows) and legally (had no knowledge of the NGO or State entities that might have given them psychological and legal assistance, or support in searching a job). Five focus groups were conducted, two with female participants (Bishkek) and three with male participants (Bishkek and Osh), as well as one group interview with men at the Employment centre in Bishkek and one group interview in Osh with a group of women. The focus groups and group interviews were aimed at stimulating debates with migrants on coping mechanisms of returned migrants and their interaction with communities. Individual in-depth interviews were taken with migrants both with and without a re-entry ban and aimed at categorizing vulnerabilities as well as coping mechanisms of migrants whose return was caused in the first place by a re-entry ban in the Russian Federation.

The ultimate goal of this section is to show the impact of re-entry bans on migrants from Kyrgyzstan and categorize the most vulnerable groups among them through an analysis of their vulnerabilities during migration and after their forced return, and their complex interrelated characteristics. The present study also uses a gender perspective and aims at showing specific vulnerabilities of re-entry banned women migrants, shedding light on socio-cultural and economic dynamics that might make them marginalized from the community and in extreme need of assistance.

1.3.2. Impact of re-entry bans on vulnerable migrants

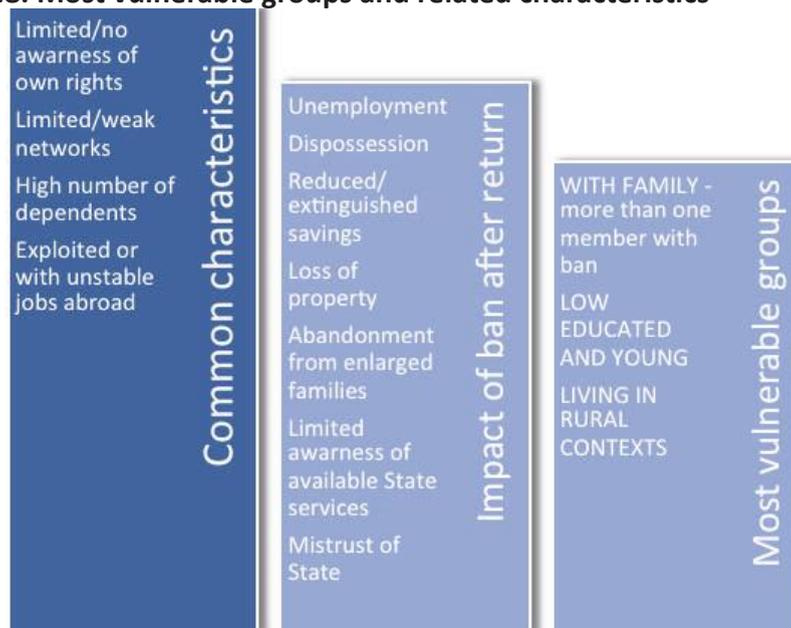
In the migration cycle in Kyrgyzstan, return has become mainly synonym of temporary return and has highlighted the transnational character that migrants' households have assumed,²⁸ with many members living and working abroad for several years and some even getting a new citizenship (Russian) but still playing a significant role in their home societies. This role does not only concern remittances, but also implies the development and perpetuation of networks.²⁹ Re-entry bans are having an impact on the coping strategies of migrants, forcing them to leave the Russian Federation before the accomplishment of their plans and for longer periods than expected, and place them vis-à-vis integration challenges back home both from the economic and the social point of view. In this way, unplanned return of migrants from the Russian Federation induces changes in their position within their community of origin, depriving men from their commonly acknowledged role of breadwinners, and women from their ability to provide for their dependents especially in case they have no husband. As a consequence, farther actions and strategies of returned migrants are highly dictated by stress, anxiety and the deeply felt need of escaping a situation of despair.

In the next sections, re-entry banned migrants' vulnerabilities will be assessed in order to measure how the bans influence their coping strategies and affect their resilience, with the ultimate goal of understanding their integration needs.

Assessing the vulnerabilities of returned migrants: characteristics of the most affected groups

Among re-entry banned migrants, different factors determined their level of vulnerability upon return. Such factors stemmed from the period both prior to and during the ban. In general, low-educated migrants built weaker strategies, had less extended and less effective networks in assuring their integration and stable employment abroad, and had more limited benefits from migration: most often they were irregular in the host country, tended to change jobs very often and were at risk of exploitation, and remittances were absorbed by everyday needs of those who stayed home, especially in case of a high number of dependents, including children.

Fig. 1.8. Most vulnerable groups and related characteristics



Source: Findings from the interviews and focus groups in Kyrgyzstan. Apr. 2016

28 Thieme, Susan. (2012). "Return Migration: Coming Home? Patterns and Characteristics of Return Migration in Kyrgyzstan". IOM; Пешкова В. М. (2016) Транснациональные особенности семейной экономики трудовых мигрантов из Средней Азии в России // Мониторинг общественного мнения: Экономические и социальные перемены. № 1. С. 240—255.

29 Vinokurov Evgeny (2013). "The Art of Survival: Kyrgyz Labour Migration, Human Capital, and Social Networks". Central Asia Economic Paper, 7.

Three main groups with some or all of such characteristics appeared to be the most affected by the re-entry bans:

1. Returned migrants with family, where more than one member had a ban could not count on second remittances and were unemployed back home.
2. Young migrants with low levels of education experienced more difficulties, compared to more educated ones, to find a job back home.
3. Migrants coming from rural contexts tended to be less educated, have more dependents, and were experiencing more pressure from extended families and communities in relation with unplanned return and having to re-adjust to more traditional and stricter life styles.

An important factor that determined the vulnerability of interviewed migrants was their low awareness of their rights. This factor determined their irregular status abroad and heightened the chances of being banned from the host country, but it also influenced the way they adjusted back home. In the Russian Federation, low awareness of human rights and low legal knowledge pushed migrants to avoid authorities, with higher risks of being exploited or deceived by employers and/or mediators, and becoming targets of corrupted police officers. Once back home respondents singled out the option of addressing official channels to get the necessary assistance to facilitate their re-integration back home, because they were used to associate authorities with cases of corruption and harassment and because they did not believe that State entities would have an interest in helping returned migrants stay. As an example, it was noticed that at least two thirds of respondents did not know about the possibility of getting unemployment benefits and that those who addressed authorities did it in the hope that they would be able to facilitate their amnesty and lift their ban in order to migrate again.

Among the above-shown vulnerable groups (Fig. 1.8), only in a few cases migrants were willing to integrate back home, thus not building any strategies to stay, but rather concentrating their efforts to migrate again, also by use of illegal means like forging their ID documents. Socio-economic and socio-cultural reasons were behind such behaviour, especially common among male respondents. When they were working and living abroad, bigger economic profits were accompanied by the possibility of planning one's own life independently and being able to plan children's education. In the case of young migrants, migration enabled them to escape from their families' control, especially if coming from rural, traditional contexts, and gain social prestige through economic autonomy. Upon unplanned return, this autonomy was causing tensions back home and pushed many returned migrants to re-emigrate to bigger cities in Kyrgyzstan, like Osh or Bishkek, breaking ties with the original communities and families, and with consequent issues of re-adjustment in urban contexts and high risks or additional marginalisation and unemployment. At the same time, unplanned return caused economic strains in the first months of ban, which reduced migrants' status in the eyes of their community of origin. For instance, Erlan, a 37-year-old migrant from Jalal-Abad, emphasised his reluctance in engaging in community events, expressing the frustration of coming back home "with empty hands":

"I will not be going to the 20th anniversary of our class graduation (in the village). Classmates usually go there to show off their wives and cars." (Erlan)

Another respondent, Umar, 35 years old and with 4 children, noticed the hardships of being back home:

"Day after day I appreciate more how valuable the salary was that I earned in Russia. Here, nothing is left in the pocket. My pockets are empty. Children are at school, they are still very little. My wife stays at home. I am ashamed when my father shares his pension with me." (Umar)

The most vulnerable groups of migrants saw their situation back home become worse in a relatively short period of time: they found themselves poorer and were not willing to engage with their community, and this was particularly visible among the above-described vulnerable group. Those migrants lacked alternative sources of income, strong support from families or communities, and were consuming their material resources faster because of the presence of dependents. Among 20 respondents with a ban, about 90% were having difficulties in providing for everyday needs, and 4/5 did not have their own dwelling, and either rented or lived with relatives or friends.

1.3.3. Impact of the re-entry ban on returned migrants' coping strategies

The following section will show how re-entry bans affected the coping mechanisms of such vulnerable migrants and how their resilience became compromised.

Short-term impact

In the short run, two main strategies were observed in reaction to the imposition of re-entry bans: attempt at re-entry or search for alternatives to emigration in Russia either in the country of origin or a third country. Table 1.3 presents typical elements of these strategies as well as outlines the key barriers and risk associated with them.

Table 1.3. Scenarios of returned re-entry banned migrants and their coping mechanisms

Possible Scenarios	Challenges and Risks
Banned migrant attempts to enter the country of destination:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He/She uses falsified or somebody else's documents and crosses the border illegally • He/She uses informal mediators to have their name removed from the "black list" • He/She comes to the state authorities for assistance with removing their name from the "black list" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial expenses and criminal liability • High risk of being deceived • High probability of increasing costs and long wait with no results
Banned migrant attempts to provide for oneself and his/her families	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He/She looks for jobs in the informal sector • He/She borrows money from relatives and acquaintances • He/She emigrates to third countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending savings and selling movable and immovable property • Low-paid and temporary work • Becoming deeply in debt • Risks of falling back into irregularity in the country of destination

Source: Findings from the interviews and focus groups

Among the majority of respondents, ways to cope with impoverishment and lack of income included short-term strategies, such as the use of loans (from acquaintances, relatives, sometimes banks), and the selling of property (for those who managed to buy any during migration), and finally occasional low-paid jobs found through acquaintances. It is important to notice, though, that expenses back home were not being used only for basic needs, which still remained a priority, but also as an investment to have the ban lifted and to get relevant information. As Mirbek claimed:

"In 2012–2014 I worked in Saint Petersburg. We had only one child then. Now we have a daughter as well. My wife also has a ban but it should be lifted next year. We heard that if one of the spouses is in Russia it is easier to remove the other spouse from the list. We had to pay for this information too. We have to pay for every piece of information. My wife will go to Russia next year, but I cannot wait here for three and half years. I want to go to Dubai. We are thinking of taking out a loan for this. We do not have any security to offer. We asked my mother-in-law for help, she is going to mortgage her house." (Mirbek)

Many migrants, explained that it is common practice to look for information also through internet, where they may find services promising upon payment the cancellation of the ban.

"I learnt that there is a company in Russia that can help to get my name off the "black list." Apparently, it costs 70 thousand roubles. But I was also told that there are several lists so I fear that they will intercept me on the border anyway."

Employment was considered as a temporary option, while waiting to be able to migrate again as it was claimed that the salary in Kyrgyzstan is too low compared to the cost of living. Nonetheless, only 5 out of 20 interviewed re-entry banned migrants were able to find stable employment, and the main reason was explained as the need to have good networks back home, which most migrants lacked, having dedicated all their plans and energies abroad. On this purpose, 23-year-old Altynbek, noticed:

"In Bishkek (in the construction sector) everyone has their tame team of builders with a foreman. They will not take anybody from outside." (Altynbek)

Such thesis was confirmed also by migrants without a ban, who tried to find a job back home and lacked the necessary networks. For instance, Sultan came back after many years of labour migration to the Russian Federation because of health issues and because he wished to reunite with his family and in particular with his children. He experienced the same difficulties in finding a job back home, and ended up selling a land plot that he had previously acquired thanks to remittances. Like in the case of Sultan, interviews with migrants without a re-entry ban showed that when the return is not planned, not only because of the ban, but also for other reasons (health issues, unemployment abroad), integration in the local job market is made difficult by the preponderance of informal practices such as the use of networks to find employment. In the local job market back home, interviewed returned migrants seemed to be outsiders. Additional difficulties mentioned by the re-entry banned migrants related to the fact that employers were reluctant to hire migrants with a ban for fear that they would leave as soon as they find a way to re-emigrate. One respondent, Nurbek, claimed:

"At first, when an employer asked me whether I want to go abroad again or when my ban would expire, I honestly answered the questions and used to say (as I am telling you now) that I want my name removed from the 'black list' and I want to emigrate. But when one of the employers told me straight that it was not a temporary job and they did not want somebody like me, then I realised that previous employers denied me work because of my answers. After that I did not tell anybody that I was on the 'black list'." (Nurbek)

Networks were an important issue for migrants back home. An interviewed re-entry banned migrant in Bishkek, Suyun, who was currently working at a car wash, noticed:

"I know perfectly well that to find a good job you need money or connections higher up. Otherwise, there is no point in going to them." (Suyun)

On the one hand migrants seemed to lack a strong community support back home. On the other hand, it is significant that among respondents, about 3/4 admitted that they ceased to contact their friends and acquaintances who stayed in Russia, as they were not in a position to interact with them anymore, because of the geographical distance and the impossibility of going back. It became apparent in their attempts of finding a job back home that they were unable to use the same kind of network-based strategies, and that this also implied their loss of status among their community of origin and their consequent isolation. Respondents explained such situation in relation with socio-cultural practices, such as *toy*, community gatherings and celebrations accompanying the cycle of life (birth, marriage, death), or group meetings, requiring exchange of presents, and money expenditure in order to honour the guests and consolidate social and loyalty ties. Such practices of the migration cycle, namely departure and return, are key moments of celebration, as anthropologist Igor Rubinov noticed, "upholding 'spheres of communal participation' in which the household is connected to the broader social context through principles of communal participation, contribution, and benefit."³⁰ In case of unplanned return, re-entry banned migrants avoided such gatherings and events because of a lack of means and embarrassment. Timur, a 40-year-old re-entry banned migrant, commented on such aspects tied with return:

"I thought, why would I ring them? They live their own life, I live mine. And I try not to go outside much here too. At first we used to get together with friends. But now I do not go out with them very often. Meet them once – and you have to dip into your pockets. There are some people here who would like to show off their wealth (he makes a gesture of disappointment with his hand). For me, meeting friends and acquaintances is a waste of time and money." (Timur)

Also, 25-year-old Kanybek, noticed:

"In Russia you only think about work. Home to work and back. If you happen to have some free time, you try to relax. But here (in Kyrgyzstan), it's constant expenses, celebrations, or even funerals. No chance of saving up." (Kanybek)

Re-entry bans thus found vulnerable migrants unprepared to integrate in the local job market, change their strategies and get included in local, rather than transnational informal networks as a way of finding alternative ways to make up for the loss of income abroad. At the same time, interviews and focus groups highlighted that re-entry bans weakened the transnational networks as soon as migrants could not return back to the Russian Federation and continue interacting with their contacts in an exchange of favours.

Long-term impact: reduced resilience of returned re-entry banned migrants

As shown above, re-entry bans are forcing people to stay home and survive through money loans. It is easy to imagine that at the end of the ban, in case of re-emigration they will have to ask for additional loans to cover the trip expenses. Moreover, interrupted relations with networks in Russia, will make it harder to use safer channels to find jobs or shelter again. Similarly, vulnerable were also migrants with a particularly strained economic situation,

30 Rubinov, Igor (2014). "Migrant Assemblages: Building Post-Socialist Households with Kyrgyz Remittances". *Anthropological Quarterly*. 87:1. 197.

confirming in this way that through re-entry bans to the Russian Federation, more and more returned migrants are entering the poorest categories of population. If men seemed ready to take out new loans in order to re-emigrate after the ban, women were giving up the migration option, probably because they had less extended networks of friends or acquaintances willing to lend them money. Participants in the focus groups explained that the weakest migrants leave without knowing if they will have a job, using debts to leave but without being sure that they will be able to pay them back.

"When people leave to Russia without having a ready job, they get into debt... it becomes hard. You feel ashamed, they [creditors – relatives, neighbours, friends] wait for the money back, and you need more and more money, ask others [for additional money]. In the end you find a job and have to pay so many debts back..." (participant of a focus group in Bishkek, April 2016)

If the ban lasts between 3 and 5 years, it must be considered that those migrants who have no other sources of help will end up under the poverty line and marginalized. During focus groups, it was noticed how families stop helping, migrants stop asking for help and embarrassment becomes a strong feeling for those who remain unemployed and have no alternative sources of income.

1.3.4. Role of the State and non-state actors in migrants' integration: migrants' view

A group interview conducted in the Employment Centre of Bishkek with 7 re-entry banned migrants showed that they were queuing with the only purpose of finding a way to have the ban lifted, once more stressing on the fact that for them staying back home was not an option. During three focus groups with re-entry banned migrants, both in Osh and Bishkek, problems were often discussed through the lens of local politics, emphasizing how corruption and regionalism were associated most often with the idea of state, whereas social help was contemplated through the system of informal networks. Participants at focus groups openly admitted that they exhibit little trust toward state entities.

NGOs, on the other hand, were known to a limited extent. Overall, respondents were able to name diasporas or NGOs abroad, but seemed rather misinformed about the existence of local NGOs willing to help those who returned from the Russian Federation.



1.3.5. Women and re-entry bans

Specific vulnerabilities of female migrants

Female migrants share certain general vulnerabilities with the general population of respondents. However, as the analysis of interviews and focus groups in Kyrgyzstan shows, they present additional socio-economic characteristics, which result in additional or deepened levels of vulnerability (Table 1.4). Their economic status has been made difficult by their limited sources of income and alienation from networks as well as the sole burden of supporting families in cases of abandoned or divorced women.

Table 1.4. Typology of vulnerabilities of female migrants

Status	Characteristics			Related vulnerabilities				
Abandoned/ divorced women	From poor economic background	Young age	Presence of pre-school and school children	Limited networks	Are the only breadwinners			
Married women					Limited support from family			
Single					Of rural origin	High number of dependents (siblings, disabled family members)	Limited income/irregular income	Enhanced needs determined by the presence of children
					Limited education			Lack of own house
Widows								

Source: Findings from the interviews and focus groups in Kyrgyzstan. Apr. 2016

Among all respondents, women migrants presented more vulnerabilities connected to their marital status. The presence of a husband meant that women could have support from the families (both from the husband's and the wife's side), larger networks (determined by acquaintances of the husband) and one more source of income. On the contrary, in case of women without a husband, due to divorce, abandonment or the death of the spouse, age became an important variable, in combination with socio-cultural factors. Age, indeed, meant a different position of the woman in the house and in the community. In this sense, divorced women and widows who were over 40 years of age had adult children, and could become the head of the family inside the house of their sons. Younger women, on the other hand, were in a more fragile social position: more prone to prejudice in case of migrating on their own and with limited networks, they could count only on themselves and often became the only or main breadwinners in their families.

In similar ways, these factors affected the quality of their lives abroad and their chances for better working conditions. Furthermore, illegal status and disinformation about their own rights discouraged them to address authorities or NGOs and limited their chances of being protected in case of violation of their rights.

On the legal level, same as their male counterpart, most women respondents were irregular in the Russian Federation, claiming that getting the right documents was time-consuming and complicated. As a result, they were constantly hiding and avoiding crowded places, in order not to be seen or stopped by the police.

All respondents came from economically deprived backgrounds and had migrated because their family could not afford only basic needs and/or because they could not afford a higher education for themselves or for their children or because the income from a male counterpart went missing (because of abandonment or the death of their spouse). In this last case, migration had become for those women the main strategy to survive both economically and socially.³¹ One example was the story of Altynay, who was 24 when she left. She had to leave behind a 9-month old child, in order to provide for him and escape the judgement of her relatives for giving birth outside marriage. It is important to note that in case of a lacking husband because of abandonment or divorce, women were lacking not only a source of income but also support from the family of the husband and at times from their own family. The majority of female respondents had not achieved their plans while living and working abroad, or did it just in part, which in case of a ban put them in very difficult economic conditions, exacerbated by the lack of help from families back home. Such help was also limited, although present, abroad. Women respondents claimed that their networks abroad consisted especially of kin and it was highlighted that for women migration bore risks of stigmatization back home. For instance, Fatima, a returned migrant in her 30s, noticed:

"I wouldn't go to Russia if it wasn't for my relatives. If you are unmarried and go to Russia, you risk to ruin your reputation, even if you don't do anything bad there. Boys in Kyrgyzstan and even your family will think that you lost your honour there. That's why girls try to go to Russia only by use of relatives, as they can confirm that you behaved there. [...] My husband still nowadays sometimes asks me what I did in Russia." (Fatima)

Kin networks had limited effects and they mostly provided migrants with contacts to find jobs, but only temporary shelter and in most cases they did not help with legalizing or in making sure that the newly arrived would find a safe working environment.

Another important factor characterizing women's migration experience was the stress that women with children experienced in separation from them, as it was the case of Altynay, who claimed:

"I came back because my mother called me back. Also, I wanted to see my baby. I can't stay away from him, that is the hardest part." (Altynay)

Also Ayana, 39 years old when she first left, had a 11-year-old child and described the experience of leaving as extremely painful, combined with the distress of being judged by her relatives.

"My relatives were against my decision to leave [to Russia]. They said – what kind of mother are you? Leaving your children behind? You should raise them. But did I really have a choice? I missed them." (Ayana)

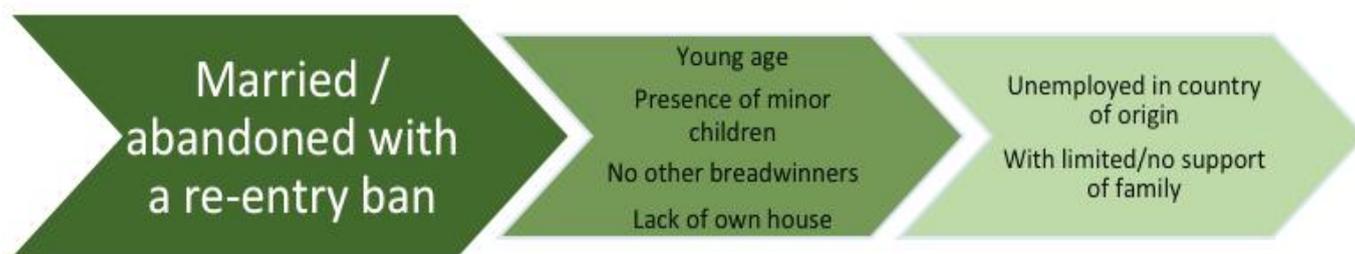
Such factors show that migration for women in Kyrgyzstan is strongly connected with family needs and bears more risks of stigmatization rather than social advancement (as it is the case for male migrants), especially vis-à-vis the presence of children and that return for them might be a desired option in case integration is possible. Such a thesis is supported by the fact that among the respondents, married women with small children declared that they wanted to stay in Kyrgyzstan.

31 Such factor was also noticed in the media. See for instance, IWPR Kyrgyzstan (2015): Молчание женщин-мигрантов, (Silence of migrant women) <http://cabar.asia/ru/iwpr-kyrgyzstan-molchanie-zhenshchin-migrantov/>. Such report notices how these women move to Russia to escape from hard social conditions caused by domestic violence but end up being victims again of trafficking and violence in the host country too.

Assessing the impact of the re-entry ban on women's coping strategies

As in the case of male migrants, re-entry banned women experienced limited possibilities of employment back home, strained economic conditions, and lack of help from the community (both intended as family and neighbours/acquaintances), as well as lack of contact with state institutions and relative mistrust towards them. But among women, the isolation from families was stronger in the case they had been abandoned by their husbands, and this deprived them not only from the possibility of finding a job through acquaintances or relatives, but also from getting occasional material help (Fig. 1.9). As the limited support that female respondents were receiving from their family, and the fact that their networks rarely went beyond kin members, abandoned women's feeling of isolation was accompanied by extreme poverty and social marginalization.

Fig. 1.9. Impact of re-entry bans on women



Source: Findings from the interviews and focus groups in Kyrgyzstan, Apr. 2016

Although women migrants' return was forced by a re-entry ban, findings show that for some of them the link with their country of origin was strongly determined by the presence of children that lived apart, or close relatives in need. Economic reasons were for these women the main pushing factor determining their decision to leave, despite the risks, humiliating working and living conditions and psychological distress due to separation.³²

The limitedness of their networks made it for them less appealing, compared to their male counterparts, to consider alternative countries of destination, with the exception of highly educated women. In fact, those who graduated from an Arab-speaking university in Bishkek were considering countries like Dubai as a possible and better-paying destination (three respondents), whereas respondents without a higher education considered that such destinations require more money and a better education in order to be affordable. Overall, women respondents stated during the focus groups that they go where relatives, especially close relatives, are. One respondent considered Kazakhstan as a destination for the only reason that a cousin of hers had been working there for years and was calling her. For this reason, Russia was for many of them the only acceptable option.

1.3.6. Conclusions and recommendations

Returned migrants' chances of re-integration back home highly depend on their own efforts and resources. The most vulnerable groups of migrants include those with high numbers of dependents, one or no breadwinners, and limited education, often coming from rural contexts. Migration has given male migrants a social status and has economically empowered both male and female migrants. Unplanned return, on the other hand, has caused a shock and crisis among them as they were unprepared to build strategies back home that do not include labour migration and have no strong networks to integrate in the local job market.

32 Cf. Agadjanian, Victor, Gorina, Evgenia, Menjivar, Cecilia (2014). "Economic Incorporation, Civil Inclusion, and Social Ties: Plans to Return Home Among Central Asian Migrant Women in Moscow, Russia". *International Migration Review*. 48 (3): pp. 583-584.

Loss of status and a state of need for a prolonged period of time pushes returned migrants to withdraw from their usual community circles. This factor, combined with a sense of loss and isolation towards state entities that migrants see unprepared and even uninterested in having them back, can put them in very difficult conditions and incapable of regaining their status through their usual coping mechanisms.

The present case study has also outlined some relevant characteristics of re-entry banned women in Kyrgyzstan, underlining how young married and abandoned women need urgent help and assistance as they are the most vulnerable and the most isolated group.

Findings also show that for women, unplanned return has put them vis-à-vis the needs of their minor children and that re-integration back home is made even more relevant considering the benefits of reunification.

Attempts of returned migrants of having the re-entry bans lifted and re-emigrate caused failure in building strategies to re-adjust back home. To this purpose, information campaigns conducted by NGOs should be financially supported in order to enable the continuity and the possibility of reaching out to migrants living outside the cities. Moreover, programs should be designed to involve the communities, sensitize them on the effects of the bans and make them become an intermediary between returned migrants, civil society and State.

As migrants keep leaving the country without knowing enough about the host country, pre-departure orientation should be reinforced and involve a high number of migrants, with a particular focus on young and inexperienced ones, in order to limit the risks for them to get a re-entry ban. The joint action of countries of origin and destination should thus go beyond the simple registration of entries and exits of migrants and focus on disseminating precise, available and on-time information on where to find jobs, how to legalize, and what entities in both countries can give support before, during and after migration.

As the state keeps investing efforts to lift as many bans as possible, questions regarding amnesty of re-entry banned migrants belonging to the same nuclear family should be part of such efforts. Nonetheless, migrants' individual efforts of lifting the bans has alienated returned migrants from the state. More actions and dialogue should be developed on multiple levels (civil society, communities and state) on how it is possible to re-integrate re-entry banned migrants back home. On this purpose, it seems urgent and imperative to develop information and programs to help returned migrants make the best use of their savings and investments in order not to lose them upon return and as a consequence of desperate actions. Such programs should be accompanied by social and psychological assistance, especially in the first months upon return, as well as strong information campaigns, as migrants who return are disoriented and invisible in the state's agenda. Such information should include services and names of organizations specialised in assisting women in need who cannot count on nuclear or extended family support.

Vocational training and income-generating activities should be funded and planned in a gender-balanced way, including also women who are the only breadwinners in the family, and should be directed towards the possibility of limiting the negative effects of the bans, but also to create alternative sources of income and change the migration culture in a more balanced way.

1.4. TAJIKISTAN

1.4.1. Profile of respondents and methods used

Visited locations

The target areas included two regions, Khatlon and Garm, and several towns, respectively: Kulyab, Farkhor, Qurghonteppa, and Yovan in the first region, and Tajikobod in the second one. The geographical and historical differences of the two areas allowed the team to enter in contact with different migrant communities and assess common issues related to migration and return, with the aim of better defining vulnerable groups, common challenges and integration needs. In general, both regions have undergone an ongoing economic and social decline since the fall of the Soviet Union, unable to replace the collective farm-based agricultural and pastoral systems.³³ The visited regions survive on subsistence economies, agriculture being the main source of income, especially in the southern region, and the social crisis has been exacerbated by the civil war (1992-1997). One of the still perceived effects of the war, according to NGO representatives, was the generation of young wives whose marriage was arranged in the years of conflict as a reaction to the lack of proper schooling and access to higher education.³⁴ According to an NGO representative in Kulyab, those women are the ones at higher risk of abandonment and poverty, also due to their low level of literacy.

Interviews and focus groups were organized with the help of partner NGOs in each of the locations. All NGOs had taken part in a re-integration programme promoted by IOM Tajikistan and thus could facilitate access to the community of returned migrants, including women. The locations in Tajikistan were selected according to information collected from IOM Tajikistan and their NGO partners. Unlike Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the NGO partners had been involved with IOM in the last years in re-integration programs directed to returned migrants, including re-entry banned ones. In Tajikistan it was thus possible to interview both re-entry banned migrants who had been assisted by IOM and the ones who had not received any assistance.

Profile of the respondents

Respondents include vulnerable migrants who returned for different reasons, including long-term unemployment in the Russian Federation, and migrants with a ban to the Russian Federation. It must be noted that the group of re-entry banned migrants included those migrants who explicitly confirmed having a ban and those who stated being expelled or deported from the Russian Federation. Migrant respondents tended to use the three categories – ban, expulsion and deportation – interchangeably and at times it was not possible to determine the nature of their juridical status in relation with the Russian Federation. The common characteristic of all of them was that they could not return to Russia for a period that ranged from 3 to 5 years.

1.4.2. Impact of re-entry bans on vulnerable migrants

Re-entry bans impact not only migrants but also their households, most often made up of 10 or more family members. Typically, households include the grandparents, unmarried daughters, sons with their wives and children. Labour migration has become a group strategy for extended families, and remittances compensate for lack of income at home and/or insufficient earnings from household economic activities, such as small scale agriculture and production of milk products from households' own cattle.

33 J. Thorez (2006), La décollectivisation dans les montagnes d'Asie centrale (Tadjikistan, Kirghizistan): transformations agricoles et crise sociale. 83:2, pp. 221-233.

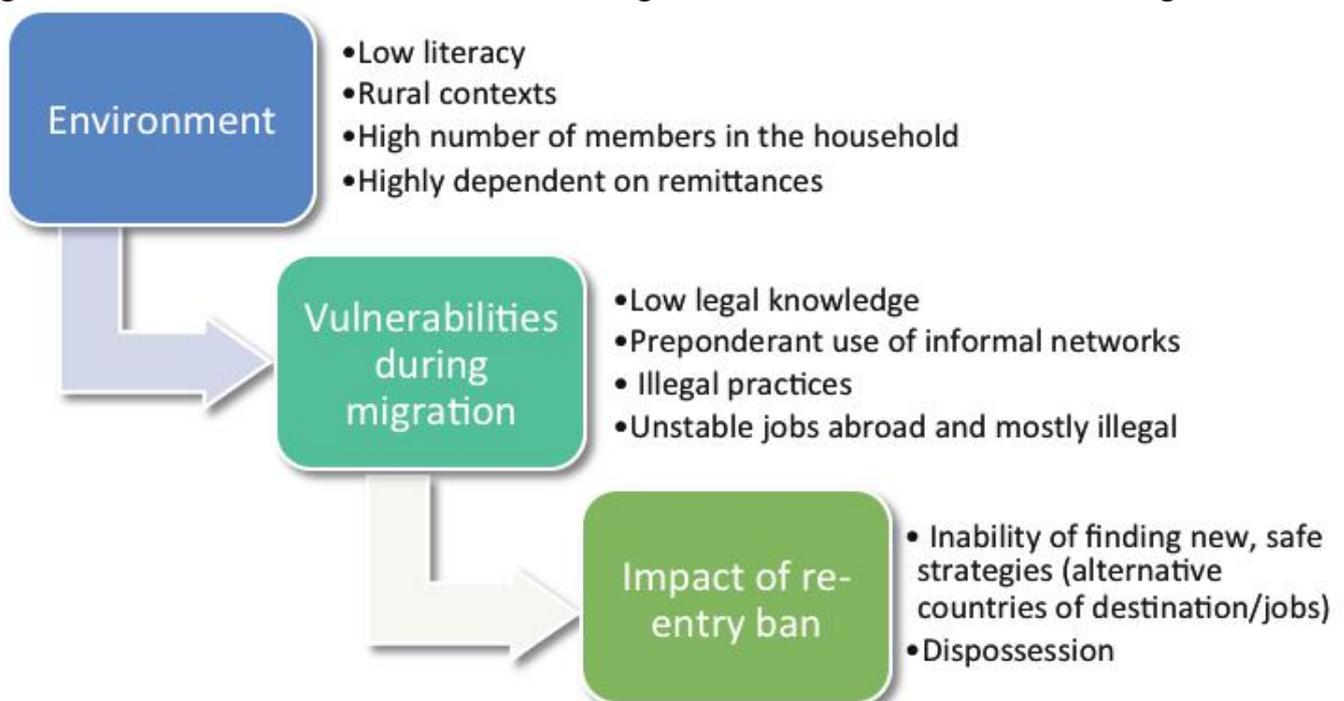
34 Interviews with NGOs representatives in Kulyab, Qurghonteppa, and Yovan, April.-June. 2016.

According to the interviews, those migrants who have managed to send remittances more or less on a regular basis have relatively improved the quality of life in that they were able to acquire basic goods, at times provide for higher education of one of their dependents, or buy some land to build an additional house. Findings, though, have shown that migration is often the only economic strategy for a whole family and in this sense, the re-entry bans are having a negative impact not only on the material level, but also on the psychological level, as none of the respondents were planning to stay in their country of origin for long periods of time, or to look for jobs in Tajikistan.

Assessing the vulnerabilities of returned migrants: characteristics of the most affected groups

The following section analyses returned migrants' vulnerabilities from the legal, economic and social perspective in order to extract scenarios and define the characteristics that made respondents particularly vulnerable. As shown in Fig. 1.10, migrants' ability to cope with challenges during migration and upon return is highly dependent on the environmental factors (educational levels, pre-departure socio-economic status) and the use of their assets in the course of migration (knowledge, networks, employment) as well as following the ban.

Fig. 1.10. Environment and vulnerabilities affecting the success in the course of labour migration



Source: Findings from the interviews and focus groups in Tajikistan. Apr.-June 2016

During migration, vulnerabilities were determined by limited networks and unstable jobs in the host country, as well as a continuing illegal standing. As a consequence, the most vulnerable migrants rarely sent remittances, and those were used mostly for subsistence. Moreover, low levels of education and limited experience abroad did negatively affect the success during labour migration, as these migrants seemed to find less stable jobs, less extended and effective networks, and were more isolated while living abroad. The preponderance of illegal practices, such as the use of mediators to get forged documents in the host country and accepting to work without a contract or a work permit, influenced migrants' behaviour who tried to avoid authorities and NGOs even in case of violation of their rights, focusing all their efforts on getting a job and sending remittances.

Overall, interviewed migrants believed that being legal in the RF would not protect them from harassment of corrupted police officers and require a considerable amount of time and energy. A representative of an NGO in Tajikobod noticed:

"There are, of course, illiterate migrants: when you try to explain to them they still insist that your advice is useless because they say one thing here but in Russia things are different and you have to pay anyway."

Very importantly, findings showed that in their country of origin, migrants relied on such mechanisms as well, lacking trust in the authorities and showing very limited knowledge of their rights and legal duties. Illiterate migrants often failed to regularly register their marriage, or the birth of a child, and in case of a re-entry ban the chance that they would address state agencies in order to report about their difficulties back home and ask for assistance were very limited. Consequently, they would look for a job through contacts, ask for money loans and search assistance and shelter among acquaintances and relatives, avoiding official channels. It must be noticed that lack of job opportunities and assistance at home was part of the decision making process that lead people to migrate. Once in the country of destination, the Russian Federation, high rates of corruption combined with limited legal knowledge of the migrants did convince respondents that being legal would not improve their situation as foreigners and would not deter police officers from harassing them. Illegal standing seemed to be the main reason for getting a re-entry ban, at least among the respondents. 53% of 35 respondents who participated in individual interviews knew about their ban before departing again to the Russian Federation. Nonetheless, if knowing in advance did prevent migrants from buying air/train tickets, they appeared to be as helpless as the ones who had already borrowed money to pay for such trip. In both cases, migrants highlighted that they were planning to work for several years in Russia, and that they had not considered alternative plans in case of failure. Their households' economies were oriented on remittances and not diversified at all. Among all respondents with a re-entry ban (35 in total), only 6 of them declared that they knew about their ban when they were in Russia and had thus time to think about alternative strategies to support their households. Vis-à-vis such situation where no jobs are available in the local market, and where all households in the neighbourhoods face the same poverty and stasis, it is easy to imagine how returned migrants with a re-entry ban see no perspectives and fall in a state of anxiety in the short/medium term. As respondents noticed themselves:

"We have 9 sotkas of land (900 m²). We grow seasonal vegetables: potatoes, tomatoes, herbs. Only for the family, there is not enough land to grow for sale. Neighbours around us are the same, maybe those who work in Moscow live slightly better than us." (Ghairatali)

"I go from village to village looking for any odd job, but, obviously, it is far from what I used to do in Moscow. I am a brick-layer. I have some land too, so I work it... I was upset about the ban. My son is getting married soon and my daughter will be going to the university soon." (Akhror)

During focus groups conducted in all selected locations, returned re-entry banned migrants were pointing out their increased poverty, the presence of debts and the feeling that no one could help them because they were in the same situation, highlighting that re-entry bans are starting to have an impact on the community level. In the same way, they noticed how it had become uncomfortable to ask for help after a prolonged period of unemployment back home.

What is striking is that in Tajikistan, the most affected migrants seemed to be both the most competent and educated ones and those with lower levels of education and skills. For instance, in a focus group in Yovan, out of 8 male participants, one was a skilled and experienced migrant who had managed even to acquire some land in Russia and had a stable job with a long-term relation with his employer. His higher status as a migrant was visible in that he had managed to bring with him his wife and children. But after he got a ban (due to the fact that he had not renewed his registration), he found himself in a similar situation as the other participants who showed lower literacy and had had less successful experiences abroad.

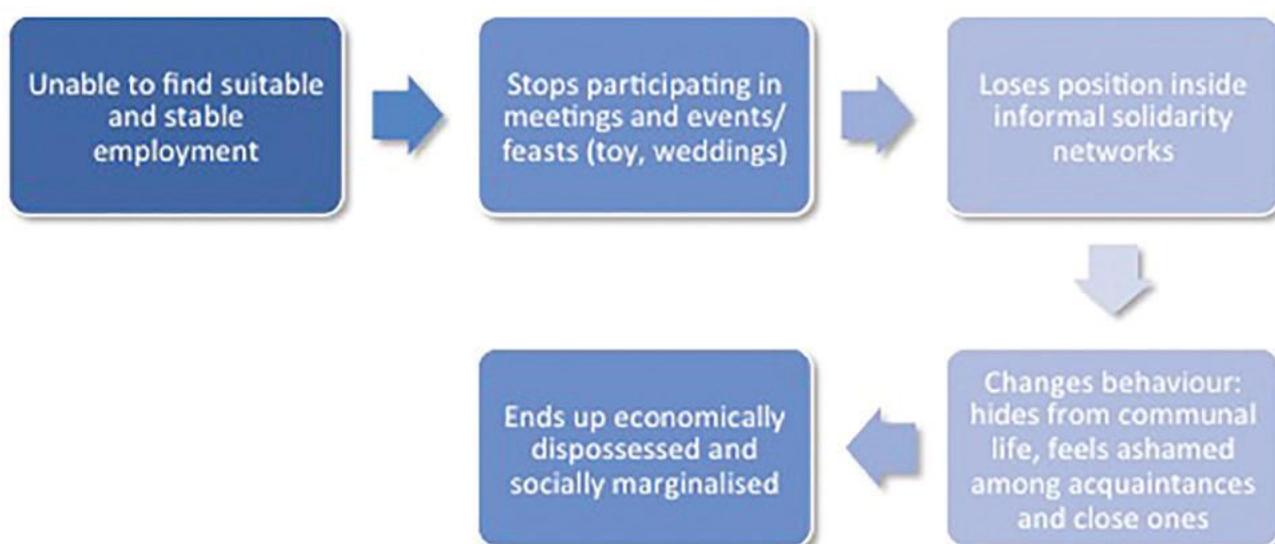
Overall, the most affected groups in all visited locations were characterized by their rural origins, their geographical distance from more active urban centres, and their deteriorated economic and social status back home (growing debts, decreasing contacts with their relatives and acquaintances, enhanced social isolation, long-term unemployment). Vulnerabilities were enhanced in case respondents had other members of the household with a ban, a high number of dependents, and insufficient income from economic activities at home.

1.4.3. Impact of the re-entry ban on returned migrants' coping strategies

Economic re-integration challenges and use of networks

Re-entry banned migrants who do not secure stable employment upon return are as a result not only more vulnerable in the economic sense (as their assets are depleted) but also tend to lose their social status (Fig. 1.11). These objective factors in turn impact their self-esteem, leading to their withdrawal and ultimately dissuading them from seeking help. Unfortunately, this may take the form of a vicious circle, in which the migrants' alienation further aggravates their low socio-economic status.

Fig. 1.11. Typical scenario of returned re-entry banned migrants who fail to find employment in medium/long term



Source: Findings from the interviews and focus groups in Tajikistan. Apr.-June 2016

Interviewed migrants spent the period of the ban trying to survive and provide their families with basic needs. Due to limited availability of jobs in their villages, respondents resorted to money loans, occasional jobs as handymen, and selling of property in similar ways as in Kyrgyzstan. During a focus group in Qurghonteppa, for instance, when asked about the presence of outstanding debts, 7 out of 8 participants lifted their hands to confirm and further debated on the fact that they were also selling their own property when debts were getting too high. One participant, in a moment of heated debate, exclaimed:

"We have already sold everything, there is nothing left to sell!"

In all locations, respondents described their life during the ban as mere survival, where occasional, low paid employment prevailed and income was discontinuous and insufficient. In this sense, economic activities included selling products of their own gardens, home repairing for neighbours, informal taxi services, and picking fruits during the harvest for very low compensations.

"I go to the bazaar every day. Sometimes someone hires me, sometimes I go back home empty handed. When they hire me, I go to the mountains and pick herbs for very little money. That's what you can find now in the area." (Davron)

Returned migrants with a re-entry ban found themselves in the situation of accepting any jobs in order to survive and projected their strategies beyond the ban period, trusting that one day they will migrate again. Lack of strategies in this sense was reported by about 70% of interviewed migrants (among those who participated in individual interviews and focus groups, of a total of 72 respondents) and was suggesting that they were failing to economically integrate back home with social consequences, such as loss of their status as breadwinners and successful migrant workers. Male participants of a focus group in Yovan stated:

"We just wait for the ban to expire, then we'll find a way to go back to Russia. We see no other way..."

Difficulties were increased by the fact that migrants were competing in their regions of origin for the same kinds of jobs (handymen, house repair, fruit picking, etc.). Migrants also highlighted the fact that the job search went exclusively through the use of word of mouth among neighbours, acquaintances or relatives, limiting returned migrants' chances for economic re-integration to the willingness or possibility of those networks to help. For instance, during a male focus group in Farkhor, it was stated by one participant:

"I am not doing much at the moment, looking for jobs. Can't find work as a driver. My elder brother gives me some money sometimes. He is a taxi-driver, he's got a car... It is very difficult to find work here. I am tending my cow. Not much milk from it, 1,5 litres a day... While I am home, I work on the allotment, give neighbours a hand. Of course I want to go to Russia again, my children need to be fed and educated... Don't know what to do. If entry is closed for us, we'll have to manage somehow, find another way. I might go to the city, I might find some work there." (Interviews with men in Farkhor).

It is worth noting that those who managed more or less to find a job were starting to reconsider migration as the only option, suggesting that re-integration back home might be possible and might be acceptable if circumstances allow it, emphasizing that the economic crisis in the Russian Federation was influencing the quality of life of migrants. Some respondents noticed, for instance, that their experience in the Russian Federation had been negative because of hard working conditions and lower economic profit compared to the past and added:

"If I can earn my living here, there will be no need to go to Russia." (interview with a man in Farkhor).

"Last time I simply decided to leave (Russia), there was not much work around and it was hard to find" (interview with a man in Tojikobod).

"Now I teach a couple of days a week. The rest of the time I help relatives with their building project. I doubt I will go to Russia again, I did not like it much" (interview with a man in Farkhor).

"I do not want to go back to Russia. And I do not want my children to go there either" (interview with a man in Farkhor).

One respondent, in particular, seemed satisfied about his income-generating activity as a window carpenter, showing that self-employment was a good option to re-integrate back home:

"I now work as a carpenter, I make windows and roofs, work with timber." (interview with a man in Tojikobod)

Nonetheless, such opinions still remain a minority, and most respondents underlined how the local job market keeps offering limited possibilities of employment to returned migrants. Moreover, migrants noticed that the increase in number of people with a re-entry ban together with the ongoing economic crisis is causing frustration not only among households, but also on the community level. In this sense, interviewees noticed how networks and family were not in a position of helping through typical practices such as exchange of favours, because of increasing social unease among the whole local population:

"Everyone is on their own. No one helps you. They can't even help themselves." (Male focus group in Yovan, June 2016.)

"My relatives have the same problems. Why should they help?" (Madina)

Particularly significant was a conversation during a focus group in Qurghonteppa among male returned migrants:

"We all have some fruit and vegetable to sell, the prices are low because we all sell the same stuff..." (Participant #1)

"Do you think I am the only one in my family looking for a job? No one works in my house; we are all searching for employment. How can they help me?" (Participant #2)

"Here [in the region] there is no work. It doesn't matter how well educated you are, you stay without work." (Participant #3)

NGO representative: "The entire village has the same problem. In every family there is one deported [banned]. The whole village is looking for employment!" (Male focus group in Qurghonteppa, June 2016.)

Withdrawal from community life and feasts was the most striking sign of the social effects of failed economic integration, as not taking part in community gatherings meant that interviewees were failing to build contacts and consolidate solidarity networks and were confirming that they had no favours or gifts to exchange. Such behaviour highly put in doubt the interviewees' role within the community and their identity as valued community members. It became clear to the researchers how interviewed re-entry banned migrants were gradually isolating themselves from their community as economic needs persisted.

1.4.4. Role of the State and non-state actors in migrants' integration: migrants' view

NGOs and *hukumat* are in constant dialogue, exchanging information on unemployed returned migrants, but migrants found out about the existence of NGOs by chance and not directly through *hukumat*, and were still lacking information on the role of NGOs. For instance, one respondent had addressed the local *hukumat*, hoping they would help find employment and was informed about the local NGO some time later, only when he was asked to meet for an interview with the research team. At the moment of the interview he still did not know about the role and activities of the NGO:

"I was put on the *hukumat* register, then they rang to say that somebody will get in touch with me. Then I had a call from that organization, they invited me for a talk" (interview with a man in Farkhor).

An important factor hindering a consolidated relation with official channels (both state and non-state) was the distance from urban centres, which not only made it difficult for respondents to find jobs (more available in cities), but also to reach NGOs or state agencies in order to ask for assistance. Difficulties were increased by lack of money to pay trips to the city, and the presence of small children. NGOs periodically moved to rural areas in order to reach out to as many people as possible in case of women. Nonetheless, among respondents only a small number received help from NGOs through international funds. Such help being discontinuous, it seemed that it was highly impacting the NGOs' capacity to promptly address the needs of returned migrants. On the other side, women respondents seem to be more keen to address state agencies than their male counterparts, but with negative results. Shukhriya, a respondent with a higher education in her 40s said:

"When I came back I thought: What can I do now? Where should I go? I went to the school where I used to teach and they gave me a job. But the money was very little. Now, they still have to pay me a two-month salary, I'm still waiting... I asked for help at the Department of Education hoping they would help finding a job. They were not even interested [in helping] [...] I found them [the NGO] as they did an information campaign in my village. So I got informed, went to them and they helped me."

NGOs seemed very active in collecting information about returned migrants through community leaders and in providing with re-integration assistance and periodical information campaigns that bear a short-term character. Only about 30% of 35 interviewees of individual interviews knew about services provided by NGOs through state agencies, whereas the rest of them knew through word of mouth or from information campaigns or simply did not know about them.

"I found out about this organization from my neighbour, Jamshid. I was told that there are organizations that provide help... When I came here, I saw this brochure...I heard about this organization from some guys I know... I got onto a bus last week and there one woman told me about this NGO, that they help. I came here... I was told by my uncle, my father's brother, that there is such an organization – Migrant Support Centre, so I went to them" (interviews with men in Tojikobod and in Farkhor).

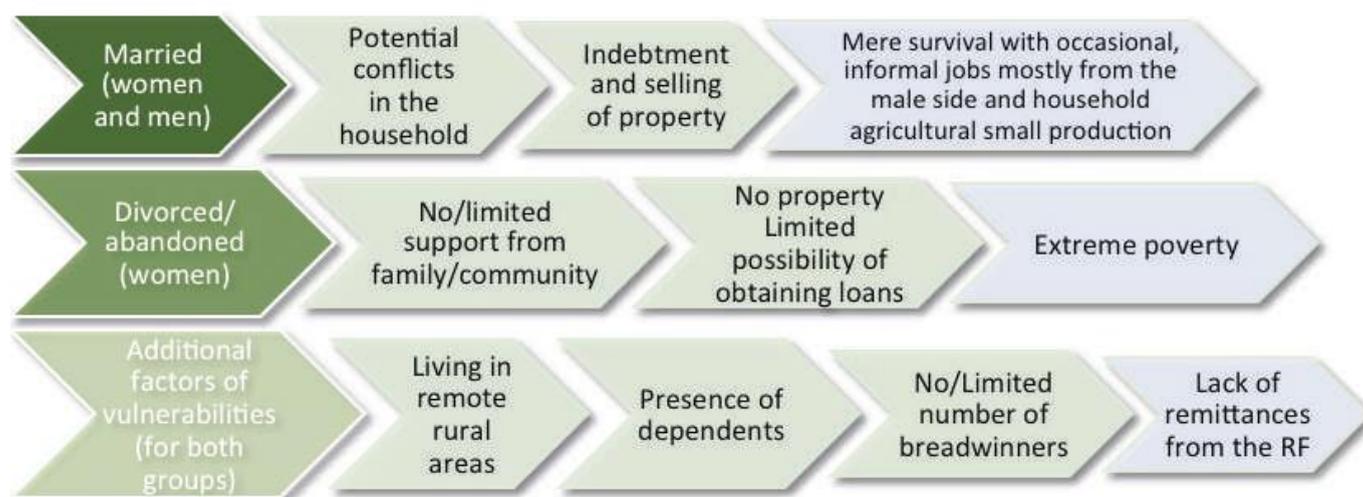
Mostly it seems that the dissemination of information on NGOs through word of mouth was limited to the same circles of acquaintances, where some assisted beneficiaries passed relevant information to relatives and few friends. More than half of respondents in Farkhor and Tajikobod, for instance, did not know about IOM or the NGO partners and had come into contact with the latter only on the occasion of the interviews with the researchers.

1.4.5. Women and re-entry bans

Specific vulnerabilities of female migrants

Re-entry banned women presented similar vulnerabilities as men in that they were unable to find a job back home for a long period of time. But in case of women with a re-entry ban, the marital status, like in Kyrgyzstan, was an important variable in determining their chances for re-integration back home, as shown in the following section (Fig. 1.12).

Fig. 1.12. Characteristics of vulnerable women in conditions of long-term unemployment upon unplanned return



Source: Findings from the interviews and focus groups in Tajikistan. April - June 2016

Married women in rural contexts in Tajikistan join the husband's household, made up of the husband's parents, other nuclear families of male descendants, unmarried daughters and at times disabled children. Among respondents, 8 out of 12 matched this profile and five had a re-entry ban. Their migration experience was part of the household strategy to enhance income and enable additional expenses or simply everyday basic needs. The re-entry ban in such cases involved also the spouse, and the household was a guarantee of first relief by granting a shelter once back home. Furthermore, support from the spouse's network and at times also from the families of origin of the wives was granting occasional material help for the returned migrants. In one case out of five, the migrant reported

that the household did not take back the re-entry banned couple and they found a shelter at some acquaintances of the husband, with whom they shared a house. It is the case of Sulman, 40 years of age with three children:

"We lived with my husband's family. His parents, our 3 children, and a disabled brother. We were all unemployed, so it was decided that my husband and I go to Russia. After we came back, we explained that we could not go back for some years. So our mother told us we couldn't stay, that we had to find another place."

Such case presented signs of social unease, isolation and a sense of helplessness, and Sulman made it clear through her story:

"I don't know what we can do. We have debts, no money, no work. Our mother doesn't want us back. My daughter is finishing a medical institute and she will look for a job. She was about to get married, but then the fiancé's family changed their mind. So now she's with us. We don't know what to do."

In the long run the other interviewed re-entry banned women reported similar difficulties connected with a state of constant material need and a position of dependence or indebtedness towards acquaintances, relatives, at times banks, and enhanced conflicts inside the households. Women migrants expressed more often initial happiness to be reunited with their children and in a second moment declared that they were in a state of anxiety due to the total lack of income vis-à-vis accumulating debts.

In case of divorce or abandonment single women found more difficulties in re-integrating for many reasons: they lacked support from in-laws and had very limited networks among members of their families of origin, being at higher risks of isolation from their communities in a shorter timeframe. A study conducted by IOM Tajikistan in 2009 raised the issue of abandoned wives of labour migrants, and showed how this category of women becomes highly vulnerable to crime, domestic abuse and exploitation because of their social marginalisation from their families and community.³⁵ The present assessment revealed that abandoned or divorced wives in such situations might find in migration a coping strategy to provide for their dependents – usually children at a pre/school age, in case they manage to find contacts in Russia and borrow money to cover for the trip expenses. According to an interview with a local NGO in Kulyab, abandoned wives are the results of social practices encouraged by migration. It happens very often, indeed, that couples marry unofficially, through the Islamic ritual of *niko*, sometimes directly in Russia, or back home, to speed up the procedure or because they don't have the approval of families. These couples do not appear in the City administration registers. Husbands, thus, can very easily call off the marriage through the ritual of *talok*, often even by phone, and these women are at high risk of being denied help by their in-laws, the ex-husband, and their only chances depend on their original families. This was the case for instance of one of the 7 re-entry banned respondents, Laylo, whose story seems quite typical. Laylo, 35 years old, came from a very poor family living in a village near Kulyab. She migrated to Russia for the first time in 2008, with the help of her father who had been working there for many years. He helped her find a place to stay and jobs so that she felt protected when she was abroad, although most of the time she was irregular. She met her future husband in Moscow and they got married directly there, as he had a wife in Tajikistan and she agreed to be his second wife. After the marriage her husband took control over her and she had to quit working, although she was still living in Russia. She came back the last time to give birth to her second child, in 2014.

35 Glenn, R. (2009). Abandoned wives of Tajik Labor Migrants. IOM Study on the Socio-Economic characteristics of abandoned wives of Tajik labor migrants and their survival capabilities. Dushanbe: International Organization for Migration.

"When my husband stopped contacting me, I went back to my parents. His family lives near Farkhor and they are ready to take me, but I don't know if my husband will agree. He never calls me, even when the baby was born and doesn't send me money. If he only sent me some money... then he can do whatever he wants, have another wife, but the children need food, clothes... I don't know what to do. [...] If I could I would go to Russia, leave the children with my parents, or with my husband's parents. [...] I want to go back to Russia. If I get a citizenship there, then it will be easier. I will be able to give my children an education. Here I have no plans. I don't have a job, will never have a job here."

During Laylo's previous migration experience she had been able to save up money, so that she was counting on doing it again as a single mother, once the ban expired, although she did not know where she could find the required money for the trip. As most abandoned wives who had migrated in the past, and who have no higher education, it was hard for Laylo to find a job, and her survival depended on the good will of her parents who accepted to take her back. Like for another abandoned respondent who had no ban, migration seemed the best way to cope with poverty and abandonment, as she too confirmed that when she was in Russia, she managed to save up some money.

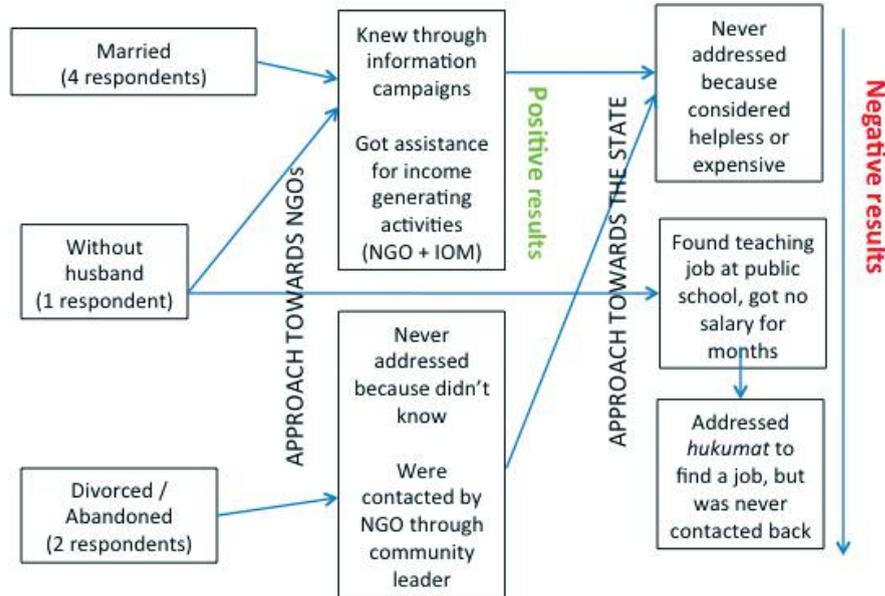
Another respondent, Gulnoza, 21 years old, was the daughter of a divorced woman. Gulnoza's mother had migrated to the RF after her divorce, and after losing the support of her husband's family. She managed to become a trader and stay in the RF for many years, although she was not regular there. Gulnoza eventually joined her mother and started university in Russia. The last summer they came back to Tajikistan to visit their family and knew that both had a re-entry ban, even though Gulnoza claims that she had a regular registration as she was regularly enrolled in a Russian university. In this way, Gulnoza's mother was risking to lose her job at the market in Russia, and Gulnoza to be expelled from university. Gulnoza explained that from her mother's side they could not get any help as their relatives were in a similar situation, and the father's family had abandoned them as well:

"Here everything works through men. Without men in the family, nothing works [...] We don't know what to do. We don't know..."

Similar to Kyrgyzstan, both focus groups and interviews highlighted the most vulnerable group of women who received a re-entry ban are those who had divorced, or been abandoned by husbands and had children to take care of. Common characteristics of these groups included the lack of property, limited chances of obtaining loans because of limited networks, and the fact that help was limited to a few relatives on the woman's side. Unemployment was widespread, and factors such as low levels of education, living in remote rural areas, and presence of small children were creating further difficulties for these women to search for jobs or be employed. Although the sample is small it is significant that among such cases, out of three (two with a ban and one without), all of them wished to migrate again to Russia, both for economic and socio-cultural reasons: job opportunities and the chance of conducting an independent life free of stigmatization due to their status made migration not only a coping strategy, but also a desired lifestyle.

Assessing the impact of the re-entry ban on women's coping strategies

Respondents built their strategies on the basis of their marital status, and informal channels prevailed. Among them, three main groups were drawn: (1) women whose husband had disappeared in Russia could still count on the husband's household and get material help from them and even a shelter. Two respondents were in such group, one having a re-entry ban; (2) married women built their strategies together with their husbands and households; (3) Abandoned or divorced women were those with less effective strategies, as they were lacking support from households from the husband's side. Unable to find jobs, they used money loans and help from acquaintances or families of origin and their survival depended on that. They were living in extreme poverty, with no own sources of income.

Fig. 1.13. Female respondents' approach to NGOs and State

Source: Findings from the interviews and focus groups in Tajikistan. Apr.-June 2016

Figure 1.13. summarizes typical scenarios in which various categories of female respondents interacted with NGOs and state institutions as part of their coping strategies. Among re-entry banned women, coping strategies included self-employment (through the support of an NGO), employment at a State agency (in one case) or help from close relatives and neighbours, with alternate results. With the exception of four respondents who were assisted by an NGO, in the other cases, the economic situation remained very precarious as the interviewees had no income and survived on the help of their close ones.

Participants in female focus groups in Kulyab, Yovan, and Qurghonteppa confirmed that in case things would not go better on the economic side, many were considering giving their young daughters into marriage and giving up their education, even taking out loans to pay for the wedding.

As in the case of male respondents, the state was seen in negative terms as useless and especially uninterested in helping. Such views were consolidated by those women who addressed the *hukumat* without results.

The lack of coping strategies of the interviewed women, as well as the dependence on benefactors for those women lacking the support of husbands' households, confirmed that their state of isolation as well as their helplessness was leading them to extreme poverty. The re-entry bans, in addition, enhanced their sense of isolation and desperation, as they found in migration their only way of improving their life and that of their children.

1.4.6. Conclusions and recommendations

The present analysis has shown that the re-entry bans to the Russian Federation are having a negative impact on migrants as well as on households and are especially increasing the distance between migrants and the state once they return back to their country of origin. Gradual isolation from communal life and withdrawal from sociocultural practices derived from economic deprivation is also impacting returned migrants' lives, as they are finding themselves more and more isolated from their communities and estranged from their networks.

Particular attention has also been given to female returned migrants, and it was noted that abandoned or divorced women find themselves in great economic difficulties once they receive a re-entry ban, due to ongoing social marginalisation back home caused by their status, and consequent limitation of material help from their community. Assistance from NGOs, information and dialogue with the state appear as an urgent matter in order to limit the negative effects of unplanned return and prevent large groups of people (including households and returned migrants) feel isolated and abandoned.

On the basis of the results shown above, it is recommended that information campaigns for returned migrants are reinforced and conducted on a continuous basis in rural areas. Information should be a joint effort of NGOs and State agencies, aiming at informing those who return about the re-entry bans to the Russian Federation and possibilities of assistance back home in order to be re-integrated in a period of several years. At the same time, collecting data about returned re-entry banned migrants might help better formulate assistance programs and understand how many people are being affected among returned migrants. Relevant information should include instructions directed to a broad auditorium of returned migrants on the importance of being registered with state organs as unemployed, to (1) enable the state to better understand the effects of the re-entry bans, (2) make sure that returned migrants are duly informed on NGOs cooperating with state organs and relevant roles and capacity of all involved entities.

NGOs and state agencies should work together on re-integration programs, formulating types of assistance that include both social and psychological help as well as economic help. In this sense, past programs conducted in partnership with local NGOs and IOM have shown that self-employment and income-generating activities have allowed re-entry banned migrants, both men and women, have sufficient income to provide their households for basic goods, also reducing potential conflicts inside the households, as shown in the table below.

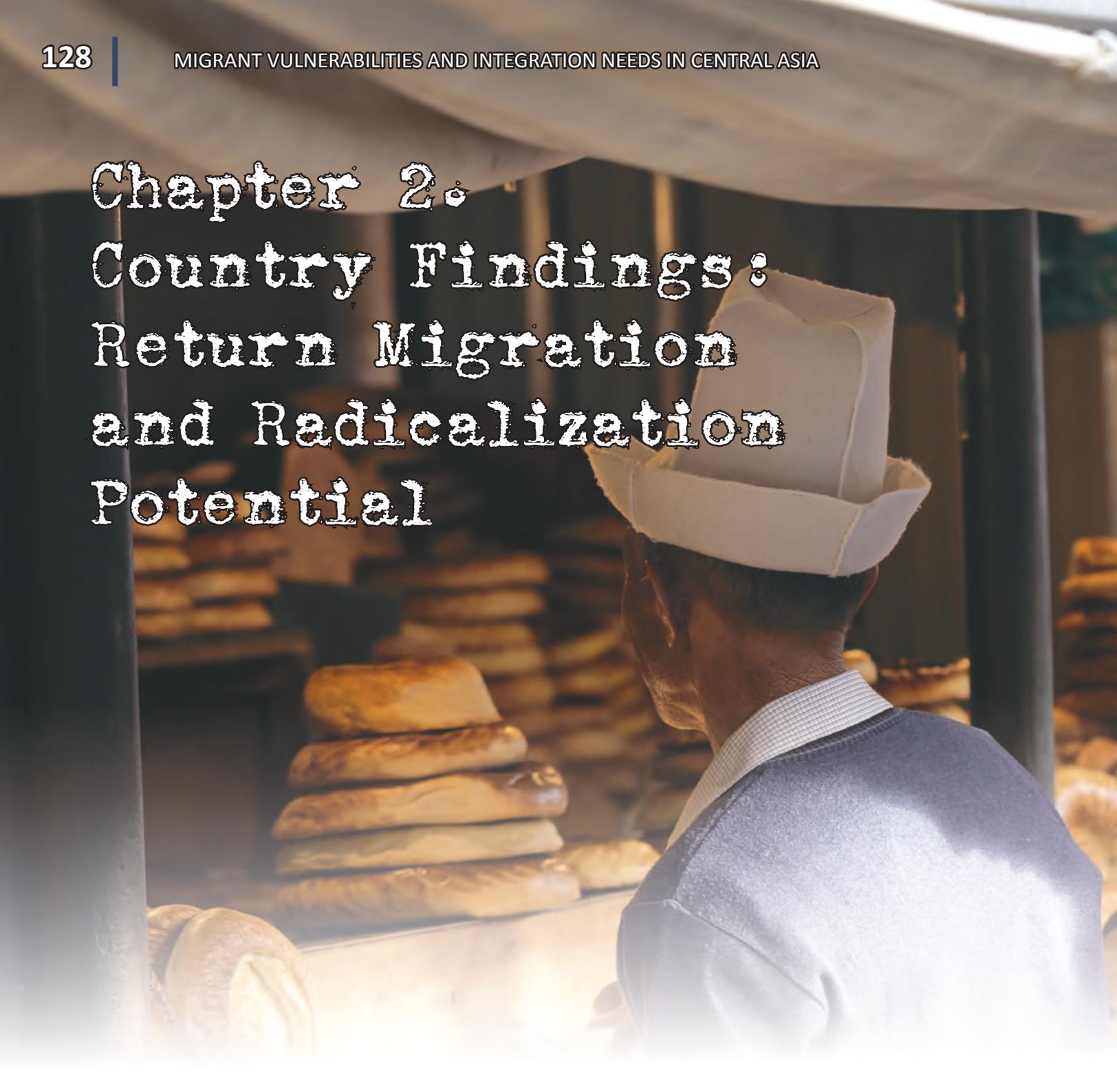
Table 1.5. Evaluation of re-integration activities targeting re-entry banned migrants

Gender and locations	Type of help	Results	Further improvement
Re-entry banned women (Kulyab, Yovan)	* purchase of necessary material for starting an income generating activity	* Sufficient income for basic needs	* No income for extra expenses (healthcare, higher education of children)
Re-entry banned men (Tajikobod, Farkhor, Kulyab)	* Assistance in planning the activity and in creating a business plan	* Reduced conflicts inside the household * Respondents declared they were surviving during the ban period * Respondents were ready to plan additional economic activities for their households	* Ongoing difficulties in paying back debts * Part of household still unemployed * Assisted returned migrants still lacking knowledge and skills for proper money investment and medium/long term planning

Source: Findings from the interviews with IOM assisted re-entry banned migrants in Tajikistan, Apr. 2016

The main objective of the re-integration program is to make sure that returned re-entry banned migrants can preserve their resilience, their economic independence, and consequently their self-worth. Such re-integration programs should be reinforced on the basis of previous experience, in order to reach out to a larger group of population and possibly include more than one member per household. In this sense, microcredit could be taken into consideration in order to potentiate income generating activities, as well as professional preparation and re-qualification of younger returned migrants. Social isolation might be prevented by reinforcing community efforts and actively involving assisted returned migrants in information campaigns on re-integration possibilities.

Re-integration programs should pay attention to gender issues and try to keep a balance, involving 50% of women in need. Female beneficiaries might be both returned migrants but also daughters who wish to get a higher education and escape arranged marriages as a result of unplanned return. Help should then aim at making women migrants and their daughters economically independent, especially in the case of lack of support from husbands' households. In this sense, both the state and NGOs should ensure psychological support and provide venues where women can feel free to speak about their problems, without risks of prejudice. At the same time, international organizations should elaborate grant opportunities directed at helping young women get a higher education and single mothers to be economically independent.



Chapter 2. Country Findings: Return Migration and Radicalization Potential

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2.1. KAZAKHSTAN



Although in the last few years the issue of radicalization of social groups in Central Asia, including migrants, has received significant attention in literature and is being increasingly the focus of activities undertaken by the governments in the region and of assistance provided by international organizations, there is still no single recognized definition of the issue.

IOM's global experience shows that too often simplifications and misguided assumptions around 'root causes' and vulnerabilities to radicalization prevail, making it difficult to properly estimate the scale of the problem and the most vulnerable groups. A key problem is the multiplicity and variety of factors, which can contribute to such vulnerabilities: social, economic, political and cultural factors all may interact and raise the risk of initiating and sustaining the complex process in which an individual or a group embarks on and continues on the path that might ultimately make them susceptible to the messages and strategies of extremist groups.

To consider the multiple and varied factors of vulnerabilities to radicalization, the assessment team has investigated the specific circumstances, in which the process might be taking place in the three countries under study. Chapter 2 presents the results of assessment of the risk of radicalization insofar as it might affect returning Central Asian migrant workers in either the country of transit and alternative destination (Kazakhstan) or the countries of origin and residence upon return (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). The assessment places the question of potential for radicalization among migrants in the broader context of factors operating both prior to the departure, during migration and upon return thus covering the entire migration path. The country sections below reflect the local perspectives on the issue, as identified through review of existing official statements, statistics, previous research and interviews with state officials and independent national experts in the three countries. The chapter concludes with some preliminary recommendations, which reflect the country-specific factors as well as emerging regional trends.

Introduction

It seems appropriate to explore the radicalization risks that migrants are exposed to in Kazakhstan in the context of the evolution of the religious situation and specific features of radicalization in the country as a whole. For this purpose, the authors:

- examined statistical data on developments in the religious sphere in Kazakhstan over the last 25 years;
 - analysed legislative acts that regulate relations between religious organizations and worshipers on the one hand, and state and non-governmental secular institutions on the other hand;
 - interviewed experts with practical experience in this field: officials from the Committee for Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Culture and Sport and Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan;
 - studied talks given by leading scholars and publicly available research studies on specific characteristics of the religious situation and radicalization in Kazakhstan in general and with regard to migrant workers in particular.
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2.1.1. Evolution of the religious situation and legislation pertaining to religion

Changing role of religion in society

In the 25 years of independence, the religious situation in Kazakhstan has changed dramatically compared to the Soviet years. Enthusiasm for religion was supported by the authorities who expected traditional religions to fill in the ideological vacuum that appeared in society after the collapse of the communist regime. Islam grew into an influential public force in independent Kazakhstan. The number of Muslim communities has significantly changed over those years. If in 1991 there were only 68 of them, then at the start of the 2000s their number increased to 1,652 and in 2012 it reached 2,229.¹

As of 10 August 2016, Kazakhstan has 3,621 official religious organizations. 2,561 of them are Muslim, 329 belong to the Orthodox Christian church, 745 represent other Christian denominations, 8 – Hare Krishnas, 6 – Baha'is, 7 – Judaism, 2 – Buddhism, 2 – Mormons, 4 – Mennonites and 1 Unification Church (Moonies).² The majority of Muslim communities are members of the national Islamic religious association – the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan (SAMK).

The country has a functioning system of religious education; its main institutions include the Islamic Institute of Advanced Training for Imams of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan, Nur-Mubarak Egyptian University of Islamic Culture and 11 big madreses. Three of them are located in the South Kazakhstan Region, two in each of the Akmola and Almaty Regions, and one madrese in each of the Aktobe, Jambyl, West Kazakhstan and Pavlodar Regions. In addition, Kazakhstan has the Catholic Mary, Mother of the Church Seminary in the Karaganda Region and the Orthodox Eparchial Theological Seminary in Almaty.³

Evolution of legislation pertaining to religion

State legislation laid the foundations of the multireligious state from the very early years of the independent republic. The Constitution stipulates that Kazakhstan is a secular state. Article 19 of the Constitution reads: “Everyone shall have the right to determine and indicate or not to indicate his national, party and religious affiliation”. Article 22 declares: “Everyone shall have the right to freedom of conscience”. Freedom of religion is a guaranteed right in Kazakhstan and religion is declared separate from the state.

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations” was adopted in 1992 proclaiming the main principles of religious tolerance and respect of people’s religious convictions by the state. This law laid the groundwork for the relationship between the state and religious organizations and associations. Article 4 of the Law prohibits “propaganda of religious extremism, and also the accomplishment of the actions, directed toward the use of inter-faith differences for the political purposes”. The same article states that “activity of religious associations not duly registered in accordance with the procedure established by the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan shall not be permitted”.⁴ So, since independence it was recognised that there is a potential threat in political parties based on a particular religion and the activity of unauthorised religious organizations. The Law “On Public Associations” and the Law “On Political Parties” prohibit the activities of parties established on the basis of religion. This measure stopped politicization of religion but did not guarantee complete eradication of the conditions that give rise to extremism.

1 <http://e-history.kz/ru/contents/view/485>

2 http://www.din.gov.kz/rus/religioznye_obedineniya/?cid=0&rid=1638

3 http://www.din.gov.kz/rus/deyatelnost/deyatelnost_duxovnyx_uchebnyx/?cid=0&rid=1188

4 http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=1000934#pos=3;-161

The state policy with regard to religious extremism was tightened in 1994 when new amendments were introduced to the Civil Code requiring mandatory state approval of the candidates for leaders of religious associations appointed to Kazakhstan by foreign religious centres as well as compulsory accreditation of missionaries who are not Kazakh citizens and “religious educational associations and institutions” with local authorities (Article 109).⁵ The President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, called the prevention of radicalization of spiritual lives of Kazakh citizens a strategic objective of the state. Article 10-1 of the Law of the RK “On Countering Terrorism” adopted on 13 July 1999 specifies “informational and propagandistic countering of terrorism” that is “carried out for the purposes of explanation of danger of terrorism; exposure of forms, methods and techniques used by terrorists for the propaganda of their views and ideas; shaping of the anti-terrorist mindset in society; integration of efforts of the state bodies in charge of countering terrorism and civic society institutions in prevention of terrorism”.⁶ On 10 February 2000, the President of the RK signed the Decree “On measures for the prevention of manifestations of terrorism and extremism” that instructed the Ministry of Culture, Information and Public Accord of the Republic of Kazakhstan (today transformed into Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society) “to monitor the activity of religious associations” and “to ensure expert theological assessment of literature disseminated in the country”.⁷

This decree was prompted by the need to address the situation where the competent state authorities have no control over the syllabi of subjects taught in religious educational institutions opened by religious organizations, including ones from abroad. Previously, in the 1990s, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and other countries supported various religious institutions. For instance, only in the South Kazakhstan Region the branch of the Social Reform Society (based in Kuwait, later added to the list of banned organizations) provided long-term support to the South Kazakhstan Academy of Humanities, Miras orphanage, Kazakh-Arab University, Yklas youth non-governmental association, Dar Al-Arqam Centre for the Koran Studies in the South Kazakhstan Region, etc.

It also became obvious that not all theologians who undertook religious studies abroad or were exposed to the influence of foreign religious doctrines agree with the adopted principle of secularism and separation of religion and the state. Tighter controls were imposed on the education of Kazakhstani in religious institutions abroad. President Nazarbayev gave order to bring back young people who were studying abroad not funded by the government but by private companies or independently.⁸

In 2000 the official representative in the Ministry of Education and Science announced that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan would “call back” all Kazakh students from foreign religious educational institutions. This step was taken primarily to prevent aggressively minded foreign Muslim clerics from implanting radical ideas into young Muslims studying abroad.⁹ By Resolution No. 259 of the Government of the RK of 20 February 2001 “On some aspects of international cooperation in the field of education”, a dedicated Inter-agency Commission was formed with the authority to take decisions on disputed cases of Kazakh citizens studying abroad and foreign citizens studying in the educational institutions of the RK.¹⁰

Law No. 31-III of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Countering Extremism” of 18 February 2005 came as the next step in building the system of preventing extremist activities.¹¹ It introduced a major innovation to the preventative measures for countering extremist activities: it is now possible to designate as extremist a foreign or international organization that carries out such activity in other countries and thereby to stop its work in the RK. Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami became the first organization designated as extremist by the Decision of the Court of the City of Astana on 28 March 2005. Later, five more organizations were added to the list: the Senim-Bilim-Omir public association (2012), Tablighi Jamaat (2013), unregistered non-governmental association Halyk Maydany – People’s Front Movement (2012), unregistered non-governmental association Alga People’s Party (2012), Takfir wal-Hijra international organization (2014).¹²

5 http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=1006061&doc_id2=1006061#pos=158;-25&pos2=1555;-45

6 http://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/Z990000416_

7 http://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U000000332_#z0

8 Ислам должен возвышать человека [“Islam should elevate a man”] // Kazakhstanskaya Pravda. 25 November 2000.

9 <http://articlekz.com/article/5188>

10 http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=1021792#pos=1;-288

11 http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=30004865#pos=1;-173

12 <http://pravstat.prokuror.kz/rus/o-kpsisu/spisok-ekstremistskih-organizacij>

Earlier, in October 2004, another four organizations had already been classified as terrorist groups in Kazakhstan: Al-Qaeda, East Turkestan Islamic Party, People's Congress of Kurdistan and Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Later, on 15 March 2005, more organizations were added to the list: Osbat al-Ansar, Muslim Brotherhood, Taliban movement, Boz Qurd, Jamaat Mujahideen of Central Asia, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Social Reform Society; in 2006 – the East Turkestan Liberation Organization and Aum Shinrikyo; in 2008 – Islamic Party of Turkestan; in 2011 – Jund al-Khilafah (Soldiers of Caliphate) and in 2015 – the Daesh (ISIS, aka “Islamic State”) and al-Nusra Front.¹³ Thus, the spread of these organizations and their cells was curtailed within the borders of Kazakhstan.

As mentioned before, 676 works of literature and other published material were found to be extremist by decisions of city and district courts in Kazakhstan. The fact that half of those publications are Salafist demonstrates that the authorities have taken an uncompromising stance towards this branch of radical ideology.¹⁴ The list of publications is regularly updated and the latest additions were made on 30 June 2016.

Law No. 483-IV of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Religious Activity and Religious Associations” was adopted on 11 October 2011, almost 20 years after the previous law, and was intended to reflect the changed religious situation in the country and a new phase in the relations between religious organizations and the state. It confirms the democratic, secular nature of the state, “the right of everyone to the freedom of conscience” and guarantees “equal rights of every person regardless of his/her religious opinion”. For the first time, in the preamble, the law recognizes “the historical role of the Hanafi Islam and Orthodox Christianity in the development of culture and the spiritual life of the people” but it is emphasised that the law “respects other religions that are in harmony with the spiritual heritage of the people of Kazakhstan, recognizes the significance of inter-faith concord, religious tolerance and respect for people’s religious convictions”.¹⁵ Reference to the historical role of the Hanafi school of Islam was added to limit the influence of the propaganda used by supporters of Islamic movements that are not seen as traditional in Central Asia.

Other articles of the law also serve the same objective by establishing new principles in the relations between the state as represented by its authorised bodies and religious organizations and missionaries. New rules were introduced to regulate various aspects of religious and missionary activity. In particular, Article 4 of the Law enhances the powers of the authorised body that “examines and analyses the activity of religious associations, missionaries and spiritual (religious) educational institutions set up in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan; coordinates the activity of foreign religious associations on the territory of the Republic, appointment of the leaders of religious associations in the Republic of Kazakhstan; ... approves the rules of theological expert examination; ... approves the instructions for determination of the location of special fixed premises for the distribution of religious literature and other information materials of religious content, religious items, as well as premises for religious activities outside religious buildings (structures)”.

New regulations place restrictions on the activities of the religious organizations outside of specially allocated premises, ban them on the sites of government agencies and educational institutions, introduce rules for the registration of foreign missionaries, etc. The adoption of this law was preceded by an intense public debate, its provisions were criticised by representatives of international organizations for being an attempt by the government to impose restrictions on the rights of believers and their organizations. Nonetheless, the law was passed, although some of the suggestions of its critics were taken into account. That way the state has clearly endorsed the strengthening of control over religious organizations, seeing this instrument as a means of preventing the spread of extremist ideology and radicalization. Adopted the same day, Law No. 484-IV of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Introduction of Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Matters of Religious Activity and Religious Associations” establishes a stricter liability for violation of the newly introduced rules with large fines as a penalty.

13 <http://pravstat.prokuror.kz/rus/o-kpsisu/spisok-terroristicheskikh-organizaciy>

14 <http://pravstat.prokuror.kz/rus/o-kpsisu/spisok-religioznoy-literatury-i-informacionnyh-materialov-priznannyh-ekstremistskimi-i>

15 http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=31067690#pos=1;-217

2.1.2. Current level of radicalization

Key trends

According to the data provided by the Committee for legal statistics and special accounts of the Prosecutor General's Office of the RK, in the last three years the number of extremist offences has risen almost three-fold, from 108 to 315 (see Table 2.1 and Fig. 2.1).¹⁶

Table 2.1. Increase in extremist offences in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2013–2016

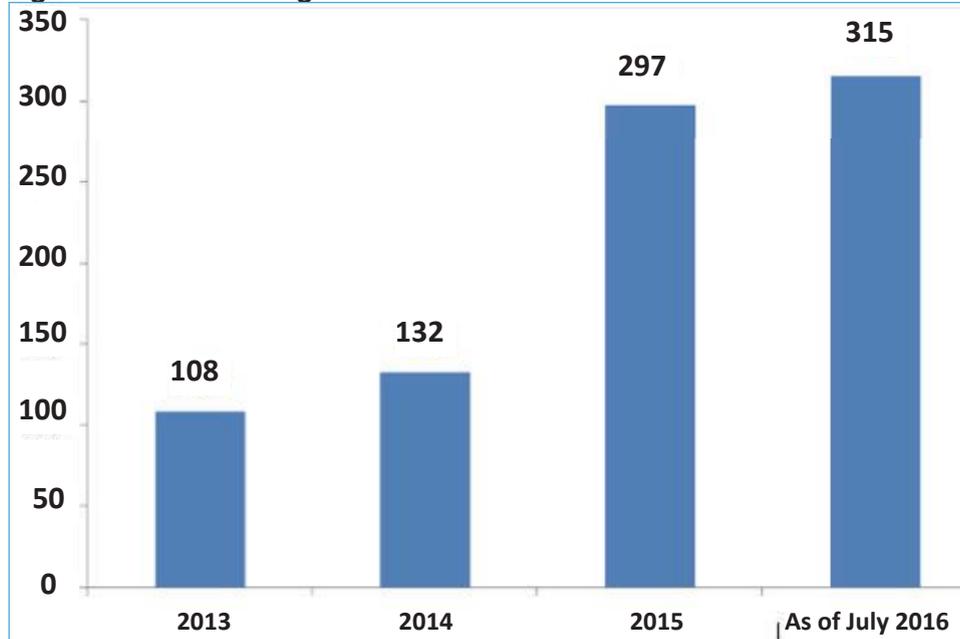
Offence description (legal code)	2013	2014	2015	2016 (as of July 1)
Incitement to social, national, clan, racial or religious hatred (Art. 164) / Incitement to social, national, clan, racial, class or religious discord (Art. 174)	39	44	82	99
Calls for the violent overthrow or change of the constitutional order or forcible violation of the unity of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Art. 170) / Propaganda or public calls for seizure or retention of power, as well as seizure or retention of power or forcible change of the constitutional order of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Art. 179)	1	2	2	4
Separatist activities (Art. 180)			4	2
Terrorism (Art. 233) / Act of terrorism (Art. 255)	4			4
Propaganda of terrorism or public incitement to commit an act of terrorism (Art. 233-1)	27	42	81	84
Creation, leadership of a terrorist group and participation in its activity (Art. 233-2) / Creation, leadership of an extremist group or participation in its activity (Art. 182)	13	23	74	59
Financing terrorist or extremist activities (Art. 233-3) / Financing terrorist or extremist activity and other aiding and abetting of terrorism or extremism (Art. 258)	9	11	13	17
Recruitment or training or arming of individuals in order to conduct terrorist or extremist activity (Art. 233-4) / Recruitment or training or arming of individuals in order to conduct terrorist or extremist activity (Art. 259)	7	3	19	12
Undergoing terrorist or extremist training (Art. 260)			6	1
Seizure of buildings, installations or means of communication (Art. 238) / Attack against building, installation, means of communication or their capture (Art. 269)				1
TOTAL:	108	132	297	315

Source: Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Committee for legal statistics and special accounts

The reason for this rise is news coverage of the events in Syria that are perceived by people who are interested in radical ideology as a fight for the establishment of a fair caliphate state. Even if the appeal of this image has been fading recently, it still affects the mindset of some people. Yerlan Karin, director of the Kazakhstan Institute of Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (KazISS), highlighted that “in 2016 there were 200 of our compatriots [in Syria], 80 of them were killed. Their numbers are diminishing: last year there were 400 Kazakh citizens there. Many of them return when they realise that they were deceived”.¹⁷

¹⁶ <http://www.pravstat.gov.kz>

¹⁷ <http://www.time.kz/articles/ugol/2016/07/01/terakt-v-aktobe-ustroili-domoroshennie-radikali>

Fig. 2.1. Increase in registered extremist offences in Kazakhstan in 2013–2016

Source: Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Committee for legal statistics and special accounts

Another reason for rising extremist crime rates is the increasingly common tendency to disguise criminal activity, more widespread at times of socioeconomic crisis, into a form of religious confrontation. In this case, extremist ideology becomes a convenient cover for criminals. Finally, as a third reason, in the current information space social networks provide more possibilities of exerting ideological influence on people in difficult social and personal circumstances. Whilst traditional values are being transformed, previously dominant communities and institutions are losing their significance and are not replaced with new ones, there is greater demand for religious models to explain the current situation, new meaning of life, understanding of one's role in society, etc. These models can easily reach people who are in doubt and in search for themselves via carefully edited propaganda stories published on social networks. In these posts, using vivid examples, young people address their peers providing explanations for the current situation and calling for action to change it. Over the recent months five so-called Daesh (ISIS, aka "Islamic State") video-messages were released in Kazakhstan alone.¹⁸

The head of the Department of Religion Studies at the Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Religion Studies of Science Committee of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Doctor of Philosophical Science, Associate Professor Bakhitjan Satershinov believes that the proportion of followers of non-traditional religious movements is about 4% of all believers in Kazakhstan. He based these estimates on the results of the latest sociological studies. However, despite low numbers of followers, these movements are known for their high activity. 80% of their supporters are young people. Understandably, the choice between different religious movements is made out of spiritual quest, but other, political and/or socioeconomic, motives are also at play. At times people do not fully understand the essence of religious teachings but are attracted by the religious practice that goes with them. This is true for pseudo-Islamic movements too.¹⁹

Regional aspects of radicalization

The analysis of the regional distribution of incidents related to terrorism and extremism in 2015 (see Table 2.2) indicates that the majority of such crimes were registered in the Karaganda (60) and Almaty (37) Regions, in the city of Astana (30), in the Aktobe, Atyrau, Kyzyl-Orda Regions and city of Almaty (22 each).

18 http://bnews.kz/ru/news/obshchestvo/erlan_karin_o_terakte_v_aktobe_odnimi_silovimi_merami_etu_ugrozu_ne_sderzhat-2016_06_06-1274820

19 <http://www.inform.kz/rus/article/2934643>

No direct link between the number of crimes and a particular region can be observed in this table: regions and cities with the highest numbers are located in the west as well as in the centre and south-east of the country. These crimes seem to be slightly more frequent in the north-eastern regions. But if one takes into account that 226 of 670 extremist materials were banned in the Republic of Kazakhstan by decision of courts primarily in the western part of the country, the pattern of radicalization distribution is different. Precisely one half of the banned publications (334) are Salafist. This fact also serves as a certain indicator of the religious situation in the west of the country. Aynur Abdirasilkyzy, director of the Scientific Research and Analytical Center for Religious Studies of the Committee for Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Culture and Sport of the RK, comes to this conclusion based on the statistics.

She identified several causes for a marked spread of terrorism and extremism in the western regions of Kazakhstan.

First of all, the western part of Kazakhstan shares a border with Russia, and this status of a border region affects the religious situation in this part of the country. In 2000–2011, western regions were among the first to hear about incessant terrorist attacks perpetrated in Dagestan. In other words, manifestations of terrorism in the neighbouring country affected the conscience of local inhabitants to some extent.



Table 2.2. Regional distribution of incidents related to terrorism in Kazakhstan in 2015

Offence description (legal code)	Akmola Region	Aktobe Region	Almaty Region	Atyrau Region	West Kazakhstan Region	Jambul Region	Karaganda Region	Kostanay Region	Kyzylorda Region	Mangistau Region	South Kazakhstan Region	Pavlodar Region	North Kazakhstan Region	East Kazakhstan Region	City of Astana	City of Almaty
Incitement to social, national, clan, racial, class or religious discord (Art. 174)	3	8	8	1	4	5	8	1	3	2	5	1	2	5	14	12
Propaganda or public calls for seizure or retention of power, as well as seizure or retention of power or forcible change of constitutional order of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Art. 179)					1											1
Separatist activities (Art. 180)														4		
Propaganda of terrorism or public calls to commit an act of terrorism (Art. 256)	2	13	3	11	6		18	2	2		5	1	1	4	10	3
Creation, leadership of a terrorist group and participation in its activity (Art. 257)	1	1	18	1	3		20	1	16		2	1		2	4	4
Financing terrorist or extremist activity and other aiding and abetting of terrorism or extremism (Art. 258)			2	5			5								1	
Recruitment or training or arming of individuals in order to conduct terrorist or extremist activity (Art. 259)				4			9		1	1				1	1	2
Undergoing terrorist or extremist training (Art. 260)			6													
TOTAL:	6	22	37	22	14	5	60	4	22	3	12	3	3	16	30	22

Source: www.pravstat.gov.kz

In 2013, Kayrat Lama Sharif, former chairman of the Kazakh Agency for Religious Affairs, now transformed into the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society, noted the uneven distribution of mosques in Kazakhstan: then the South Kazakhstan Region had over 800 mosques, whereas there were only 26 mosques in the Atyrau region.²⁰ As mentioned before, the majority of madreses are also located in the south of the country. So, a low level of religious education may impede the ability of believers to take a more critical approach to extremist appeals disguised with pseudoreligious rhetoric.²¹

As a consequence of all these factors, the Aktobe Region has seen several terrorist attacks and has become one of the leaders among regions with the highest numbers of registered extremist crimes in the centre and north-west of the country (Karaganda, Atyrau and Aktobe Regions). It is worth noting that Aktobe and Atyrau lie along return routes of migrant workers from the Central Asian countries with re-entry bans to the Russian Federation. A significant number of terrorism-related crimes in the cities of Astana and Almaty and in the Almaty Region can be explained by the fact that these capital regions attract the unemployed, especially young people who arrive there in search of work and better standards of living but have not yet found opportunities to realise their plans.

Ways of spreading radicalization

Extremist ideology is most commonly spread in Kazakhstan by the proponents of the Salafist doctrine. Experts use this generic term to designate the range of ideas claiming the need to bring the modern world into line with the principle of “salaf” (purity of the original Islam). The Salafist doctrine was formed over several centuries under different names, but nowadays the main aims of this movement are to refute the values of the secular state and to promote the Islamic state. Aynur Abdirasilkyzy, director of the Scientific Research and Analytical Center for Religious Studies of the Committee for Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Culture and Sport of the RK, believes “the following trends of Salafism are present in Kazakhstan: Takfiris, Madkhalists and Sururis”.

Another obvious manifestation of the debate is the dispute over the issue of whether it is acceptable to wear hijabs in educational institutions. Over the last five years this question has been passed to the Ministry of Education and Science, thereby placing it in a difficult position: the Law of the RK “On Education” stipulates a secular nature of education, but the Constitution of the RK guarantees the respect of freedom of conscience. Decree No. 26 of the Minister of Education and Science of the RK of 14 January 2016 “On approval of requirements to compulsory school uniform for secondary education organizations” in Article 13 clearly states: “Adding elements of clothing indicating a religious affiliation of different confessions to school uniform is not allowed”.²² It is doubtful that this decree will end all arguments but supporters of the hijab are able to contest any specific decision of the executive authorities.

20 <https://www.nur.kz/263087-kazakhstan-zanimaet-pervoe-mesto-v-czentralnoj-azii-po-kolichestvu-mechetej.html>

21 Interview at the Committee for Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Culture and Sport of the RK in March 2016 in Astana.

22 http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=38224755#pos=46;-123



2.1.3. Factors of migrants' radicalization

Migrants' radicalization potential

Once migrant workers are unable to continue working in the RF because of re-entry bans or the economic crisis, they find themselves in Kazakhstan in a social situation that predisposes them to radicalization. The key indicators of their vulnerability, identified in the course of this research project, are:

- abrupt changes in their living conditions, disintegration of the familiar social environment, involuntary withdrawal from usual social networks, impossibility of using old resources to find employment and accommodation, increased risk of seeking help from illegal intermediaries;
- lack of trust and often hostile attitude towards official agencies, government bodies, especially law enforcement agencies; delaying contact with state authorities to regularise their own status out of fear that the re-entry ban to the RF would affect their status in Kazakhstan.

Kazakh nationals who were later convicted of terrorism lived in a social environment with very similar characteristics. On the basis of interviews with them, researcher Serik Beissembayev identified the following features of their social circumstances:

- change of place of residence – from small towns to big cities, changes in usual social institutions and need to find new ones;
- links to the criminal world or street crime subculture, culture of violence and confrontation with state authorities, especially law enforcement agencies.²³

On the basis of these findings, it is possible to determine generic social factors contributing to the radicalization of the population across the country as a whole and among migrant workers in particular:

- change in the habitual social environment, loss of familiar institutions, need to establish new networks of self-help and mutual assistance. Migrants who lost employment in the RF are forced to look for new sources of income and social support in Kazakhstan;
- conflicts with or lack of trust towards authorities. Significant numbers of migrant workers are not able to legalise their employment and stay in Kazakhstan.

Yet, the actual religious situation of Kazakh citizens subjected to radicalization and migrant workers from the Central Asian countries staying in the country has some notable differences:

- Citizens of Kazakhstan received their knowledge of Islam not in their families as part of traditional or systematic learning but from someone from outside, for this reason they are not able to critically analyse religious information they receive. This is why they are usually radicalized at the time of learning the foundations of Islam because their first religious teacher turns out to be a person (preacher, recruiter) who supports radical ideas. This is particularly the case in the central and north-western parts of the country where in Soviet times the tradition of religious education was almost completely lost and religious revival began only in the post-Soviet era. Even these days there are not many SAMK mosques and madreses there. By contrast, there is no shortage of missionaries, including from abroad, who fill this vacuum and experience no problems with finding people eager to learn new ideas. The situation is further exacerbated by the depreciation of secular education and lifestyle against the background of presumably more important spiritual (understood as religious) development.
- The majority of migrant workers from the Central Asian countries, on the contrary, were brought up in families where traditional Islam has been part of their life, they know from a young age many important formulas and figures of speech obligatory for the “correct” way of performing rituals. They can immediately spot any discrepancies in verses from the Koran and Sunna when recited by new missionaries so they treat them with suspicion and resistance.

23 Serik Beissembayev Religious Extremism in Kazakhstan: From Criminal Networks to Jihad \The Central Asia Fellowship Papers No. 15, February 2016.

Another important factor is the role of the preacher (intermediary, the elder, person of authority) in the eyes of the citizens of Kazakhstan and of migrant workers from the Central Asian countries:

- for Kazakhstani extremists, the leader of the community, often being the preacher as well, instils in its common members that they can't continue living as before, they should be preparing either the change of social order in the country or their own departure to places where there is justice or a fight for it, etc.
- in the community of migrant workers from the Central Asian countries in Kazakhstan, the intermediary, the leader of the diaspora, is much more interested in preserving peace and carrying on work in Kazakhstan. For this reason, he will do his best to dampen discontent among migrants by convincing them just to continue work in a foreign country and leave all search "for justice and a better life" for the future.

As a result of these restraining factors, in the first six months of 2016 only three out of 317 offences of terrorist and extremist nature registered in Kazakhstan were committed by foreign citizens from the CIS countries, but it is not known whether any of them were citizens of the Central Asian countries. Two people were accused of "propaganda of terrorism or public calls to commit an act of terrorism, as well as production, storage with the purpose of distribution or distribution of materials of specified content" (Article 256 paragraph 1 of the CPC of the RK) and one person was accused of the same acts, "committed by a person with the use of his (her) official position or by a leader of a public association, or with the use of mass media or information and communication networks, or by a group of persons or a group of persons on previous concert" (Article 256 paragraph 2 of the CPC of the RK).²⁴ In 2015 there were no CIS citizens among people who perpetrated such crimes. According to the experts in the Committee for Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Culture and Sport PK, so far no signs of radicalization of migrant workers have been observed.²⁵

Prospects for radicalization

However, as the conditions for the prompt inclusion of migrant workers into the legal labour market and legalisation of their status in Kazakhstan are inadequate, they may become more susceptible and responsive to any offer of mutual help and interest towards them on behalf of "their" relatives, acquaintances or fellow countrymen and may be prepared to accept without critical questioning any information from "their" sources if it seems useful. With continuing, mostly irregular employment of migrant workers in Kazakhstan, their responsiveness to extremist information disguised as care for them will increase, while their hopes for legalising their status in the country will diminish. But so long as migrant workers remain hopeful of finding legal sources of income, their protest sentiments will stay subdued with minimal demand for extremist explanations of their current situation. Therefore, in order to minimise risks of radicalization of migrant workers from Central Asia within the borders of Kazakhstan the main task is to create appropriate conditions to facilitate the legalisation of their employment and residence status, which will open the opportunities for them to use all the resources offered by the state and civic organizations to satisfy their needs.

Speaking of religion itself, it should be noted that the majority of migrant workers from the Central Asian countries in Kazakhstan can attend a mosque, but they do not always take this opportunity due to their work hours or remoteness of the mosque. All migrant workers celebrate big religious festivals several times a year and go to mosques on those days and/or get together with their friends and family. In the south of Kazakhstan migrant workers from Uzbekistan are almost not noticeable among worshipers during Friday prayers in villages inhabited by ethnic Uzbeks who are Kazakh nationals. In other words, migrant workers have access to all facilities to satisfy their religious needs within the existing religious institutions in Kazakhstan. They are not members of any specific mosques and, as a rule, they do not require separate mosques or imams.

There is a new phenomenon emerging in the last five years – the tendency for radicalization of women, members of migrant workers' families who come to Kazakhstan to reunite with their families and find themselves in strong social isolation. This happens because they are alien to their new community, they usually do not work so they do

24 www.pravstat.gov.kz

25 Interview in Astana on 23 February 2016.



not have reasons or opportunities to interact with the host society and its institutions. Sometimes husbands hide them from registration authorities, sometimes the first wife is alternating with the second wife in the same family and their husband is not willing to go public about this fact. Twelve women in similar circumstances were found in Petropavlovsk, some cases (5-7) were also observed in Aktau. Living in such conditions, they receive most of the information about the outside world from their husbands, in a distorted form at times, which may make them think that the world is unjust and that radical means are needed to change it.

Overall, the people most vulnerable to radicalization are those who come up against social injustice and inability to realise themselves in their current circumstances. Generally, they are members of the lower middle class who moved to big cities and, being migrant workers, can see that many people live much better than them and they themselves have no chances to lead the same lifestyle.

2.1.4. Measures to prevent radicalization

The State Programme for Countering Religious Extremism and Terrorism in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2013–2017 adopted in Astana on 8 October 2013 became an important step in the efforts taken by the government to reduce risks of population radicalization.²⁶ The Programme defines the following external and internal factors contributing to the dissemination of radical religious ideology in the country:

External factors include:

- proximity of the borders of Kazakhstan to the hotbeds of armed conflicts, including with involvement of radical religious groups, and ensuing vulnerability of the country to migration issues;
- propaganda of ideas of religious extremism and terrorism from abroad in the internet;
- presence of some Kazakh followers of terrorist ideas in the fighter training camps in the foreign countries.

There were also reports of Kazakh students at foreign religious institutions being exposed to extremist and terrorist ideology.

Internal factors include existing socioeconomic problems, low level of religious literacy among the population, and weaknesses of moral and patriotic education of the young generation.

In addition, it was recognised that one of the reasons for the destructive mindset and lack of trust towards state authorities especially among young people is the corruption and excessive bureaucracy of some officials in local government bodies.

The Programme states that the government is implementing “the state policy that seeks to ensure internal political stability, including in the matters of countering extremism and terrorism”. However, it also recognises that the following weak points persist: numbers of the followers of radical religious ideologies continue to grow; lack of efficiency of awareness-raising measures; inadequate system for preventing the dissemination of extremist and terrorist materials, including in the internet; underdevelopment and lack of competitiveness of the national theological education system; lack of effective measures to safeguard Kazakh citizens from radical preachers while abroad; low engagement of civil society institutions in activities to counter religious extremism.

The Programme notes that between 2008 and 2013 the number of individuals convicted for terrorist crimes increased from 27 to 171 and for extremist crimes from 56 to 168.

In order to reverse those negative trends a comprehensive range of measures has been developed covering different aspects of public life and work of non-governmental and state agencies. In particular, it was decided that by 2017 targeted preventative campaigns run by specialized information and advocacy groups and state authorities should reach 100% of people who are vulnerable, or already exposed, to radical religious ideology.

26 <http://medialaw.asia/posts/08-10-2013/75615.html>

According to the Committee for Religious Affairs at the Ministry of Culture and Sport of the RK (today transformed into Ministry of Religious Affairs and Civil Society)²⁷, in 2015 the regions held 183 events involving 10,283 people and 2,105 people were surveyed with questionnaires. The findings of the study were not only submitted to the Committee for Religious Affairs and other relevant state agencies but also regularly publicised in the form of articles and interviews in mass media and thus were communicated to the general public.

In 2015 alone, over 20 updated publications were produced and published in two languages, such as the compendium “State and Religion Relations in the Republic of Kazakhstan” for school directors, heads of educational institutions and youth liaison officers; a teacher’s guide for the “Introduction to Religious Studies” course; issues 5 to 7 of the series “20 Questions and Answers on Topical Issues of Religion”; “The Handbook of Religious Scholar”; information and reference publication “Secular State and Inter-Faith Relations: Theory and Practice”; methodological guidelines “Practical Issues of Studying Religious Situation in the Regions”; compilation of studies on “Current Questions of the Religious Situation in Kazakhstan”; reference book “Imam’s Aid” and collection of articles “Research in Religious Studies”.

The Committee for Religious Affairs identified several categories of the population who were invited to take part in various events depending on the specifics of the audience. They were representatives of religious associations and mosque jamagats (religious communities), company employees, students, schoolchildren, teachers of the “Introduction to Religious Studies” course, civil servants, members of information and advocacy groups, women, unemployed, self-employed and inmates of correctional institutions. The Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan (SAMK) is actively involved and has formed a specialized group of imams who carry out awareness-raising work in penal colonies in order to prevent the spread of radical ideas. In 2015 awareness discussions were held with 723 people linked to extremist activity.²⁸ Importantly, the prevention work is targeting specific groups of the population, since the most vulnerable marginalised young people, including migrant workers, who spend their days looking for jobs or working, are often not included in these programmes.

Despite all the efforts, the number of people imprisoned for extremist crimes is on the rise. In 2015 there were 400 of them, of which 150 still support radical ideas²⁹, whereas in 2013 their number was only 339. On the other hand, as a result of the awareness-raising work, in the Aktobe Region alone 215 followers of radical movements reverted back to traditional Islam in the first six months of 2016.³⁰ This came as the result of the joint work undertaken by the Department for Religious Affairs at the local akimat, the Ansar rehabilitation centre, opened at the initiative of the local akimat, local law enforcement agencies and the local SAMK branch. Similar centres were opened in other regional capitals of Kazakhstan. In September 2015, a specialized learning centre was opened in the Aktobe Region offering courses to improve religious literacy among women, but there is still a shortage of trained religious scholars. For example, in July 2016 mosques in the Aktobe Region had 7 unfilled imam vacancies.

To solve this problem, the SAMK announced in 2015 the implementation of the Concept for Development of Religious Education. As part of this initiative, first, the madreses will be renamed into colleges; along with quality religious education they will offer secular courses and will train specialists in Islamic studies. Second, the number of religious literacy courses run by mosques will be increased, as they are the main instrument to provide the basics of spiritual education to the majority of the population. Third, there will be more regional centres to train the reciters of the Koran as well as specialists with initial theological education, including azans, qari, mullahs, who will be in charge of religious ceremonies in mosques, and hafiz for madreses and higher religious education institutions.³¹

The current system of countering extremism and terrorism faced a serious challenge in June 2016 when proponents of radical religious beliefs carried out a series of terrorist attacks in Aktobe. Nonetheless, the preventative work did show its effectiveness as out of 45 initial members of the group who planned the attacks almost half abandoned their intentions.

27 <http://old.muftyat.kz/ru/article/view?id=2055>

28 <http://www.kazpravda.kz/news/obshchestvo/v-turmah-kazahstana-nahodyatsya-400-osuzhdennih-za-ekstremizm-i-terrorizm/>

29 http://www.express-k.kz/news/?ELEMENT_ID=62843

30 <http://www.meta.kz/novosti/kazakhstan/1079413-215-posledovatelye-radikal-nykh-techeniy-vozvrashcheny-v-traditsionnyy-islam-v-aktyubinskoy-oblas.html>

31 <http://www.kazreligiya.kz/?p=4454>

Apart from the repressive and awareness-raising measures, campaigns were launched in recent years with the aim of returning young people back to rural areas through special arrangements for their education and further employment with the help of the Road Map to Employment–2020 Programme and the Zhana Serpin 2050 Programme. At the meeting of the Security Council on 10 June 2016, President Nazarbayev spoke about the importance of eradicating social conditions conducive to extremism and the radicalization of youth. He noted the need “for fundamental improvements in work with the population” and instructed the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan together with akimats “to work with each unemployed person on an individual basis and in two months’ time to submit proposals for the employment of these categories of the population. To initiate relevant amendments to the Labour Code if required”.³²

On 13 September 2016 President Nazarbayev signed the Decree on the establishment of a new ministry – the Ministry for Religious Affairs and Civil Society.³³ Pursuant to this Decree, the ministry received the functions and authority:

- from the Ministry of Culture and Sport of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of relations with religious associations – to guarantee the right of citizens to freedom of religion and ensure interaction between the state and the civil society;
- from the Ministry of Education and Science in the field of youth policy.

Meanwhile, the key measures in countering radicalization of migrant workers in the territory of Kazakhstan should be focused on expanding the conditions for issuing of work permits to migrant workers working for private individuals as well as on increasing opportunities for self-employment of migrant workers on their arrival to Kazakhstan. The inclusion of migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan into the single labour market is an equally important task.

All these initiatives are aimed at the maximum engagement of migrant workers in Kazakhstan in administratively simple and transparent mechanisms of their integration into the local labour markets and communities in different parts of the country. This will stop the emergence of clandestine forms of their socialisation and mobilisation within the borders of Kazakhstan that could become a breeding ground for the spread of extremism.

32 http://www.akorda.kz/ru/events/akorda_news/zasedanie-soveta-bezopasnosti-pod-predsedatelstvom-glavy-gosudarstva-4

33 http://www.akorda.kz/ru/events/astana_kazakhstan/astana_other_events/ukaz-o-merah-po-dalneishemu-sovershenstvovaniyu-sistemy-gosudarstvennogo-upravleniya-respubliki-kazahstan-1



2.2. KYRGYZSTAN

Introduction

Labour migration in Kyrgyzstan is a complex process marked not only by large-scale movement of people in search of work but also by serious socioeconomic and political consequences as well as security concerns.

In recent years, the topic of migrants' vulnerabilities and their susceptibility to radicalization has been raised not only in the expert community but in political circles as well. The problems of religious radicalism tend to arise increasingly more often in the context of migration processes. However, in Kyrgyzstan religious radicalization issues are closely related to the principal trends observed in the religious situation and the scale of Islamization in the country.

This chapter will discuss the main characteristics of the religious radicalization phenomenon in Kyrgyzstan and possible causes and consequences of radicalization of migrant workers. The first part of the study reviews the religious situation and manifestations of religious radicalism in the country. The second part focuses on the identification of possible causes of radicalization of the population, namely Kyrgyz migrant workers. The third part deals with the circumstances that make migrant workers vulnerable to radicalization. Social groups vulnerable to religious radicalization are covered in the fourth part of this chapter. The current measures to prevent and combat religious extremism are discussed in the fifth part of the study.

For the data collection purposes we carried out a desk review and analysis of legislative acts, statistics, available reports and studies. In addition, we conducted interviews with officials, experts and representatives of non-governmental organizations who specialize in problems of religious radicalism.

2.2.1. Religious situation and manifestations of religious radicalization in Kyrgyzstan

Growing influence of religion on society as the main characteristic of the religious situation in the country

Rising religiousness has become a distinctive feature of the history of modern Kyrgyzstan as evidenced by a sharp increase in numbers of religious sites and organizations. If in 1990 Kyrgyzstan had only one Kazyiat and 39 working mosques, nowadays the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (SAMK) oversees nine Kazyiats (territorial division units of the SAMK), 2,239 mosques, 74 other Islamic entities, 10 Muslim institutions of higher education and 89 madreses. The state authority for religious affairs lists 2,814 religious organizations on its register, including 380 Christian entities.

The largest Christian organization is the Eparchy (diocese) of Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan belonging to the Central Asian Metropolitan District of the Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate). Before 1991 there were 29 churches and houses of prayer in Kyrgyzstan; nowadays the country has 49 functioning Orthodox cathedrals, churches, Sunday schools and one convent.

Other Christian religious organizations include 4 Catholic, 50 Baptist, 20 Lutheran, 56 Pentecostal, 31 Seventh-Day Adventist, 38 Presbyterian, 43 Charismatic, 41 Jehovah's Witnesses and 18 other non-denominational Protestant organizations.

Seven Christian institutions of higher education and eight Christian institutions of secondary education are open in Kyrgyzstan, of which three schools and one higher education establishment are accredited as conforming with state educational standards.³⁴

Furthermore, the role of Islam in the social and political life of the country is rapidly growing. Kyrgyzstan is the only state in Central Asia that has two namazkanas (prayer rooms) inside the Parliament building, and Bayram Muslim prayers are held on the main square in the capital city attended by top officials who find opportunities to address thousands of worshippers.

Spiritual leaders not only shape the worldview and beliefs of their followers, they also set guiding principles for their lives. The authority of Muslim scholars and their role in shaping of public opinion is rapidly increasing, whereas the same cannot be said about the influence of politicians and government officials.

Islamic organizations already offer alternative solutions to philosophical, social, managerial and even economic problems. Many jamaats³⁵ position themselves as the most active social institutions and set up affiliated self-help groups.

Religious foundations are enhancing their role in the life of society day by day: they fund the construction of schools, roads, state buildings and social amenities.³⁶ Not only common citizens but even political and public figures make use of the help provided by Islamic foundations. Their funding goes towards building mosques in the ancestral villages of politicians and government officials. For instance, the namazkana in the Parliament building was also furnished with financial support from an international foundation in Saudi Arabia.

Politicization of Islam

With the help of religious foundations state officials miss no opportunity to perform the Hajj free of charge or participate in events organized by religious organizations, thus demonstrating the backing of the state. Main religious jamaats and movements in Kyrgyzstan have already gained support among the ruling elite. Political figures and spiritual leaders demonstrate solidarity with each other in public. Counting on the religious people's vote politicians often lobby the interests of religious organizations. All these facts can be treated as one of the manifestations of politicization of the religion, for political parties with Islamic rhetoric are gradually emerging in the parliamentary democracy. In the 2015 parliamentary election campaign some political parties used Islamic symbolism and slogans to great effect. Campaign banners with religious appeals appeared in the streets, religious leaders openly supported candidates. During the electoral campaign the population did not make obvious demands for the country to be run according to Islamic principles. Nevertheless, some political parties and candidates acted as if they were responding to such demands.³⁷

It is not possible to say that the Muslim community in Kyrgyzstan is being shaped only from one source of ideas. On the contrary, several ideological Islamic models from different countries are competing with each other. Islamic jamaats and movements from Muslim countries (Pakistan, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, etc.) are gradually building up their influence. The Concept of the State Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Religious Sphere for 2014–2020 (adopted by Decree No. 203 of the President of the KR on 14 November 2014) states that “booming growth of the number of religious sites has been made possible through the influence and financial support of Turkish, Pakistani, Arab, Iranian and other religious organizations and activists. This process resulted in the emergence of new religious

34 State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, http://religion.gov.kg/ru/registration_union.html (accessed 17 April 2016).

35 Islamic communities, congregation.

36 Such Islamic foundations as Ihsan Hayriya, Tabarak, World Assembly of Muslim Youth and others are known to be active in Kyrgyzstan.

37 «Улуу Кыргызстан - политическая партия с религиозным уклоном» [“Uluu Kyrgyzstan: political party with religious inclinations”], <http://rus.azattyk.org/a/27276484.html> (accessed 10 April 2016).

practices and divisions in Muslim community that could in future lead to disagreements and conflicts on religious grounds”.³⁸

At the same time, state authorities and the expert community are concerned with the activity of unauthorised religious associations and movements, such as Tablighi Jamaat, Hizmet, Muslim Brotherhood and others, as they may bear a potential threat for society and state.³⁹

Manifestations of religious radicalization

Courts of law of different instances in the Kyrgyz Republic have banned 20 extremist and terrorist organizations.⁴⁰ It is worth noting that nine Islamic organizations were banned in Kyrgyzstan after 2012, i.e. since the aggravation of the situation in the Middle East, especially in Syria and Iraq. Military conflicts in Syria and Iraq with the participation of Kyrgyz nationals remain a very topical issue in the country, and one of the key priorities for the state authorities is to prevent the negative consequences of this phenomenon.

Official figures on levels of radicalization in society give reasons for concern. In the ten months of 2015, according to representatives of law enforcement agencies, 294 cases of extremism were detected, 7,331 pieces of extremist material were confiscated and 239 individuals linked to extremism were identified and detained. At present, the departments of internal affairs have files on 1,846 individuals known for their extremist views. About 2,000 citizens in Kyrgyzstan support extremist ideology popularised by international terrorist organizations.⁴¹

Eighty-six cases of recruitment of Kyrgyz nationals for participation in hostilities in Syria were identified in 2014, but in 2015 their number went up to 266.⁴² Furthermore, in November 2015 the Prosecutor General of the KR Indira Djoldubaeva reported that almost 500 Kyrgyz nationals⁴³, including 122 women, were in international terrorist organizations in Syria; however, in August 2016 the State Committee for National Security of the KR released the official information that the number of Kyrgyz citizens taking part in military conflict in Syria had reached 600 people.⁴⁴

Local authorities are concerned that the number of returnees from Syria is growing. The deputy akim of the Kara-Suu district stated the following facts: “Compared to other districts of the Osh Region the majority of citizens who departed to Syria came from the Kara-Suu district. For example, 42 went from the Nariman rural community, 61 from the Kashgar-Kyshtak rural community, 21 from the Shark rural community, 19 from the Saray rural community and 10 from the Savay rural community. These numbers are for 2014–2015. Not a single local inhabitant went to Syria in 2016. Instead, they are coming back in groups of three or four.”⁴⁵ For this reason, the question of the impact that individuals who took part in military conflicts may have on public security is becoming one of the main topics of debate.

38 1. Al-Qaeda; 2. Taliban Movement; 3. East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM); 4. People’s Congress of Kurdistan (Kongra-Gel); 5. East Turkestan Liberation Organization; 6. Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami; 7. Jihad Group (Islamic Jihad Union); 8. Turkistan Islamic Party (Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan); 9. Unification Church (Sun Myung Moon’s Church); 10. Jaish al-Mahdī (Mahdi Army); 11. Jund al-Khilafah (Soldiers of Caliphate); 12. Ansarullah (Helpers of Allah); 13. Takfir wal-Hijra; 14. Agitation and propaganda material of Alexander Tikhomirov – Said Buryatsky; 15. Al-Akramiyah; 16. Islamic State; 17. Jabhat al-Nusra; 18. Katibat al-Imam Bukhari; 19. Jannat Oshiklari; 20. Jama’at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad <http://www.gov.kg/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Kontseptsiya-na-rus-prilozhenie-k-Ukazu-PKR.docx> (accessed 19 July 2016).

39 Абдырахманов Т. А. Религиозная ситуация и религиозное образование в Кыргызстане [T. Abdyrakhmanov. Religious situation and religious education in Kyrgyzstan], Vestnik Krasnoyarsk. gos. ped. un-ta. 2008. No. 2. P. 51–55. <http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n-religioznaya-situatsiya-i-religioznoe-obrazovanie-v-kyrgyzstane> (accessed 23 April 2016).

40 State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic,

41 <http://svodka.akipress.org/news:146355> (accessed 4 February 2016).

42 <http://svodka.akipress.org/news:146355> (accessed 4 February 2016)

43 However, in an interview on 20 April 2016 one of the officials in law enforcement agencies admitted that, in his opinion, the number of citizens of the KR fighting in military conflicts was not particularly high.

44 <http://rus.azattyk.org/a/27897305.html> (accessed 4 February 2016).

45 «В Кара-Суу в этом году увеличилось количество граждан, возвращающихся из Сирии, - госадминистрация» [“State Administration: In Kara-Suu the number of returnees from Syria has increased this year”], http://osh.turmush.kg/ru/news:303671/?from=ru_turmush&place=newstoplast (accessed 10 July 2016).

On the other hand, the Prosecutor General of the KR Indira Djoldubaeva highlights the fact that terrorist organizations are sending Kyrgyz nationals, trained in terrorist and guerrilla warfare in Syria and Iraq, back to Kyrgyzstan and other countries of Central Asia to carry out acts of terrorism. As part of the preventative actions, three channels for transferring recruits to the Turkish-Syrian border area were detected and cut off and 47 individuals were identified, detained and prosecuted under criminal law.⁴⁶

In June 2016, officers of the State Committee for National Security of the KR (SCNS KR) arrested three nationals in Batken who returned from the combat zone in Syria with the intention of organizing terrorist attacks in Kyrgyzstan. During the search, assault rifles with ammunition and a grenade were found.

Thus, Kyrgyz law enforcement agencies have two concerns over the growing extremist and terrorist threat: first, the targeted recruitment by radical organizations and departure of citizens of Kyrgyzstan to the zones of military hostilities and, second, the risk of terrorist attacks in the territory of Kyrgyzstan perpetrated by returnees from Syria.

2.2.2. Causes of radicalization and factors affecting radicalization of Kyrgyz migrants

Official opinions on the causes of radicalization in the country

Since the 1990s the state authorities were of the opinion that religious radicalism in Kyrgyzstan is mainly imported from abroad. The National Security Concept of the Kyrgyz Republic (adopted by Decree No. 221 of the President of the KR on 13 July 2012)⁴⁷ calls to improve the efficiency of the migration policy in order to control the arrival of “emissaries and funds from Europe, America and the Arab Gulf States”. In other words, the state is concerned with the activity of religious missionaries and preachers coming from abroad.

Experts see the supporters of the Uzbekistan Islamic opposition who migrated to Kyrgyzstan as one of the external channels of radicalization.⁴⁸ They highlight the role of Uzbek emigrants from the Fergana Valley in generating and disseminating ideas of organizations banned in Kyrgyzstan, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Hizb ut-Tahrir al-Islami, Al-Akramiyah, etc.⁴⁹

Another source of radicalization in the country are supposedly citizens of the KR who received a religious education abroad. For instance, the Concept of the State Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Religious Sphere for 2014–2020 specifically mentions the negative social impact of graduates from foreign religious extremist centres and organizations who are “the purveyors and disseminators of ideology and mentality of the country of their stay, they introduce lifestyle, culture, physical appearance, attire and behavioural standards that are alien to the people of Kyrgyzstan”.⁵⁰

Confrontation between secular and religious sections of the society

Religious matters produce a number of other challenging issues that point to certain negative developments in that field. Some of them directly contributed to radicalization risks in the country. To be precise, Islamization processes in Kyrgyzstan led to the escalation of confrontation between secular and religious sections of the society.

46 «Порядка 500 граждан Кыргызстана находятся в Сирии в рядах ИГ – Генпрокурор И.Джолдубаева» [“Prosecutor General of the KR I. Djoldubaeva: Around 500 citizens of Kyrgyzstan are in Syria in the ranks of IS”], <http://www.kabar.kg/rus/law-and-order/full/98746> (accessed 11 November 2015).

47 http://religion.gov.kg/ru/legal_base.html (accessed 4 April 2016).

48 Назира Курбанова, Ислам в общественно-политической жизни Кыргызстана [Nazira Kurbanova. Islam in social and political life of Kyrgyzstan]. Altyn Tamga, Bishkek, 2008, p. 136.

49 Канатбек Мурзахалилов. Трансформация институтов мусульманской общины Кыргызстана и России на рубеже XX–XXI вв. Сравнительный анализ [Kanatbek Murzakhalilov. Transformation of Muslim community institutions in Kyrgyzstan and Russia at the turn of the 19–20 centuries. Comparative analysis], p. 5. islamjournal.idmedina.ru/jour/article/download/57/59.

50 http://www.president.kg/files/docs/kontseptsiya_na_rus._prilojenie_k_ukazu_pkr-1.pdf (accessed 28 June 2016).

Speaking at a meeting of the Defence Council in 2014, President of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Atambayev commented on the danger posed by total Islamization: “The general idea behind Islamization is to turn the Kyrgyz into mankurts. It is obvious now that some moldos⁵¹ and politicians are striving for the universal Islamization of the country. If they succeed in enticing people to follow them, it won’t be long before religious fanaticism takes root in the country”.⁵²

A certain part of Muslim community fiercely insists that society should adopt Islamic values and live by them, raising grave concerns among the so called secular section of the society. This is demonstrated by the growing popularity of spiritual leaders even on the political arena. For instance, in early June 2016 a heated debate erupted after rejection of a draft law aimed at extending lunch breaks for civil servants to enable them to perform Friday prayers. In his special address, the former Grand Mufti of Kyrgyzstan and current member of the SAMK’s Council of Ulema Chubak Ajy Jalilov severely criticised deputies who opposed the draft law. In a video message Jalilov named the deputies who voted against the draft law and urged his supporters not to vote for them, not to greet them and not to recite the funeral prayer (Janazah namaz) at their funeral. Jalilov also advised the Muftiate to set up a database of individuals who oppose religion, fight Islam, profane Islamic values and pass themselves off as Muslims when they are not genuine Muslims.

Ideological conflict in the country also fuels debates over religious clothing. The secular part of Kyrgyz society calls for the rejection of the “arabization” and for return to national values. On 13 July 2016 a billboard was put up in the streets of the capital showing two photographs: one depicting women in national Kyrgyz dress and the other with women in burqas (with covered faces). The message on it (“Where on earth are we going, people?!”) warned passers-by about the danger of losing national values. The following day the Muslim community criticised those who commissioned this billboard and the SAMK promptly released an official statement condemning such acts. However, the President of Kyrgyzstan showed his support for the authors of the billboard and instructed for it to be displayed throughout the country. On the other hand, some opposition leaders spoke out about the need to protect the rights of people with religious beliefs. Therefore, disagreements over the place of religion in the social and private life of the citizens of the country are gradually heating up.

Kyrgyzstan experiences the emergence of civic organizations and Islamic activists who not only take upon themselves the right “to put on the path of truth” but also to clear any obstacles that stand along that path. To give an example, on 4 June 2016 a group of young people attempted to disrupt a social dance party in Bishkek — the activists claimed that such events should be banned as they contradict the traditions of Islam.

Some Muslims make attempts to physically remove barriers on the way to “pure Islam” by burning New Year trees and destroying historic religious buildings (mausoleums, monuments, etc.). The attack and attempted murder of the prominent theologian Kadyr Malikov in November 2015 demonstrated how aggressive the intentions of supporters of radical movements in Kyrgyzstan can be.

On the background of thriving political and systemic corruption at all government levels, pro-Islamic slogans are becoming more popular among the population. Despite the fact that the state has intensified efforts in fighting corruption⁵³, some members of the public are calling, informally, for more severe sanctions, and on social networks some users suggest punishing or even executing corrupt officials by sharia law.

Some Muslims in the country see the meaning of life in Islam rather than in the current secular system, as evidenced by Muslims’ attitudes to the notions of “secularism” and “democracy”. Ordinary Muslims and spiritual leaders alike see the secular state as “anti-religious” and perceive democracy as a system that leads to the loss of religious and national values.

51 Mullahs, clerics.

52 «Заблудшие. Как остановить религиозную радикализацию Кыргызстана» [“Gone astray: how to stop religious radicalization of Kyrgyzstan”], <http://www.stanradar.com/news/full/13521-zabludshie-kak-ostanovit-religioznuju-radikalizatsiju-kyrgyzstana.html> (accessed 19 July 2016).

53 Decree of the President of the KR “On measures to address the causes of political and systemic corruption in government”, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/61721?cl=ru-ru>. (accessed 11 August 2016).

Intra-confessional issues

Relations between the state and religion in Kyrgyzstan are compounded, among other issues, by controversies surrounding the SAMK. The main reasons for deteriorating relations within the clergy include the leadership struggle between spiritual leaders, uncompromising ideological divides between proponents of different Islamic factions and issues around the organization and conduct of the pilgrimage (Hajj).

Mosques are being built in Kyrgyzstan without any control or supervision. In some cases, neither state authorities nor official local Islamic organizations have any knowledge of new mosques under construction, nor do they know who funds them. Approximately 500 mosques remain unregistered in the country. Without official registration these mosques in fact engage in illegal religious activities. Nonetheless, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan continues to appoint imams to unauthorised mosques.

The number of functioning prayer rooms in the country remains unknown because nobody keeps any record of namazkanas. For this reason, propaganda and advocacy activity that takes place in namazkanas and other unregistered mosques escape the state and SAMK control altogether.

The issue of religious education is also of relevance to this topic. Its state has a direct bearing on the dissemination of radical ideas in the society. Madreses and other Islamic educational institutions do not have state accreditation, their curricula are not harmonised, no standards of religious education have been developed, each institutions belongs to a certain jamaat that, as a rule, has not received a state registration.⁵⁴ In addition, last year the general public witnessed some madrese students go to Syria for the jihad.⁵⁵

Kyrgyz law enforcement agencies are convinced that a poorly educated clergy only makes the extremists' job easier. They believe that imams do not have a sufficient basic religious education. According to the State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, about 2,500 imams were assessed in 2015 but only 800 of them were certified as meeting the requirements of their professional status. Only 20% of the Islamic clergy had received basic religious education. Moreover, 92% of heads of religious education institutions were not allowed to sit the assessment as they did not meet the SAMK statute requirements, namely they did not have a graduate degree from a secular education institution.

Divisions and systemic problems in the Muslim community gave rise to ethnic differentiation of worshippers. For instance, the Muslim jamaat in the south of the country is divided into Kyrgyz and Uzbek mosques; in the north there are separate Uyghur and Dungan mosques.

In recent years Muslims in Kyrgyzstan are also divided in two groups in terms of dates for celebrating Ramazan Bayram. The majority of the population ends Ramazan and celebrates Ramazan Bayram according to the Muftiate's fatwa⁵⁶. However, some jamaats do not recognise decisions of the Muftiate and set their own dates for Bayram celebrations. These jamaats organize alternative Bayram Namaz prayers too. Some religious organizations do not hide their fundamental differences with official clergy and, disguised as non-governmental organizations, spread their ideas in society through free text messages, internet sites, social networks and TV and radio broadcasts. In this context, tensions are mounting over who is practising "pure Islam" and who is the "true Muslim".

54 USIP and SFCG. Radicalization of the population in the Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken Regions: factors, types and groups of risks, 2016. P. 36.

55 «Досье 22-летнего А.Бакыбекова из Лейлека, выехавшего в Сирию: Отец умер, мать на заработках в Бишкеке» ["Case of 22-year old A. Bakybekov from Leylek: Father died, mother is away earning money in Bishkek"]. <http://www.turmush.kg/ru/news:264779> (accessed 23 June 2016).

56 Legal decision made in accordance with sharia rules.

Socioeconomic problems and growing popularity of radical organizations

The increasing risk of radicalization in Kyrgyzstan is closely linked to the activity of major radical religious movements in the country. For example, the religious political party Hizb ut-Tahrir, banned in the country by the decision of the Supreme Court of the KR on 20 August 2003, has changed its strategy in the last ten years. Until mid-2000s Hizb ut-Tahrir's leaflets contained incitements to the regime change in the neighbouring Republic of Uzbekistan, whereas nowadays the organization directly attacks the political course of the Kyrgyz government and disseminates messages through social networks on every topical issue in the country advocating that the creation of the caliphate will be a solution for all of them.

Hizb ut-Tahrir actively uses the poor socioeconomic situation in Kyrgyzstan as a means of discrediting the government and the existing political system. For instance, in May 2013 Hizb ut-Tahrir circulated a documentary film on the internet about the Kumtor gold mine that is often at the centre of political debate. In this film they called for the Kumtor gold mine to be given to the nation instead of foreign investors and the government because "by sharia everything below and above the ground belongs to the people". Obviously such messages draw the attention of the population who has been struggling through financial difficulties for many years.

Zaynabidin Ajimamatov, expert in Islamic movements, points out the merger of the Hizb ut-Tahrir with Salafi movements in Kyrgyzstan and cites the example of Rashot Kamalov's arrest. Imam of the central mosque in the town of Kara-Suu, Osh Region, Kamalov was detained in 2015 for advocating the establishment of the caliphate and violent overthrow of the constitutional order. He was also accused of recruiting citizens to extremist organizations and sending them to Syria. By the end of 2015 Rashot Kamalov was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment.

Despite certain ideological disagreements, jamaats in Kyrgyzstan agree on Islamic internationalism. In other words, even if they compete for followers, Islamic jamaats do not yet openly criticise each other and even show some mutual support when it comes to the complete Islamization of society.

Factors influencing Kyrgyz migrants

The expert community recently started raising alarm over the radicalization of migrant workers. Kadyr Malikov, director of the research centre "Religion, Law and Politics", thinks that labour migration to the RF creates the right conditions for the recruitment of Central Asian nationals into terrorist organizations.⁵⁷

Government officials also agree that difficult circumstances faced by migrant workers only encourage their radicalization. Raim Salimov, deputy chief of the 10th Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the KR (MIA KR), sees labour migration as one of the channels for radicalization of the Kyrgyz youth. He believes that Kyrgyz nationals "come under the influence of the propaganda spread by radical North Caucasian jamaats that are very active in recruiting fighters for military conflicts".⁵⁸ Taalay Japarov, deputy director of the SCNS KR's Anti-Terrorist Centre, also supports the view of his colleagues in the MIA KR adding that the majority of those who left for Syria were in search of employment.⁵⁹

Another security services official believes that certain factors in the RF, including administrative pressure exerted by law enforcement agencies, threats coming from nationalist groups, problems with employment and influence of radical religious movements, contribute to the radicalization of migrants.⁶⁰

Speaking at a meeting of the Jogorku Kenesh Defence and Security Committee in the autumn 2014, the chairman of the State Committee for National Security of the KR Busurmankul Tabaldiyev stated that the main reason why Kyrgyz

57 «Почему граждане Кыргызстана едут в Сирию на войну?» ["Why do citizens of Kyrgyzstan go to war in Syria?"] <http://www.islamsng.com/kgz/analytics/8009> (accessed 9 July 2016).

58 <http://svodka.akipress.org/news:146355> (accessed 10 April 2016).

59 Agym newspaper on 17 October 2014.

60 Interview with the chief of one of the units at the 10th Main Directorate of the MIA KR on 1 January 2016.

nationals go to Syria is to earn money. According to him, fighters in Syria are paid one thousand US dollars per day.⁶¹ These words of the head of the main Kyrgyz security agency sparked lively debate and attracted much criticism from the public. Those who actually took part in military action in Syria denied that fighters receive such sums of money.⁶²

Experts point out that jihad is becoming “a form of labour migration” and Tajiks, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz are primarily motivated by financial gains rather than by idealistic intentions and ideology. In addition, excess workforce in the form of migrants returning from Russia expands the recruitment pool for extremist and terrorist organizations.⁶³

There are quite a few young people with past migration experience in the ranks of radical organizations. As a rule, they come from economically disadvantaged or single-parent families. In other words, socially unsettled youths with family problems are most vulnerable to the influence of radical appeals. In October 2015 a video was put on the internet showing a young man from Kyrgyzstan who was in tears before setting off on a suicide mission. Later the young suicide bomber was identified by relatives and friends: he was a 20-year-old Babur Israilov from the Jalal-Abad Region. He lost his mother at the age of 18 months and grew up in his uncle’s family. Immediately after finishing school in 2013 he went to Russia to work, stayed in contact with his relatives and sent them money. But they had not heard from him since March 2014 until the horrific video appeared.⁶⁴

Law enforcement agencies and experts consider migrants to be one of the vulnerable social groups that can be targeted by recruitment efforts of radical organizations. Most of all, migrants want to find a decent job to provide for themselves and their families. Lack of employment and financial difficulties are very likely to push migrants into illegal activities. So the economic factors that contribute to criminal behaviour among migrants are also relevant to the issues of religious radicalization. It is fair to say that as the economic challenges experienced by migrants continue to build up, the risk of them joining radical groups will only increase. The deterioration of the economic situation of migrants abroad can turn into an additional motivation for travelling to the war zone. Radicalization potential of the vulnerable migrants cannot be ignored because they are a social group directly affected by socioeconomic and other problems in society. Being an active part of the population, migrants can easily perceive radical ideas as a way out of the difficult situation and become victims of extremist and terrorist groups as a result.

In response to the worsening situation with religion and security, the state has recently adopted certain legislative measures, such as the National Security Concept of the Kyrgyz Republic, the National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2013–2017 and the Concept of the State Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Religious Sphere for 2014–2020. Despite the fact that the link between radicalization and migration is not mentioned in any of them, more recently this issue is being regularly raised by experts and security services.

61 «ГКНБ: Воюющие в Сирии кыргызстанцы получают по 1 тысяче долларов в день» [“SCNS KR: Kyrgyz nationals fighting in Syria are paid one thousand dollars a day”], http://rus.azattyk.org/archive/ky_News_in_Russian_ru/20140923/4795/4795.html?id=26611589 (accessed 29 September 2014). The spokesman for the SCNS KR Rahat Sulaymanov also suggested that “recruiters who convince citizens of Kyrgyzstan to go to war in Syria receive 500 dollars for each recruit”. «За каждого рекрута, отправленного на войну в Сирию, вербовщикам платят по 500 долларов – ГКНБ КР» [“SCNS KR: Recruiters receive 500 dollars for each recruit sent to fight in Syria”], <http://www.kabar.kg/law-and-order/full/72422> (accessed 28 February 2016).

62 «Исламжан Мамаджанов: «Поездка в Сирию — моя самая главная ошибка в жизни...» [“Islamjan Mamadjanov: Trip to Syria was the biggest mistake of my life...”], <http://vof.kg/?p=16692> (accessed 3 October 2014).

63 «Опасная миграция: боевики из Центральной Азии ищут альтернативу ИГ» [“Dangerous migration: fighters from Central Asia are looking for alternatives to the IS”], www.dw.com/ru/опасная-миграция-боевики-из-центральной-азии-ищут-альтернативу-иг/a-19381632

64 <http://www.svoboda.org/a/27308262.html> (accessed 15 October 2015).

2.2.3. Social groups vulnerable to religious radicalization

Radicalization of young people, women and disadvantaged groups of the population

The expert community and state officials are in agreement that young people, women, people from disadvantaged and vulnerable families and ethnic minorities are the social groups that can become easy prey for recruiters to extremist and terrorist organizations.⁶⁵

Young people with growing religious feelings also actively defend and disseminate their beliefs. Aggression and intolerance towards others is a distinctive feature of young religiousness. Young people get involved increasingly more often with radical religious organizations, extremist movements and terrorist groups. 15.6% of all citizens who joined various terrorist organizations were minors. Even 18-year-old Kyrgyz boys gone to Syria still try to recruit their peers and friends from there.⁶⁶

State authorities in charge of combating extremism and terrorism reveal the fact that in Kyrgyzstan extremist activity peaks at the age of 25–29 years; the next most active group is 30–35 year-olds. The majority of the citizens of the KR who went to Syria, Iraq and to North-West Pakistan (Waziristan) were aged between 22 and 25 years.⁶⁷ It is worth noting that while government officials prefer to emphasise the role of radical ideologies and organizations as the main radicalization factor among young people, Kyrgyz and international experts in the field of radicalization point towards the role of socioeconomic and cultural factors. Ikbaljan Mirsaitov, analyst at the Search for Common Ground non-governmental organization, believes that young people struggle to find their social niche in the community, feel unwanted and become radicalised as a result.⁶⁸

Social problems are also a push factor in the process of radicalization of women. According to Jamal Frontbek kyzy, chairperson of the Mutakallim non-profit organization, vulnerable women are more likely to be recruited into extremist organizations. Single women, widows or divorced young girls experiencing socioeconomic difficulties are easily influenced by radical organizations.⁶⁹

According to the security forces, women are as active as men in spreading radical propaganda, they even set up women-only groups. If in 2005 only 1.1% of those who committed extremist crimes were women, in 2015 their proportion increased to 25%. At present, 7.4% of all identified active members in extremist organizations are women. Moreover, women account for 23.3% of those who left Kyrgyzstan to take part in armed conflicts.⁷⁰ The SCNS KR has information that some young girls and women travel to Syria for so-called sex-jihad, i.e. providing sexual services to rebel fighters.⁷¹

The general public also learns about cases of mass departure of economically disadvantaged families from different parts of Kyrgyzstan to Syria. In 2015 twenty-five members of the same family left the Issyk-Kul Region for Syria.

65 «За 10 лет доля женщин в совершении экстремистских преступлений выросла с 1,1% до 25%, - замглавы 10 ГУ МВД Р.Салимов» [“R. Salimov, deputy head of the 10th Main Directorate of the MIA KR: in 10 years the proportion of women committing extremist crimes has increased from 1.1% to 25%”], <http://svodka.akipress.org/news:146355> (accessed 10 April 2016); «МВД Киргизии: четверть религиозных радикалов в стране – женщины» [“Kyrgyz MIA: a quarter of religious radicals in the country are women”], <http://www.interfax-religion.ru/krz/?act=news&div=60057> (accessed 8 September 2015); «Узбеки на юге Кыргызстана более других подвержены вербовке для отправки в Сирию — МВД» [“MIA: Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan are more susceptible to recruitment for departure to Syria”], <http://kyrtag.kg/society/uzbeki-na-yuge-kyrgyzstana-bolee-drugikh-podverzheny-verbovke-dlya-otpravki-v-siryu-mvd> (accessed 2 June 2016).

66 «Пугающие цифры об экстремизме в Кыргызстане» [“Frightening figures on extremism in Kyrgyzstan”], http://zanoza.kg/doc/328645_pugaushie_cifry_ob_ekstremizme_v_kyrgyzstane.html (accessed 25 November 2015).

67 <http://svodka.akipress.org/news:146355> (accessed 10 April 2016).

68 «Кыргызстан: Кто уезжает воевать в Сирию» [“Kyrgyzstan: who goes to fight in Syria”].<http://www.fergananews.com/articles/8774> (accessed 20 November 2015).

69 Interview with Mutakallim representatives on 15 April 2016.

70 <http://svodka.akipress.org/news:146355> (accessed 10 April 2016).

71 «Участниц “секс-джихада” возвращают из Сирии в КР» [“Sex-jihadists are returned to the KR from Syria”], <http://rus.azattyk.org/a/26808946.html> (accessed 23 January 2016).

According to the MIA, the family departed in two groups: initially they went to Russia in search of work and then to Syria via Turkey. Their group included an 80-year-old grandmother with her daughters and grandchildren under the age of 18. The 10th Main Directorate of the MIA KR has information that the whole family was recruited by one of its members – 36-year-old Joldoshbek who once served in the elite Scorpion Unit. Retired from the army he stayed at home, got married but the marriage did not work out. After his divorce he went to Bishkek for work where he met a young girl from the Osh Region and married her. Preliminary information indicates that it was his wife who introduced him to radical ideas. Sometime later Joldoshbek went to Turkey to earn money. Next, members of his family started leaving for Turkey too: first in a group of 13, then followed by the remaining family, including children.⁷²

One family departed to Syria from the Osh Region: a 63-year-old retired woman left the Aravan district with her son, daughter, daughter-in-law and two grandchildren.

Radicalization of ethnic minorities

The security services also have information suggesting that southern regions of the country are more affected by radicalism and the majority of volunteers who go to Syria are ethnic Uzbeks because they “are easy to recruit – they are more religious, more devoted than others. But they lack religious education, they are not very competent when it comes to interpreting the Koran.”⁷³

In the wake of the inter-ethnic clashes in southern Kyrgyzstan in 2010, active young ethnic Uzbeks migrated abroad as a way out of the difficult environment at the time. However, their return to the country due to the imposition of sanctions and economic downturn in Russia may badly affect the ethno-religious situation in the south. Returning migrants find themselves in the same situation as before they left. Extremist religious organizations are likely to take advantage of the rebellious sentiment that is building among ethnic Uzbeks in the south of the country.

Some experts explain radicalization of ethnic Uzbeks by the fact that “ethnic minorities in the regions are being forced out of the local Muslim community government”. They believe that “people from ethnic minorities join terrorist and extremist organizations because of a combination of factors, including the absence of qualified ulema from ethnic minorities working in the Muftiate”.⁷⁴

Criminalization of youth and religious radicalization

Another aspect of the problem is the increasing trend of criminal groups merging with religious radical organizations. The number of religious crimes is on the rise, where robbery and assault are seen as *amaliat* (military operation) and the loot is *ghanimat* (spoils of war). Religious dogmas are used to make crimes look legitimate, while armed robberies are disguised as fight for justice. In 2015 there were several incidents of religious criminal bands carrying out armed robberies and assaults against financial and other commercial institutions.⁷⁵

Organized criminal groups also come in contact with religious extremists in penitentiary facilities. Their joint detention in prison camps creates perfect grounds for the dissemination of extremist ideologies among inmates. As a result, criminals join forces with religious radicals. Officials in security services report that extremists actively

72 «Ушел в ИГИЛ! (прощальное письмо кыргызстанца)» [“Off to ISIL! (farewell letter from a Kyrgyz man)”], <https://kabarlar.org/news/69971-ushel-v-igil-proschalnoe-pismo-kyrgyzstanca.html> (accessed 25 November 2015).

73 «Узбеки на юге Кыргызстана более других подвержены вербовке для отправки в Сирию - МВД» [“MIA: Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan are more susceptible to recruitment for departure to Syria”], <http://kyrtag.kg/society/uzbeki-na-yuge-kyrgyzstana-bolee-drugikh-podverzheny-verbovke-dlya-otpravki-v-siriyu-mvd> (accessed 2 June 2015).

74 List of recommendations and suggestions, produced by Search for Common Ground, international non-profit corporation, for the Religion and Peacebuilding Programme, Bishkek, 2016, p.7.

75 «Деньги на джихад в Сирии добываются в Кыргызстане» [“Money for jihad in Syria is procured in Kyrgyzstan”], <http://delo.kg/index.php/2011-08-04-18-06-33/6775-dengi-na-dzhikhad-v-sirii-dobyvayutsya-v-kyrgyzstane> (accessed 30 August 2016).

recruit prisoners in order to use their criminal potential.⁷⁶ In response to this issue, the government is taking steps to ensure that individuals convicted for extremist and terrorist activities are kept separate from other categories of inmates in order to minimise potential spread of extremist propaganda in penitentiary facilities.

Regional aspects of religious radicalization

Statistical data provided by law enforcement agencies demonstrates that southern regions of the country are more vulnerable to radicalization. According to the KR security services, citizens who join international terrorist organizations “in 85% of cases do it with destructive ideological intentions, in other words, they engage in active religious extremism”.

The parts of the country that are most vulnerable to the spread of radical and extremist religious ideology are those with no alternative sources of information, with poor secular education and limited opportunities for economic activity and social protection and where no preventative work is being carried out.

According to MIA KR, the vast majority of crimes of religious extremist nature are detected in southern Kyrgyzstan. 72.4% of all registered extremist offences take place in the southern regions, namely, 37.6% in the Osh Region and 46.9% in the Jalal-Abad Region. As for the supporters of extremist organizations identified by the departments of internal affairs, 94.5% of them come from the southern regions: 48.2% from the Jalal-Abad Region, 34.3% from the Osh Region and 12% from the city of Osh.

State security services also claim that the majority of citizens of Kyrgyzstan fighting abroad in armed conflicts (82%) are natives of the south of the country: 55.9% of them are inhabitants of the Osh Region, 18% are from the city of Osh, 4.6% from the Batken Region and 3.6% from the Jalal-Abad Region.⁷⁷

The religious situation in new residential estates around the cities of Bishkek and Osh deserves special attention. Internal migrants move to these newly built areas on the outskirts of the cities where religious organizations can find new supporters. It is important to remember that, since independence, as a result of internal migration 40 new settlements appeared around the capital. It is in these areas that Islam mobilises new followers who left their traditional (ethnic and regional) communities aspiring to build a new life. In these new residential estates, the number of mosques and namazkanas is growing rapidly, and religious organizations and movements not registered with the state authorities are free to disseminate their ideas among the local population.

2.2.4. Ways of migrant recruitment to radical religious organizations

In 2014 the 10th Main Directorate of the MIA KR published a report that identifies four channels used by recruits to travel to Syria. According to the security services, “people are sent from Bishkek to Russia and then further on to Turkey and Syria; there are similar transfer routes via Ukraine and Georgia. Also, there is a direct route from the city of Osh” to Turkey and then on to Syria.⁷⁸

Experts and government officials agree on the opinion that radicalization of migrants takes place mainly on the internet, which has become the main recruitment channel. As for the migrants, for them the internet is the main source of information, including matters related to religion. Migrants are proficient users of internet technology, they exchange messages and receive information through websites, social networks and mobile applications.

76 «В Киргизии религиозные экстремисты срращиваются с криминалитетом?» [“Do religious extremists in Kyrgyzstan join forces with criminals?”] http://www.sayasat.kg/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=45298:religios-extremists-in-kyrgyzstan-spliced-with-criminals&catid=26&Itemid=132&lang=ru (accessed 30 August 2016).

77 «За 10 лет доля женщин в совершении экстремистских преступлений выросла с 1,1% до 25%, - замглавы 10 ГУ МВД Р.Салимов» [“R. Salimov, deputy head of the 10th Main Directorate of the MIA KR: in 10 years the proportion of women committing extremist crimes has increased from 1.1% to 25%”], <http://svodka.akipress.org/news:146355> (accessed 10 April 2016).

78 «Мамбеталиев: выявлено четыре канала выезда завербованных граждан в Сирию» [“Mambetaliev: four channels for departure of recruits to Syria identified”], <http://ru.sputnik.kg/opinion/20141225/1013855120.html> (accessed 3 April 2016).

Nonetheless, officials at the Southern Regional Department of the State Commission for Religious Affairs of the KR claim that radicalization of migrants primarily takes place within the borders of the RF but they do not have enough data to say to what extent returning migrants are radicalized.⁷⁹

It is also highly probable that some migrant workers who found themselves in difficult socioeconomic conditions (for example, because of sanctions or loss of employment) can consider religious education abroad as one of the solutions to their problems. Both state authorities and the expert community agree that the key role in spreading radical ideology in the country belongs to the graduates of foreign education centres. Many Muslim countries have established religious centres and educational institutions that offer free religious education to foreigners and provide them with everything they need. Almost every official document dealing with the issues of radicalization, including the already mentioned Concept of the State Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Religious Sphere for 2014–2020, recommends monitoring or even banning citizens of the KR from going abroad to study in foreign educational institutions. At present no state agency in Kyrgyzstan has exact information on numbers and character of Kyrgyz nationals studying abroad. Given the uncontrolled access to foreign religious centres of education, migrants could be returning to the country as proponents and disseminators of extremist ideologies.

Therefore, in order to prevent their recruitment by religious extremists it is very important to inform migrants about existing extremist and terrorist threats before they leave the country. Awareness raising campaigns among migrants about possible actions of recruiters and ideas of extremist jamaats should be run systematically through dissemination of information in order to expose their criminal intentions.

Kyrgyz migrant workers can be exposed to religious radicalization in Kyrgyzstan as well as abroad, for instance, in Russia and Kazakhstan. This is because problems experienced by migrant workers contribute to their alienation from the key social institutions and make them more susceptible to radical ideas. First, unresolved psychosocial and economic problems make migrants feel hopeless and frustrated. Second, the feeling of resentment towards people around them and the state of isolation from traditional institutions and communities puts migrants among the most vulnerable groups in society. Third, the desperate situation of migrants may encourage thoughts about the need to totally change the existing order. Fourth, migrants in this frame of mind are likely to find ideas and actions aimed at decisive change of the existing situation rather attractive. In this context, political and religious appeals for radical reforms in the sociopolitical system are gaining popularity among migrants in difficult socioeconomic circumstances. Religious radical movements and factions show vulnerable migrants “the path to salvation in both worlds” that lies in an uncompromising fight against “the unfaithful and unjust”.

Moving new recruits between countries is not difficult in the modern world. Besides, extremist organizations widely use fake passports: in recent years there were several cases of Kyrgyz identity card and passport forgery by members of extremist organizations.

For example, on 17 May 2016 Turkish authorities stopped 98 Chinese citizens with forged Kyrgyz passports in the International Istanbul Airport.⁸⁰ It was reported that they attempted to travel to Saudi Arabia using Kyrgyz passports to perform the small Hajj. However, on 4 July 2016 two passengers arriving from Ukraine were detained in Istanbul – they had several Kyrgyz passports on them proving that easy-to-obtain Kyrgyz passports are used for more than just religious tourist trips. Two travel passports, three Kyrgyz identity cards and five birth certificates as well as four pairs of thermal imaging binoculars and three military uniforms were seized during the search of those two individuals. They are suspected of having links to the Islamic State terrorist organization.⁸¹ One of the suicide bombers who carried out a terrorist attack in the Istanbul Ataturk Airport on 28 June 2016 also had a Kyrgyz passport.⁸²

79 Interview on 20 April 2016.

80 «В Турции задержали 98 граждан Китая с поддельными кыргызскими паспортами» [“98 Chinese citizens with forged Kyrgyz passports were detained in Turkey”],

81 «Двое мужчин с кыргызскими паспортами задержаны в Стамбуле» [“Two men with Kyrgyz passports detained in Istanbul”], <http://reporter.com.ua/uanews/5e20-0407/> (accessed 28 September 2016).

82 «Teröristlerin uyrukları belli oldu», <http://www.yenisafak.com/gundem/teroristlerin-uyruklari-belli-oldu-2488936> (accessed 28 September 2016).

2.2.5. Prevention of religious radicalism: types of measures and their effectiveness

“Traditional religion” against radicalization

The Kyrgyz state is trying to control the religious situation through the development and introduction of a secular model of relationship between the state and religious community. The state has acknowledged the values of the democratic system and proclaimed a secular form of government. However, up to this day it was not able to formulate its secular policy.

The government is trying to shape and support “traditional religion” that would contribute to the development of the society and strengthening of government institutions. But official efforts to fight radicalism with “traditional religion” have not yet produced any tangible results, given that since the 1990s the state has changed the definition of “traditional religion” several times. Resolution of the Government of the KR “On religious situation in the Kyrgyz Republic and on the tasks of government bodies in developing state policy in the religious sphere” (No. 345 of 10 August 1995)⁸³ listed Islam, Christianity and Buddhism as traditional religions of Kyrgyzstan, whereas in the Concept of the State Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Religious Sphere (No. 324 of 6 May 2006)⁸⁴ the state named Sunni Islam and Orthodox Christianity as “traditional religions”. However, the new Concept of the State Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Religious Sphere for 2014–2020 (No. 203 of 14 November 2014)⁸⁵ stipulates that “the state creates the conditions for strengthening and development of traditional moderate forms of Sunni Islam based on the Hanafi mazkhab school of law and Maturidi school of theology” along with Orthodox Christianity.

It is worth noting that the government chose to support the Hanafi Mazkhab of Maturidi school as a semi-official ideology with the intention of preventing the spread in Kyrgyzstan of Salafi and other movements that emerged in 2000s. Nonetheless, it would be reasonable to direct the necessary institutional efforts towards establishing and developing religious diversity in the country. A multi-confessional society requires the state to protect fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual and to maintain the principles of religious tolerance. In addition, state authorities should adopt a single consensual and neutral position on issues that are hotly debated and cause disagreements in society (e.g., wearing of an Islamic headscarf (hijab) or activities of certain jamaats).

Shortcomings of the state policy in fighting radicalism

Law enforcement agencies see “radical Salafism” as the key ideology that fuels Takfiri and Jihadi organizations and threatens state security.⁸⁶ Yet, Salafism is not officially banned in Kyrgyzstan and no official act defines its role in the radicalization of society.

Since gaining independence the state seems to have failed to set its strategic priorities and directions in the field of religion. Serious problems persist with coordination of official standpoints and actions between different state bodies. To give an example, they cannot agree on their opinion regarding the Tablighi Jamaat movement banned in the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and included in “The list of organizations designated as terrorist and extremist in the CSTO Member States”.

According to the 10th Main Directorate of MIA KR, available data suggests that supporters of this organization “preach a distorted version of Islam, almost indistinguishable from the ideology of Wahhabi or Salafi jihadists worshipped by all terrorists”. The security services also believe that Tablighi Jamaat “is directly or indirectly involved

83 See http://unrel.org/index.php?option=com_k2&Itemid=768&id=508_cbe9c6419b5c5babde4cd912433fc52e&lang=ro&task=download&view=item (accessed 15 May 2016).

84 See <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/57409> (accessed 30 June 2016).

85 See <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/68294/10?mode=tekst> (accessed 30 June 2016).

86 <http://svodka.akipress.org/news:146355> (accessed 10 April 2016).

in the recruitment of fighters for terrorist and extremist organizations”.⁸⁷ However, speaking with journalists in December 2015 President of the KR Almazbek Atambayev said that “Tablighi Jamaat are simply daavatchi. They preach what we preach”.⁸⁸

State authorities have adopted a similarly contradictory approach to the issue of wearing of the headscarf in educational institutions of Kyrgyzstan. During a parliamentary session of the Jogorku Kenesh the Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of the KR recommended the Ministry of Education to dismiss senior officials at one of the local education authorities for banning schoolgirls from wearing the hijab. However, the following day the President’s Press Service announced that the head of state always advocates secular and national dress and considers the actions of the local education authority officials absolutely justified as they compel parents not to force schoolgirls to wear the hijab.⁸⁹ The question of whether religious dress (hijab) can be worn by pupils, teachers and other staff in state schools remains unresolved and is raised at the start of every school year.

Research conducted by the non-profit corporation Search for Common Ground has shown that no systemic and comprehensive work on tackling threats of violent extremism is being carried out in Kyrgyzstan. State authorities mainly target specific individuals identified as recruiters, dispatchers or fighters.⁹⁰ However, it is worth noting that the Concept of the State Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Religious Sphere for 2014–2020 does mention “activity of the state bodies for the prevention and elimination of manifestations of extremism should be directed against specific religious organizations and individuals whose actions violate the Constitution and the current legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic”.⁹¹

The government has taken some steps with the aim of regulating the religious situation and combating radicalism in the country. In particular, with support of the President of the KR the public foundation Yyman Development Fund for Spiritual Culture was set up in 2014 providing advanced training to members of the clergy and officials from law enforcement agencies on the matters of religion. However, educational events organized by this foundation and other state agencies do not give sufficient coverage to socially vulnerable groups the most susceptible to radicalization.

As stated above, state authorities are concerned that the number of returnees from Syria is growing. According to one official at the State Commission for Religious Affairs of the KR, measures for the rehabilitation of citizens returned from the countries with ongoing armed conflicts are aimed at those who return as a result of an injury.⁹²

But Kyrgyzstan does not have any specialized programmes for rehabilitation and reintegration of nationals returning from military conflict zones. Suggestions to implement rehabilitation measures in prisons or experts’ recommendations to set up a rehabilitation centre for victims of religious extremism (similar to the one in Kazakhstan) have not yet been put into practice.

The security services have recently proposed amendments to the legislation on countering extremism and terrorism online. Namely, the Parliament has received for consideration a draft law that provides for the closure of user profiles who spread radical ideas in social networks and the blocking of extremist websites and internet pages that popularise extremist organizations.

87 «Дааватисты “Таблиги джамаат” несут определенную угрозу, считает МВД КР» [“MIA KR thinks Tablighi Jamaat’s daavatchi present a certain threat”], <http://ru.sputnik.kg/society/20151208/1020730095.html> (accessed 15 May 2016).

88 Ca-portal. <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:24077> (accessed 6 July 2016); <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u51b85lyduQ> (accessed 30 June 2016).

89 «Мнение Атамбаева о хиджабах стало поводом наказать полпреда президента в ЖК» [“Atambayev’s opinion on hijabs became a reason for punishing President’s Plenipotentiary at Jogorku Kenesh”], http://www.vb.kg/doc/303835_mnenie_atambaeva_o_hidjabah_stalo_povodom_nakazat_polpreda_prezidenta_v_jk.html (accessed 30 June 2016).

90 List of recommendations and suggestions, produced by Search for Common Ground, international non-profit corporation, for the Religion and Peacebuilding Programme, Bishkek, 2016, pp. 9–10.

91 See <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/68294/10?mode=tekst> (accessed 10 July 2016).

92 Interview on 20 April 2016.

The question of revoking citizenship of nationals who participate in armed conflicts has also been intensely debated in society. This measure was suggested by President Almazbek Atambayev at a meeting of the Kyrgyz Defence Council in September 2015. In August 2016, the President signed the law that allows the revocation of citizenship of individuals convicted of acts of terrorism and extremism.⁹³ The chief of the State Border Service of the KR reported that appropriate actions are taken against nationals who fought in armed conflicts alongside terrorist organizations.⁹⁴

In the meantime, security services do not seem to have a specific strategic action plan or a coherent policy in this area. For instance, reports produced by the departments of internal affairs state that local information and awareness-raising groups were set up in towns and villages with participation of members of the clergy. These groups provide “examples of the norms of traditional Islam that discredit the ideology preached by the Daesh (aka ISIL), Hizb ut-Tahrir and other radical religious factions, such as Wahhabism and Salafism”.⁹⁵ However, it should be noted that Wahhabism and Salafism as such are not banned in Kyrgyzstan. Even if law enforcement agencies see a threat in the spread of Salafi movements, no specific action has been taken in the legal field in this respect.

In addition to the aforesaid, both the expert community and the state officials in Kyrgyzstan are divided into three camps, depending on which of these statements they support:

1. Just as any other religious movement, Salafists have the right to exist in the religious community of the country and they pose no threat to society and the state.
2. Salafism should be banned in Kyrgyzstan as radical religious and political ideology for fundamentally contradicting traditional religious school of thought and pursuing political and extremist aims.
3. There are “moderate” and “radical” Salafists. Moderate Salafists do not express radical extremist views and present no threat. But it is probably advisable to ban radical Salafists who support ultra-radical ideas and carry out acts of violence.

Cooperation with religious and community leaders in preventing and countering religious extremism

Kyrgyz state authorities are working to reconcile the interests of the state and religious organizations and to better coordinate the efforts of government bodies in the implementation of the state policy in religious sphere. The State and Confessional Council was created under the State Commission for Religious Affairs of the KR on 16 June 2016; its members are the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, the Eparchy of Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Jewish religious community and the Buddhist Chamsen religious society.

Further, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan has recently placed special emphasis on working with migrants in their countries of destination. The Muftiate opened its representative offices to engage with migrants directly in the cities of Moscow and Omsk in the Russian Federation. The members of the SAMK’s Council of Ulema often set up meetings with migrants in different Russian cities in order to answer their questions.

The work of some non-governmental organizations involved in the prevention of extremism and terrorism also deserves attention. For instance, Mutakallim, a non-governmental Muslim women’s organization, has a network of women’s groups (atyncha) and is actively working with religious women in the regions.

Active in Kyrgyzstan since 2013, the non-profit corporation Search for Common Ground is also involved in the development of radicalism prevention mechanisms. This organization has successfully established permanent forums with participation from religious scholars and leaders (ulema) and young people in Central Asia with the purpose of fighting extremism. Moreover, research⁹⁶ conducted by Search for Common Ground is widely used by the scientific community.

93 http://www.president.kg/files/docs/Laws/v_sfere_protiv-ya_terr-u_i_eks-u_2_08_16.PDF (accessed 30 August 2016).

94 «В отношении лиц, возвращающихся из Сирии в Кыргызстан, проводятся усиленные фильтрационные мероприятия, - глава ГПС Р.Дуйшенбиев» [“SBS chief R. Duyshenbiyev: returnees from Syria to Kyrgyzstan undergo enhanced screening”], <http://kg.akipress.org/news:631744>

95 <http://svodka.akipress.org/news:146355>

96 See USIP and SFCG. Radicalization of the population in the Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken Regions: factors, types and groups of risks, 2016. P. 36.

2.3. TAJIKISTAN

Introduction

One of the most noticeable phenomena in the Muslim world over the past few years has been a rather rapid radicalization of a part of its population. In its most extreme form this process manifests in radical religious groups conducting armed insurgencies against legitimate authorities, as well as planning and carrying out acts of terror in many different countries.

Evidence shows that nowadays people from the countries of Central Asia are fighting against legitimate authorities of Syria and Iraq. According to the Turkish authorities, they were among the perpetrators of the recent terrorist attack in the Istanbul Ataturk International Airport.⁹⁷ Hardly anybody in the region would question the reports that citizens of the Central Asian countries are allegedly present among the fighters of the recently emerged ISIL armed groups in Afghanistan.

Facts also suggest that a significant proportion among ISIL members who originate from the CIS countries, now fighting in Syria and Iraq, are Tajik nationals. According to Nikolay Bordyuzha, Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, in the beginning of June 2016 nearly ten thousand CIS nationals were among the Daesh (aka ISIL) fighters.⁹⁸ The Prosecutor General of Tajikistan stated that 1094 citizens of the country are involved in fighting in the Middle East.⁹⁹ In other words, over 10% of all fighters originating from the CIS countries in the Middle East “represent” one of the less populous member-states of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Faced with these facts there is a need to explore, as part of this project, the various forms that religious radicalization can take, primarily among migrant workers from Tajikistan, as well as its immediate and more fundamental causes, mechanisms of recruitment of new followers to radical religious movements, ways and measures to prevent religious extremism, etc.

This objective was achieved through a) desk research (study of the published material on religious radicalization of migrant workers) and b) interviews with experts which supplied a new body of information. As a whole, the desk research and interviews enabled us to establish a fairly realistic cross-section of the problem.

Interviewed experts represented government bodies, research institutions, non-governmental organizations including religious and political parties, national and foreign media. A separate category of interviewees were independent experts.

97 <http://www.vladtime.ru/allworld/496753>

98 <http://www.news.tj/ru/news/bordyuzha-nazval-chislo-vykhodtsev-iz-stran-odkb-voyuyushchikh-v-sirii-v-ryadakh-terroristov>

99 <http://news.tj/ru/news/genprokuror-bolshinstvo-voyuyushchikh-za-ig-tadzhikov-posledovateli-salafii>

2.3.1. The phenomenon of religious radicalization and its manifestations in Tajikistan

This project explores the issue of religious radicalization in relation to labour migration and return migration of Tajik nationals.

Since the beginning of the last decade, labour migration and return migration involving citizens of Tajikistan has become a lasting trend with a significant, if not decisive, impact on the socioeconomic, political and other processes in the country. Therefore, the phenomenon of religious radicalization of Tajik migrant workers and returned migrants should be examined from 2000 to the present time. In this context, radicalization of Tajik migrant workers and returning migrants means the process, under the influence of a range of factors, of accepting ideological and political views spread by religious movements and organizations banned in the Republic of Tajikistan whose ideas and political concepts as well as real-life religious and political activity are classified as being radical, extremist and terrorist.

Throughout all that period of time religious radicalization of the population of Tajikistan was seen as an obvious threat to the stability of the country. Before the critical aggravation of the military and political situation in Syria and Iraq (2013–2014), it was mainly associated with religious radicalization of permanent residents of the country who were not satisfied with the situation in Tajikistan and did not show interest in participating in the activities of banned international religious movements and organizations outside of the country.

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During that period, the probability of religious radicalization of migrant workers and returning migrants from Tajikistan was low. Migrant workers were very much in demand in the main receiving countries – Russia and Kazakhstan – where the economy was booming. This fact almost excluded the possibility of mass radicalization of migrants while they were residing and working in those countries. As for seasonal migrant workers, re-entry banned migrants and, surreptitiously, unsuccessful migrants, their willingness to return back to Russia kept at bay the problem of mass radicalization within Tajikistan. Furthermore, as pointed out by nearly every interviewed expert, each migrant worker had at least their families behind them who were interested in him/her being able to leave Tajikistan and enter Russia without restrictions to earn money and send it back home. Therefore, they would do everything possible to prevent their migrant workers turning into radicals at home. The state authorities also took some preventative actions against religious radicalization.

However, the situation with religious radicalization of migrant workers changed dramatically in 2013–2015 with the following new developments:

(1) A sharp increase in the numbers of citizens of Tajikistan joining radical religious movements and organizations involved in armed conflicts against the authorities in Syria and Iraq in 2013–2015. The following figures illustrate the scale of this phenomenon. In 2002, according to experts, only 4 Tajik nationals were known to be part of the Taliban movement. During 2015 about 500 people originating from Tajikistan were believed to be among militants of armed religious opposition in Syria and Iraq.¹⁰⁰ As of 25 January 2016 there were 992 individuals and by 3 March

100 Надин Бахром. Таджикистан сообщает о растущем числе боевиков за границей [Nadin Bakhrom. Tajikistan reports increasing numbers of fighters abroad]. <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:25170> [In Russian]

2016 their number reached 1094 people, 780 of them are put on the wanted list. 85% of these 1094 Tajik nationals joined illegal armed groups while they were migrant workers.¹⁰¹

In Tajikistan experts believe that these figures account only for Tajiks fighting as members of radical religious organizations outside of the country and the CIS who were identified by the law-enforcement agencies. It is quite possible that by the time the above figures were made public there were many more of them fighting in the ranks of “illegal armed groups abroad”.

(2) Increasingly aggressive reaction to the present times, just like in the 90s, among returned migrant workers and young people who cannot find a place for themselves in the economic, social or political life of the society. This worrying observation was made by a mass media representative when he was interviewed. In his opinion, this is happening for the first time since the end of the civil war and implementation of the intra-Tajik peace agreements. Between 2000 and 2013 the excess workforce, primarily young people, was absorbed directly into labour migration bound for Russia and other countries. Remittances sent by migrant workers boosted the economy back home indirectly, thus promoting job creation, including for the benefit of returned migrants who decided to stay in Tajikistan.

The crisis in Russia resulted in an economic downturn in Tajikistan as well; the country was faced with the problem of excess workforce. Not all of the returned migrants were able to go back to labour migration. Not all of them expressed interest in the local labour market either because the level of income that they would get in Tajikistan did not meet their requirements.

Young people, not interested in low-paying jobs, otherwise unoccupied with anything, would get together in groups on their streets or other convenient places and would chat endlessly “about life”, at times rather critically or even using strong words. As observed by the experts, eventually these conversations turn, among other things, towards discussing current affairs in the Muslim world, in the Middle East, including the activities of religious movements and organizations involved in the events.

Dissatisfaction with one’s life and difficulty or lack of opportunities to provide for one’s needs gives rise to an aggressive attitude among young people towards their environment— returned migrants who are not willing to settle for low wages offered in the country and who do not have means to leave for labour migration or school leavers who did not get into university and did not find any jobs in the local labour market and also unable to go abroad. Young people in this frame of mind become vulnerable to falling under the influence of religious movements and organizations designated as extremist in Tajikistan, vulnerable to ideas and views they spread.

(3) Heightened interest in information on opportunities to leave for Syria and Iraq owing to the willingness of migrant workers, looking for solution to their own problems, to join those who are fighting against authorities in those countries. The very fact that a relatively large number of Tajik nationals — over 1000 people — left to take part in hostilities supporting the forces that oppose Syrian and Iraqi governments serves as a sufficient proof, first, of this particular type of religious radicalization and, second, of the effectiveness of efforts spent to this end.

2.3.2. Causes of radicalization

Causes and motives for radicalization among migrant workers and returned migrants can be divided into two categories: immediate and fundamental. The first category affects mainly those migrant workers who suffered from the crisis (due to loss of employment and fallen income making it impossible to return to their homeland, etc.) but still remain in the main country of destination for labour migration from Tajikistan — Russia. These causes also apply to those people who returned from labour migration and are not happy with their economic and financial situation in Tajikistan; they would like to return to Russia but lack the necessary funds. As for the second category of causes, they affect society as a whole, including current and aspiring migrant workers as an integral part of that society.

101 <http://news.tj/ru/news/genprokuror-bolshinstvo-voyuyushchikh-za-ig-tadzhikov-posledovateli-salafii>

Immediate causes and motives for radicalization

Impact of the financial and economic downturn in Russia (2014–2015). Among the immediate causes of the sharp rise in religious radicalization of Tajik migrant workers and returned migrants, one should, first of all, mention the impact of the financial and economic slowdown in Russia in 2014. The recession of the Russian economy and depreciation of the rouble against the US dollar resulted, on the one hand, in falling wages paid to migrants and, on the other hand, in a reduction of migrants' income in dollar terms. This also led to job losses for many migrant workers and a slight increase in seasonal return migration. Affected by the Russian downturn, the Tajik economy was not well placed to absorb all the returning migrant workers.

Migrant workers who stayed in Russia without jobs or with significantly reduced income; those who would like to return home but do not have enough funds to do so; returned migrants who did not find a place for themselves in Tajikistan or are dissatisfied with the level of income and also lacking funds to go back to Russia — all these people started experiencing a sense of economic desperation and they are ready to try anything to change it, including taking part in jihad in the Middle East. The majority of those who joined radical religious groups in the Middle East came from this category of migrants.

Increasing demand in human resources in Syrian and Iraqi opposition armed forces. Another immediate reason for growing religious radicalization is the fact that from approximately 2013 armed groups of religious political organizations banned in Tajikistan (Daesh aka ISIL, Jabhat al-Nusra, etc.) took the leadership among the opposition forces fighting against the authorities in Syria and Iraq. As the scale of the military confrontation grew, these armed groups required not only more external financial and material support (weapons, ammunitions, intelligence information, etc.) but also more human resources: from common fighters to highly skilled professionals in various fields of economy.

Thus, on the one hand, growing numbers of migrant workers and returning migrants experiencing difficulties in Russia and in Tajikistan as a result of the Russian financial and economic downturn, and, on the other hand, increasing need in workforce of religious political organizations opposing Syrian and Iraqi authorities, combined into one of the major factors that define the nature and scale of religious radicalization of migrants.

Fundamental internal factors

Socioeconomic inequality. The collapse of the USSR and the establishment of a new socioeconomic order in Tajikistan resulted in a deep socioeconomic stratification of the society, including migrant workers, aggravated by the current financial and economic downturn in Russia.

Experts point to the fact that in conversations migrants openly admit that they are prepared to accept any proposals promising to end this economic desperation that they had to endure over the last 1.5–2 years in Tajikistan, during migration in Russia and on return home. They are also prepared to accept proposals to participate in jihad in the Middle East. The majority of those who joined radical religious groups in the Middle East came from this category of migrants. For instance, in April 2016 the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point United States Military Academy published the results of a study into 4600 personnel records of individuals from over 70 countries who joined Daesh aka ISIL in 2013–2014. It showed that the majority of Tajik nationals who became Daesh aka ISIL fighters were unemployed, that is to say they did it for economic reasons.¹⁰²

Therefore, migrant workers are dissatisfied with the lack of jobs but also with the rate of pay that does not satisfy their requirements. That is why they respond to propositions that, as they hope, will provide for their needs.

102 Brian Dodwell, Daniel Milton, Don Rassler: The Caliphate's Global Workforce: An Inside Look at the Islamic State's Foreign Fighter Paper Trail, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point United States Military Academy, April 2016, fig.11, p.22

Ineffective social and political mobility. Religious political movements and organizations, banned in Tajikistan as being of radical, extremist and terrorist orientation, attract new recruits not only with economic incentives but also because there are limited opportunities to find worthwhile use for their abilities and talents in their homeland. Directly or through mediators, emissaries of religious groups managed to convince their followers that the inviting party appreciates and needs them.

Since gaining independence on 9 September 1991 and until the middle of the following decade, Tajikistan went through a very difficult and complex period of shaping its post-Soviet economy and new national sovereignty. However, that was the time when social mobility functioned efficiently.¹⁰³

According to independent researcher Parviz Mullojanov, starting in the second half of the last decade “social mobility lifts are becoming increasingly scarce for significant groups of population who get stuck in their social niches without any prospect of changing their social status in future”.¹⁰⁴ His observations show that access to social mobility is now restricted not only for the poor and disadvantaged but even to many business people, mainly in small and middle enterprises, a substantial proportion of intellectuals, especially young students who once graduated are not able to find jobs in their field without connections and external help.¹⁰⁵

Both above mentioned factors are perceived by those who experienced their impact as forms of social inequality. Essentially this is what Cihan Sultanoğlu, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, meant when she said: “Radical ideologies are associated with a high and extreme rate of inequality and injustice or with the perception of inequality and injustice in society”.¹⁰⁶

People prone to religious radicalization manifested their reaction to these factors in a limited number of ways. Before the Arab Spring events, they would usually be sympathisers or members of Hizb ut-Tahrir or other similar organizations banned in Tajikistan. They would support or participate in propaganda of their ideas and help distribute their literature and leaflets. These people were prosecuted in the criminal court for membership of banned organizations and participation in their activities: they were arrested, detained, tried and sentenced to different terms of imprisonment. At this stage even if religious radicalization of migrant workers did take place it was rather marginal in scale.

After the Arab Spring migrant workers susceptible to religious radicalization demonstrate willingness to participate and do indeed participate in armed conflicts abroad as members of religious political organizations banned in Tajikistan. We have already mentioned that over 85% of 1094 citizens of Tajikistan fighting in the Middle East went there while they were in labour migration.

Existence of a well-established body of Salafi movement adherents. Over the last 16 years Tajikistan has seen the emergence of a rather populous, stable and increasingly influential section of society who adhere to a religious movement known as Salafiyya. The following observations by experts can give an idea of numbers of its followers. Adherents of the Central Asian school of Hanafi mazkhab perform mandatory (farz) and optional (sunnah) prayers. But Salafi followers leave the mosque straight after the mandatory prayers. For example, during Friday prayers between 10% and 40% of all the people performing Namaz can be worshippers who do not accept optional prayers. According to one of the experts, he once observed in the north of the Sughd Region that in one of the local mosques 90% of the audience left after mandatory prayers. This mosque was later closed but it is clear it does not mean there will be less Salafi followers in the country.

103 A perfect illustration is the formation of new political elite in the course of dynamic post-independence development of political and social processes in the country.

104 Парвиз Муллоджанов: Имеет ли место радикализация ислама в ЦА? [Parviz Mullojanov. Does Islam get radicalised in CA?] <http://cabar.asia/ru/parviz-mulladzhanov-imeet-li-mesto-radikalizatsiya-islama-v-tsa/> [In Russian]

105 Ibid.

106 News.tj., Issue No.110 (4498) Tuesday, 14 June 2016

Experts point out that in Tajikistan Salafi Muslims generally make up a well-to-do part of the society (as a rule, they work in commerce that for centuries has been considered a respectful occupation in the Muslim world and are rather successful in this business). They have received good religious and secular education and are physically fit (judging by the appearances, they make up 70% of regular gym goers and, on top of that, lead a healthy lifestyle). Obviously, just this image of success cannot but strengthen the influence of Salafi followers on people around them. A similar effect is produced by the measures that restrict opportunities for those people who want to meet their religious needs freely, openly and legally.

Experts believe that three trends can be identified in the Salafi movement:

Reformist Salafiyya — its adherents call Muslims to return to healthy ideas of the original Islam and reject bid'ah (religious innovation, new ideas that corrupt Islam);

Jihadist Salafiyya — its followers believe that the only way to establish a fair order in the world is jihad understood in current politics as exerting varying degrees of pressure on authorities in the existing Muslim countries;

Takfiri Salafiyya — followers of this radical movement can declare a Muslim a kafir (unbeliever) for the slightest fault or what they consider a fault and believe that to spill the blood of such Muslim and to expropriate his/her property is not a sin.

According to experts, all three trends of the modern Salafi movement are to some extent represented in Tajikistan. However, the most dominating branch among Salafi adherents is the reformist doctrine. Salafists promote a hard line in the religious practices established over the centuries by the Central Asian school of Hanafi mazhab. They actively advocate that Muslims in Tajikistan should return to the fundamentals of Islam and cleanse current religious practices from subsequent innovations that do not conform with the basic concepts and principles of Islam.

Salafist views, ideas and concepts are designated as radical by their opponents. This perception of Salafism eventually resulted in the Supreme Court of Tajikistan prohibiting the activity of Salafiyya movement in the country in 2009. In 2014 it was designated a terrorist organization. Nonetheless, in its annual report the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) states with reference to the Sharq Analytical Center that Salafism has become increasingly popular among the Tajik elite.¹⁰⁷ It also points out that the government of Tajikistan has expressed concern over the increasing number of Tajik officials who reportedly have become Salafis.¹⁰⁸

Factors influencing Tajik migrants in Russia

Russia is a country of destination for the main flows of migrant workers from Tajikistan where their labour is in great demand virtually throughout the country. They cannot escape the impact of the socioeconomic, political and religious landscape in their new place of residence in Russia.

First of all, the situation in the Northern Caucasus is far from stable. The authorities and followers of various Islamic movements there are not only in opposition to each other but are openly locked in a permanent political and ideological confrontation of varying degrees of intensity, at times degenerating into an armed conflict. The situation in the Muslim areas of the Volga River basin is not simple either. It is obvious that this confrontation as well as its coverage in the mass media and anything in the Russian information space concerning the Islamic world has an impact on the views and attitudes of migrant workers from Tajikistan and other Central Asian countries.

According to Anastasia Manuylova who refers to a study by the Expert and Analytical Centre at the Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA), over the last ten years the main countries of origin of legal migrants to Russia have been Uzbekistan (46%) and Tajikistan (24%), the vast majority of whom accumulate

107 http://www.uscifr.gov/sites/default/files/Tajikistan%202016_Russian.pdf

108 Ibid.

in five regions of the RF: the city of Moscow and Moscow Region, Saint Petersburg, Leningrad and Sverdlovsk Regions.¹⁰⁹ It is important to point out that Moscow and other big Russian cities are becoming centres with large Muslim communities consisting nowadays of Russian citizens and immigrants from former Soviet republics and other Muslim countries. The multiethnic nature of the Muslim population in big Russian cities, being the main centres of concentration for migrant workers from Tajikistan, is complemented by the pluralism of worldviews, political and ideological opinions, including those that are considered radical in Tajikistan. The native and migrant Muslim population of Russian cities are influencing each other.

Secondly, migrant workers cannot escape the constant influence of an increasingly European-style liberal atmosphere that predetermines, among other things, a rather tolerant attitude of the Russian authorities to all religious matters. Effectively, by virtue of this burgeoning tolerance big Russian cities are open to all sorts of ideological and political innovations, including radical ones, emerging in the modern Islamic world that these days is not limited to the traditional area of Islam “from Tangier (western Morocco) to Jakarta” as defined by one well-known expert from Al-Mayadeen TV Channel. It is obvious that migrant workers have both the opportunity to learn about these innovations and to enjoy free access to them.

Thirdly, unequivocal and significant tolerance of religion shown by Russian authorities produces a strong demonstration effect. Migrant workers see the examples of Chechnya run by President Ramzan Kadyrov and modern Tatarstan of Mintemer Shaimiev who is no longer the head of this republic but still has influence on various aspects of its life.

Finally, even in Tajikistan the population, including returned migrant workers, lives in an open information world of smartphones, internet, social networks, great variety of radical religious websites, satellite TV channels, etc. that actively influences them.

Experts believe that one of the causes of migrants’ radicalization is propaganda that takes place both in the real and the virtual world. In the real world representatives of radical religious movements use it in face-to-face contact. Propaganda on the internet takes numerous forms, from answering simple questions through skilful provocation to discussions and debates on various topics during which people are gradually manipulated into seeing reality the way it best suits the interests of radical preachers.

A relative success of this method is evidenced by the fact that 1094 Tajik nationals joined Daesh (aka ISIL) and other organizations that are active in Syria and Iraq. As highlighted by the experts, over half of those convicted in Tajikistan between 2011 and the present day on the charges of involvement in radical religious movements stated that they received satisfactory answers to their own religious questions precisely from people preaching ideas classified as radical.

2.3.3. Social groups vulnerable to religious radicalization

In 2014, 1,244,665 Tajik citizens left for Russia. But only 991,957 citizens of Tajikistan registered with the Federal Migration Service of Russia (FMS RF). It is thought that the remaining 252,708 (or 20.3%) arrived in Russia and stayed for less than 15 days and travelled to third countries via Russia. Of 991,957 Tajik nationals registered with the FMS RF only 568,820 (or 57.3%) were issued with a work patent or permit. So 423,137 (or 42.6%) citizens of Tajikistan did not receive any of these documents. It should also be noted that 31,800 Tajik nationals had a residence permit in the RF and approximately 15,000 were students at Russian higher education institutions in 2014. Overall, these two categories of population comprised almost 50,000 people. Therefore, 391,337 citizens of Tajikistan remained out of sight of Russian and Tajik authorities. Migrants falling into this category are the most likely to join religious radical and extremist groups.

109 Kommersant, 29 June 2016, <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1467352920>

In the general population and among migrants in particular, young people are the most vulnerable group in terms of religious radicalization. Recruitment efforts are usually aimed at young people. Some data suggests that the average age of new recruits is 26 or 27.¹¹⁰ According to other sources, over 80% of Tajik followers of terrorists are young people between the ages of 18 and 25.¹¹¹ In general, they are young people under 35 years of age. Very rarely older people can be also targeted — they agree to join extremists because they need to find an urgent solution to their financial difficulties.

Regional aspect of religious radicalization

As of 3 March 2016, the breakdown of the numbers of Tajik nationals who joined religious radicals in Syria and Iraq by their region of origin in Tajikistan looked as follows: total number — 1094; Khatlon Region — 400; Sughd Region — 272; Districts of Republican Subordination — 254; Dushanbe — 139 and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO) — 26.

As of 14 July 2016, 394 inhabitants of the Sughd region were fighting in Syria, that is 122 people or 1/3 more than at the beginning of March. Moreover, according to information available to the regional Department of Internal Affairs, 24 inhabitants of Sughd took their wives and 44 minor children with them to Syria. 36 local people were killed while fighting in armed conflicts in Syria.¹¹² As of 25 August 2016, 516 inhabitants of the Khatlon Region were identified as taking part in armed hostilities in other countries since 2014.¹¹³

These figures, itemised by regions of Tajikistan, demonstrate a countrywide escalation of religious radicalization.

2.3.4. Mechanism of recruitment to radical religious organizations

Experts point out that to attract human resources to religious political organizations banned in Tajikistan and involved in fighting in Syria and Iraq a complex range of activities is taking place, including exposure to ideological propaganda, recruitment and departure of new recruits for the Middle East.

Exposure to propaganda. According to the experts, one of the effective methods of propaganda (to influence young people in particular) is to superimpose problem solving models taken from the sacred texts onto modern reality. Another productive method of propaganda takes advantage of the disparaged status of Tajik migrant workers in Russia: “In Russia you are treated like slaves, you live in disgrace. You work for your employers like slaves. Come over here, to Iraq (Syria, etc.). Here you will be honoured as respectable and well-regarded fighters for the good cause of God.”

Older people with some life experience will not be affected by this superimposition of a known model over reality. But young migrants in a difficult economic and legal situation are much more susceptible to such appeals.

Recruitment. Potential recruits among Tajik migrant workers in Russia are targeted by intermediaries rather than by emissaries themselves. According to the experts, very often these intermediaries are those individuals who did not accept the peace in Tajikistan at the time and went to Russia for labour migration. Anti-government armed groups of all kinds in Syria and ISIL in Iraq need workforce of varying skill levels: from infantry soldiers to highly qualified military and civil professionals. An important instrument in recruiting new followers are various internet communities. Cells of one of them, Rohnamo ba sui Davlati Islomi¹¹⁴, were identified by the Federal Security Service in the Sverdlovsk, Chelyabinsk and Tyumen Regions of the Russian Federation.

110 Jack Moore. New Analysis Shows ISIS Fighters Originate From 70 Countries, <http://europe.newsweek.com/new-analysis-shows-isis-fighters-originate-70-countries-449968?rm=eu>

111 <http://www.news.tj/ru/node/230048>

112 Asia-Plus, 15 July 2016, <http://news.tj/ru/news/v-boevykh-deistviyakh-na-territorii-sirii-uchastvuyut-394-zhitelya-sogda>

113 <http://www.news.tj/ru/news/lider-natsii-obespokoen-rostom-prestupnosti-sredi-khatlonskoi-molodezhi>

114 Translated from Tajik as “Guide to the Islamic State”.

Recruiters place emphasis on the following aspects:

1. Discontent of potential recruits with what is usually referred to as socioeconomic and political injustice.
2. Internal readiness of the potential recruit to join a radical religious movement or organization.
3. The use of specific information about the potential recruit. Very often the interested parties receive this information from Tajikistan.
4. The use of intermediaries in the process of recruitment.
5. Promises of good financial remuneration. As mentioned above, the 37-page report compiled by American researchers after the analysis of 4600 personnel records of Daesh (aka ISIL) fighters confirms that economic reasons predominate when Tajik nationals make a decision to join Daesh (aka ISIL). Andrey Serenko, expert at the Center for Modern Afghanistan Studies (CMAS), agrees: “Experts estimate that those who travelled from Central Asia to join jihad these days are primarily motivated by financial gains rather than by idealistic views and ideology”.¹¹⁵

On the other hand, there is a group of individuals who join extremist organizations for economic reasons but out of their own initiative without any influence from emissaries or their representatives. This mind-set of some migrant workers gives reasons to believe that, as commented by Andrey Serenko, expert at the Center for Modern Afghanistan Studies (CMAS), “jihad is becoming a new form of labour migration”.¹¹⁶ For them Russia is becoming a country of transit for onward travel to other parts of the world.

Departure of new recruits for the Middle East. To reach jihad territories in Syria and Iraq, recruited Tajik citizens use two main itineraries: the main route — direct flight from Tajikistan to Russia or a train or coach journey there via other countries (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan) and then onward travel to Syria or Iraq via Turkey (85% of the recruits and the alternative route — from Tajikistan direct to Turkey and then to Syria and Iraq (theoretically, the remaining 15% of the recruits). However, the head of the Council of Ulema of the Republic of Tajikistan Said-Mukarram Abdulqodirzoda believes that only 5% of Tajik nationals left for the Middle East directly from Tajikistan.¹¹⁷

2.3.5. Prevention of religious radicalism: types of measures and their effectiveness

Measures before 2013

Since the early 2000s, when labour migration from Tajikistan became a sustained and large-scale phenomenon, the authorities have been greatly concerned with manifestations of religious and political radicalization in the country. Before 2013–2014, the main source of fears was religious and political radicalization of those who were living in Tajikistan and dissatisfied with the situation in their country. They were associated with international religious movements and organizations to a greater or lesser extent, for example, Hizb ut-Tahrir or Lashkar-e-Taiba, but their numbers were not significant.

As for migrants from Tajikistan, the probability of their religious radicalization during that period was low. They were very much in demand in the main receiving countries – Russia and Kazakhstan – where economy was booming. Migrant workers’ remittances boosted the economic activity back in Tajikistan so that those few migrants who decided to stay in the country were able to find a place for themselves in the economic life and were satisfied.

Before 2013–2014, the scope and objectives of preventative measures against religious radicalism, including among migrant workers, were focused on the need to ensure political stability in Tajikistan. The first and principal line of

115 В.Волков. Опасная миграция: боевики из Центральной Азии ищут альтернативу ИГ [V. Volkov. Dangerous migration: fighters from Central Asia are looking for alternatives to the IS]. <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1467841260> [In Russian]

116 Ibid.

117 Имам-хатибы подрывают стабильность Таджикистана? [Do imam-khatibs undermine the stability in Tajikistan?] ASIA-PLUS, No.51, (1136), 7 July 2016. [In Russian]

prevention activities was imposition of bans; more specifically, the following organizations, movements and sects were outlawed: Al-Qaeda, Taliban, Islamic Group, East Turkestan Islamic Movement, Islamic Party of Turkestan (former Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, IMU), Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizb ut-Tahrir, Tablighi Jamaat, Ansarullah, Jundullah, Muslim Brotherhood, Salafiyya and others. Their supporters and followers were identified, detained, prosecuted, tried and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. Mosques were required to install video surveillance cameras. Minors and women were not allowed in mosques. Primary religious education classes and groups run by mosques gradually closed. Islamic self-study courses introduced in schools few years earlier were cancelled. A secular dress-code was introduced for school children and university students. Beards were banned for students and their teachers and so on. The same security approach led to the closure of mosques predominantly attended by followers of radical religious ideas.

The second line of preventative measures against religious radicalism did not involve any prohibitive actions. Instead, on the initiative of several important religious figures, a draft law providing legal protection to the Hanafi mazhab in Tajikistan was prepared and adopted. The state authorities also initiated work on persuading young Tajik citizens who were studying in religious schools and other institutions in Islamic countries to return home in order to protect them from the influence of radicals and extremists. In the meantime, a greater emphasis was placed on improving the quality of future religious clergy training in the country, primarily in the Abu Hanifa Islam Institute. The Institute was transferred to the authority of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Tajikistan, which enhanced its status and the prestige of state degrees awarded by it.

Current prevention measures

First of all, the Tajik Government and law enforcement agencies put the following at the forefront of preventative measures: strengthening of the national legal framework, constant monitoring and analysis of current problems and raising of awareness among the population aimed at reducing the risk of extremism and radicalization. One of the important regulatory acts aimed at countering the risk of religious extremism and radicalization of the population, including migrant workers, is the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations”. Strict compliance with this piece of legislation should ensure further prevention of these challenges of our time.

Pursuant to the Constitutional Law of the RT “On Prosecution Authorities of the Republic of Tajikistan”, the Law Enforcement Coordinating Council is now set up at the Prosecutor General’s Office. In 2015 at one of its meetings the Coordinating Council specifically discussed the measures taken to prevent religious radicalism, terrorism and extremism. In March 2016 a number of ministries and agencies presented a report to the Coordinating Council on the work they do to prevent these negative phenomena. Further, by its decision the Coordinating Council established a permanent law enforcement command centre in charge of preventing Tajik nationals from becoming involved with terrorist organizations.

In 2015, 835 crimes of terrorist and extremist nature were detected in Tajikistan leading to criminal prosecution of 247 individuals.¹¹⁸ In its 2015 annual report on countering international terrorism, the US State Department announced that on 23 July 2015 the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported that it prevented a series of terrorist attacks by Tajik supporters of Daesh (aka ISIL); who planned to bomb 10 police stations in Dushanbe, Kulob, Fayzobod and Garm.¹¹⁹

In 2015 the problem of Tajik citizens leaving for Syria and Iraq with the intention of joining religious radical groups received greater attention. By 25 January 2016, 156 citizens of Tajikistan, Daesh fighters, were arrested, 61 voluntarily returned from Syria and Iraq and 147 citizens of Tajikistan died fighting for Daesh abroad.¹²⁰ As of 3 March 2016, 780 Tajik nationals fighting for Daesh were on the wanted list.¹²¹

118 Надин Бахром. Таджикистан сообщает о растущем числе боевиков за границей [Nadin Bakhrom. Tajikistan reports increasing numbers of fighters abroad]. <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:25170> [In Russian]

119 news.tj. Issue No.104 (4492), 6 June 2016

120 Asia-Plus. Issue No.17 (4403), 26 January 2016

121 <http://news.tj/ru/news/genprokuror-bolshinstvo-voyuyushchikh-za-ig-tadzhikov-posledovateli-salafii>

Besides, the work was ongoing on curbing activity of movements and parties designated as radical and extremist in Tajikistan. The Supreme Court of Tajikistan banned 17 extremist movements and parties and criminal proceedings are being immediately initiated against individuals who joined these organizations in the country or abroad.¹²²

In this context, the Salafiyya religious movement designated as radical and banned back in 2009 was declared a terrorist organization in 2014. In September 2015, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), having legal status until then, was added to the list of radical religious organizations banned in Tajikistan. On 24 February 2016 a trial of 13 members of its political council began in closed session and on 2 June 2016 all of them were convicted with sentences ranging from 2 years to life imprisonment.¹²³

Given the new reality, the need for international cooperation in the interests of preventing religious radicalism is increasingly becoming urgent. International cooperation of the Tajik law enforcement agencies plays an important role in countering terrorism and extremism. For this purpose, they have signed and are implementing a number of agreements and memoranda with their foreign counterparts. According to the head of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Tajikistan is developing cooperation with other countries, namely Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan, “to fight against transnational terrorism”. In partnership with their Turkish colleagues, almost 100 Tajik nationals were detained at the Turkish-Syrian border in 2015.¹²⁴ At the same time, Tajikistan played an active part in all anti-terrorist activities including training exercises, varying in scope, conducted by the Collective Security Treaty Organization in the territory of its participating states. In its fight against religious radicalism and terrorism the country places a special emphasis on bilateral cooperation with Russia in general and on cooperation of Tajik law enforcement agencies with the Russian 201st Military Base stationed in Tajikistan in particular.

In a similar vein, the new reality puts greater importance than before on non-prohibitive and non-repressive measures to prevent religious radicalism. Law enforcement agencies of Tajikistan in cooperation with other relevant ministries, institutions and local government do prevention work with young people in secondary schools, universities, mosques and jamoats. Similar work is undertaken with migrant workers in the Russian Federation.

In 2015 the Dushanbe City Administration set up 46 information and awareness-raising groups to fight terrorism and extremism. These groups comprise officials from different institutions and experts working in a variety of fields. They visit areas and districts of the city most vulnerable to the effects of radical religious propaganda, meet and talk to relatives and neighbours of “jihadists” to raise awareness among them.¹²⁵

The Committee on Religious Affairs, Regulation of National Traditions, Celebrations and Ceremonies under the Government of Tajikistan has done a lot of work to persuade young Tajik citizens studying in religious schools and other institutions in Islamic countries to return home in order to protect them from the influence of religious radicals and extremists. According to official statistics, over the last five years 3000 out of 3233 Tajik students returned from abroad.¹²⁶

The Committee also works with imam-khatibs in mosques to teach them how to neutralise the impact of radical religious propaganda. Jumahon Giyosov, deputy chairman of the Committee, said that to achieve this, imam-khatibs attend training courses on an annual basis to learn about “the main factors and trends affecting religious and social life in Tajikistan”. As part of these courses, imam-khatibs listen to lectures by representatives of the Center for Islamic Studies under the President of Tajikistan, Committee on Religious Affairs and the Islamic Center. Imam-khatibs are trained “to identify potential extremists and to fight against terrorist organizations”.¹²⁷

As part of its prevention work against religious radicalism the Committee on Religious Affairs holds conferences and round tables on this topic. For instance, on the Committee’s initiative and in cooperation with the Russian

122 news.tj. Issue No.107 (4495), 9 June 2016

123 news.tj. Issue No.102 (4490), 3 June 2016

124 Надин Бахром. Таджикистан сообщает о растущем числе боевиков за границей [Nadin Bakhrom. Tajikistan reports increasing numbers of fighters abroad]. <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:25170> [In Russian]

125 Ibid.

126 Ibid.

127 Ibid.

Orthodox Church in Dushanbe a big international conference entitled “Islam and Christianity” took place on 4–5 June 2015 with 60 participants attending from Tajikistan, Russia and Kyrgyzstan. Its purpose was to strengthen inter-confessional tolerance. The Dushanbe Ismaili Center was chosen as the venue for the conference. A month later, the Committee in cooperation with the OSCE organized an international conference on prevention of terrorism attended by delegates from 25 countries and many international organizations.¹²⁸

In 2016 joint discussions between official and public institutions of Tajikistan and international organizations of the issues of growing religious and political radicalization and its prevention continued. In June 2016 two events of that nature took place. The Annual Joint Task Force meeting on the OSCE’s role in Tajikistan was convened on 8 June in the premises of the OSCE Office in Tajikistan. It brought together officials from the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, Security Council under the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan. The participants drew special attention to the issues of radicalization and migration.

On 13-14 June 2016 the High-Level Experts Meeting on Framing Development Solutions for the Prevention of Violent Extremism was held with the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan Sirodjidin Aslov and the Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS Cihan Sultanoğlu.

Up to the end of 2015 attempts to solve the problem of preventing and suppressing religious and political radicalization in society in general and of migrants in particular were made through the implementation of several, rather disjointed programmes, for example, youth radicalization prevention programme, counter-terrorism programme, training exercises of the Tajik security agencies as well as bilateral (primarily with Russia) and multilateral (under the CSTO and SCO) programmes for combating drug trafficking, etc. Each government body — defence and law enforcement agencies, Committee on Religious Affairs, Regulation of National Traditions, Celebrations and Ceremonies under the Government of Tajikistan, Islamic Center of the Republic of Tajikistan, Committee on Youth, Sport and Tourism, etc. — was working on its own projects. Their efforts were not always properly coordinated.

By 2016 it became obvious that the scale of the widespread growth of religious and political radicalization — internationally, in the Central Asian region and in Tajikistan — requires prevention efforts to be taken to a fundamentally new level. On 20 January 2016, in his address to the Parliament President Emomali Rahmon instructed the Prosecutor General’s Office jointly with other relevant state agencies to develop and submit at the earliest possibility the National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Countering Extremism and Terrorism for 2016–2020. According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan Sirodjidin Aslov, the Government of Tajikistan, in collaboration with international partners, is finishing the draft of the National Strategy for Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and Radicalization Leading to Terrorism. The minister emphasised that the priorities outlined in this strategy are:

- prevention of extremism and radicalization among minors and young people;
- countering the use of internet for extremist and terrorist purposes;
- suppressing the dissemination of extremist views and ideas in correctional facilities.

The Strategy also covers gender aspects of violent extremism.¹²⁹

In reality, practice shows that the main efforts in preventative measures are mostly focused on the functions of law enforcement agencies. Having said that, it is obvious that their very important work, in fact, largely deals with the consequences, whereas the prevention of religious and political radicalization is actually built on the assumption that the threat of religious radicalization and associated challenges comes from outside the country. Indeed, the impact of external factors cannot be excluded and the events in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Ukraine present sufficient evidence to support that. But the same events also demonstrate that external influences can only be successful if applied to already pre-existing grounds locally.

128 Religion and Society magazine.

129 News.tj. Issue No.110 (4498) Tuesday, 14 June 2016

This fact is highlighted by the international organizations through the words of their representatives. In her speech at the High-Level Experts Meeting on Framing Development Solutions for the Prevention of Violent Extremism on 13 June 2016, Cihan Sultanoğlu, Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, said: “Radical ideologies are associated with a high and extreme rate of inequality and injustice or with the perception of inequality and injustice in society. Hopelessness and despair of social, economic and political nature contribute to violence. Violent extremism in public life can cause a build-up of mistrust between people and the state”.¹³⁰ Speaking for the international community as represented by the United Nations, Cihan Sultanoğlu is essentially calling on the Tajik authorities to pay more attention to the deeper internal socioeconomic, political and other causes of growing religious radicalism, to assess and study them objectively and on this basis to develop and implement measures to address them.

Labour migration affects Tajikistan as the donor country, Kazakhstan as the transit country to a larger extent and as the recipient country to a lesser extent and Russia as the main recipient country for migrant workers from Tajikistan. Tajik labour migration is an established, sustained and large-scale phenomenon that has a strong impact on all aspects of life in Tajikistan since the beginning of this century. And it is here to stay for the foreseeable future and even in the longer term. At present and at some point in future it can be targeted by various forms of radicalization, including its religious form. Bearing all these circumstances in mind, there is a need for a trilateral (Tajikistan-Kazakhstan-Russia) special programme on prevention and neutralisation of possible radicalization of some migrant workers as a whole and migrants returned to Tajikistan in particular through joint efforts of these three countries.

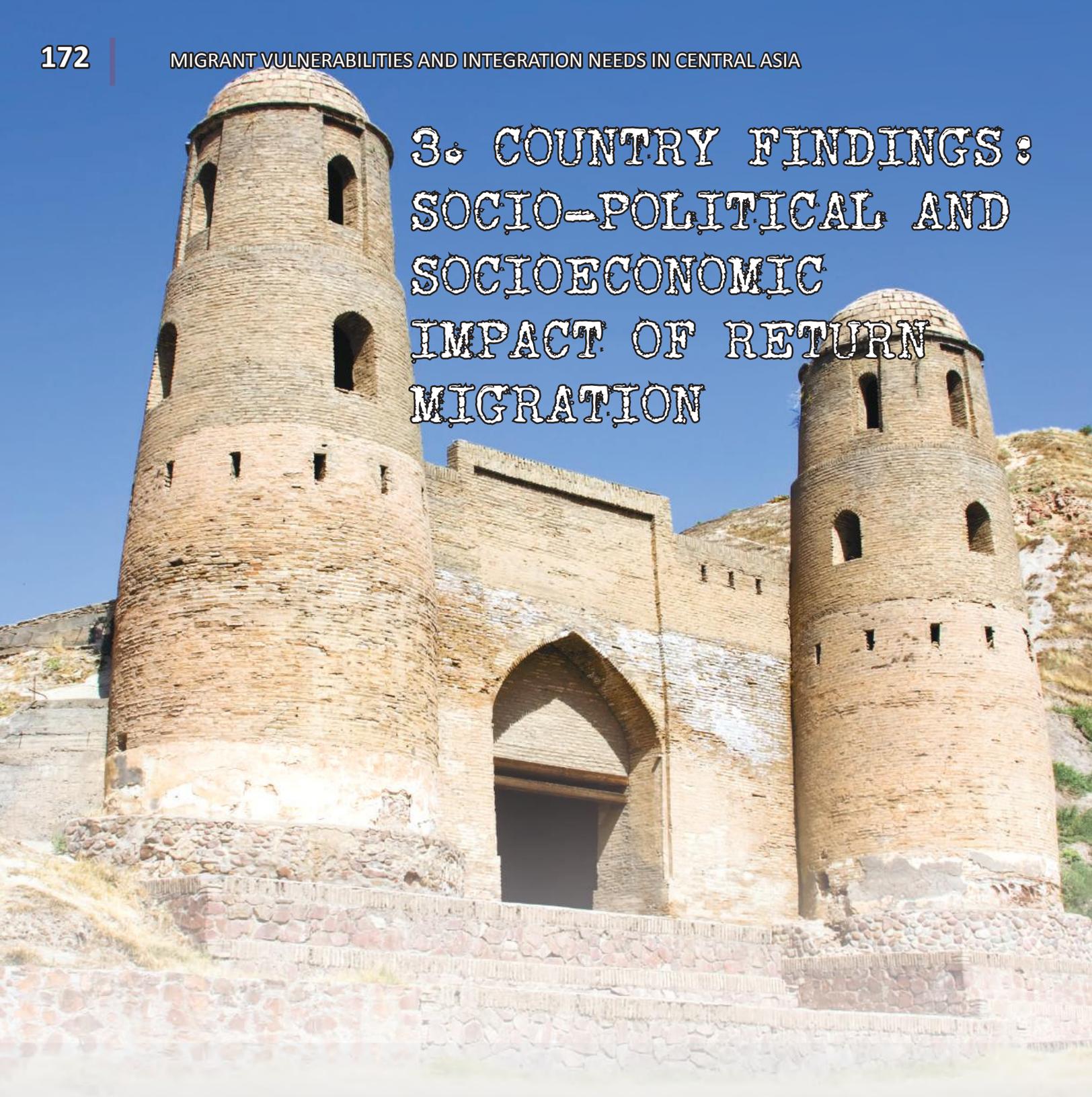
Cooperation with spiritual and community leaders in preventing and countering religious extremism

There is no consensus in Tajikistan on the question whether it is possible, useful and effective to use the authority of well-known mullahs as a preventative measure against growing religious radicalism among migrant workers in Russia. Some people believe that religious figures are not so much a possible solution but rather a significant part of the problem. According to others, such authoritative figures should go and visit migrants, but preferably as part of a task force along with officials from the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment, Consular Section at the Embassy of Tajikistan in Russia, law enforcement agencies and representatives of Russian Muslim clergy so that they feel competent to describe religious radicalism, its manifestations, causes and threats for each migrant worker and be able to answer any burning and complex questions (whether they are from theological, political, economic or legal field, etc.) asked by migrants.

130 News.tj. Issue No.110 (4498) Tuesday, 14 June 2016







3. COUNTRY FINDINGS: SOCIO-POLITICAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACT OF RETURN MIGRATION

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3.1. KAZAKHSTAN

Introduction

Over the 25 years of independence, migration movements of the population have been and remain important factors in Kazakhstan's development, also affecting social processes. Throughout the 1990s economic and ethnic emigration was a prevailing trend that later gave way to an inflow of thousands of ethnic migrants — oralmans. In more recent years the growing number of migrant workers from Central Asia is becoming an ever more prominent occurrence. There is, therefore, an increasingly pressing need to analyse diverse socioeconomic, cultural and demographic aspects of this phenomenon along with new emerging opportunities and risks for the security and development of the country.

The main objectives of the study are formulated as follows:

- to identify the main factors, scale and prospects of labour migration from the Central Asian countries to Kazakhstan, especially regarding those migrants who entered Kazakhstan after they had lost the ability to work in the Russian Federation;
- to analyse adaptation and integration opportunities and challenges encountered by migrant workers from the Central Asian countries in terms of current legislation and existing practices;
- to explore vulnerabilities of migrant workers (especially women) and ways to minimise them.

The methodology used for the purposes of this study combined the analysis of statistical data, review of documentation reflecting the legislative framework and institutional practices and summaries of interviews with officials and experts conducted in the course of this research project.

The principal sources of information came from official responses to our information requests from the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Migration Police Department at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Official online resources of the National Statistical Committee of the Ministry of National Economy and the National Bank of Kazakhstan were also used as well as regional and national reports produced by the IOM in Central Asia, published expert articles and interviews with experts. As the migration situation in the Russian Federation represents the major factor for migration trends in Kazakhstan, we also used data published on the official website of the General Administration for Migration Issues at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation as well as assessments produced by Russian experts. While working with sources some difficulties were caused by lack of available information: no data has yet been published on the number of cross-border movements and the number of nationals of the countries of Central Asia with temporary registration in Kazakhstan for the first months of 2016.

The chapter comprises five subsections. The first subsection presents an overview of external migration in Kazakhstan, including factors and forecasts for the future evolution of labour migration trends. The second subsection examines the impact of re-entry bans to Russia on the numbers of Central Asian nationals in Kazakhstan. The third subsection describes legal and institutional frameworks for the return and reintegration of migrant workers. Existing measures facilitating access of migrant workers to the labour market and their integration are analysed in the fourth subsection. Finally, the fifth subsection focuses on barriers to the full integration of migrant workers and potential opportunities for their integration in Kazakhstan.

3.1.1. General overview of the migration situation in Kazakhstan

Migration balance

Between 2011 and 2015, the migration situation in the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK) was marked by a reduction in numbers of people entering the country for permanent residence¹, a stable flow of emigrants and, as a consequence, a negative migration balance (see Table 3.1 and Fig. 3.1).

Table 3.1. External migration of the population of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2011–2015

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Immigrants	38,016	28,296	24,105	16,784	16,581
Emigrants	32,920	29,722	24,384	28,946	30,047
Net Migration	5,096	-1,426	-279	-12,162	-13,466

Source: Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Statistical Committee

Fig. 3.1. Balance of external migration in Kazakhstan in 2011–2015



Source: Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Statistical Committee

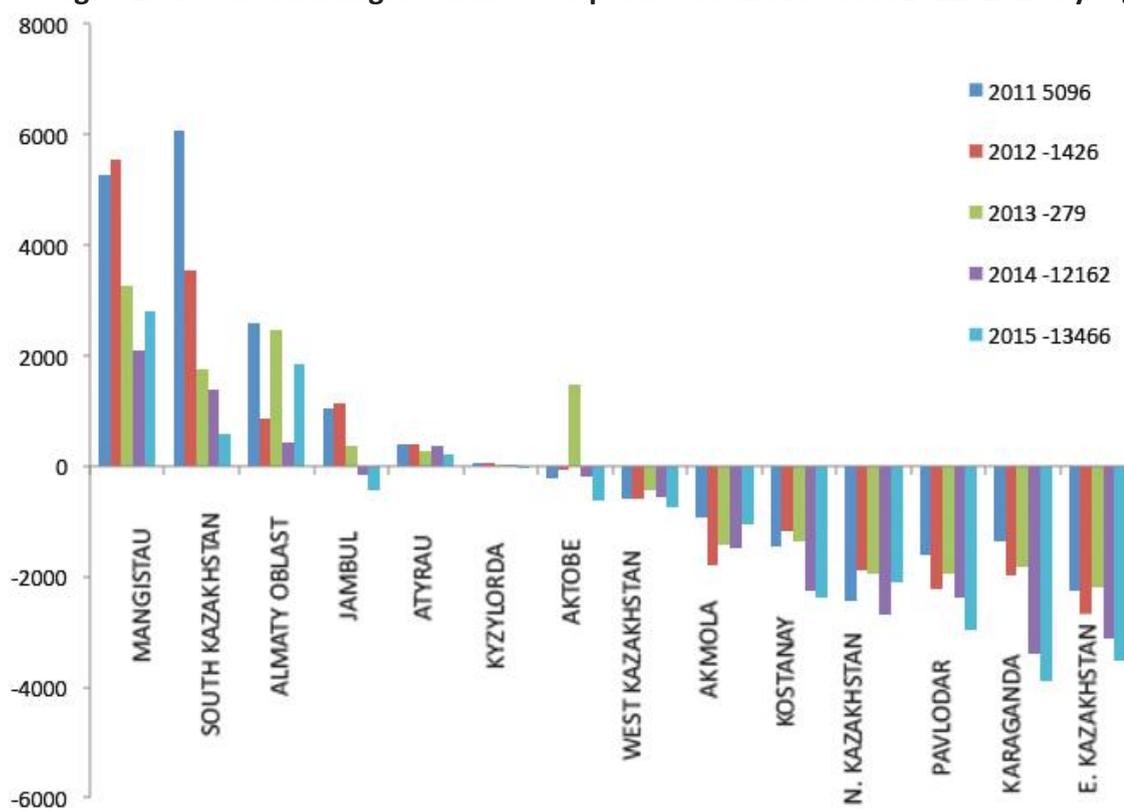
The Mangistau, Almaty, South Kazakhstan and Jambyl Regions attract most of external migrants, and since 2013 the South Kazakhstan and Jambyl Regions have been receiving the main influx of migrants from abroad.

¹ Ye. Saylekanov. The Issues concerning internal and external migration in the Republic of Kazakhstan: Analysis of status and prognosis <http://kisi.kz/ru/categories/politicheskaya-modernizaciya/posts/problemy-vnutrenney-i-vneshney-migracii-v-respublike-ka>

Table 3.2. Net external migration in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2011–2015 by region

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Republic of Kazakhstan	5,096	-1,426	-279	-12,162	-13,466
Akmola Region	-930	-1,803	-1,422	-1,497	-1,050
Aktobe Region	-226	-61	1,487	-191	-606
Almaty Region	2,572	852	2,479	419	1,833
Atyrau Region	391	407	267	370	219
West Kazakhstan Region	-595	-586	-435	-565	-731
Jambyl Region	1,037	1,145	369	-142	-434
Karaganda Region	-1,348	-1,991	-1,823	-3,403	-3,874
Kostanay Region	-1,440	-1,179	-1,349	-2,260	-2,388
Kyzylorda Region	70	46	13	19	-45
Mangistau Region	5,284	5,562	3,256	2,091	2,791
South Kazakhstan Region	6,086	3,551	1,770	1,382	593
Pavlodar Region	-1,608	-2,209	-1,953	-2,370	-2,966
North Kazakhstan Region	-2,431	-1,886	-1,952	-2,671	-2,099
East Kazakhstan Region	-2,267	-2,841	-2,207	-3,122	-3,511
City of Astana	380	-287	1,412	375	-25
City of Almaty	121	-146	-191	-597	-1,173

Source: Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Statistical Committee

Fig. 3.2. Net external migration in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2011–2015 by region

Source: Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Statistical Committee

In 2015 positive net migration originated from the following neighbouring countries: Uzbekistan (7,228 individuals or 43% of all external migrants), China (1,208 individuals or 7.2%) and Turkmenistan (762 individuals or 4.5%). Migrants from China are registered mainly in the Akmola and Almaty Regions, those from Uzbekistan — in the Mangistau, Almaty and South Kazakhstan Regions. As for their ethnic origin, the majority of immigrants who arrived for permanent residence in 2015 from Uzbekistan, China and Turkmenistan were ethnic Kazakhs – oralmans. With the end of the state-funded Nurly Kosh Programme in 2011 and redirection of the returnees to the North-East of the country started in 2012² the number of permanent immigrants to Kazakhstan has fallen over the last 3 years and fewer people are moving from the South Kazakhstan and Jambyl Regions. Overall between 1991 and 1 January 2016 the Republic of Kazakhstan welcomed 261,104 families or 957,772 oralmans.³

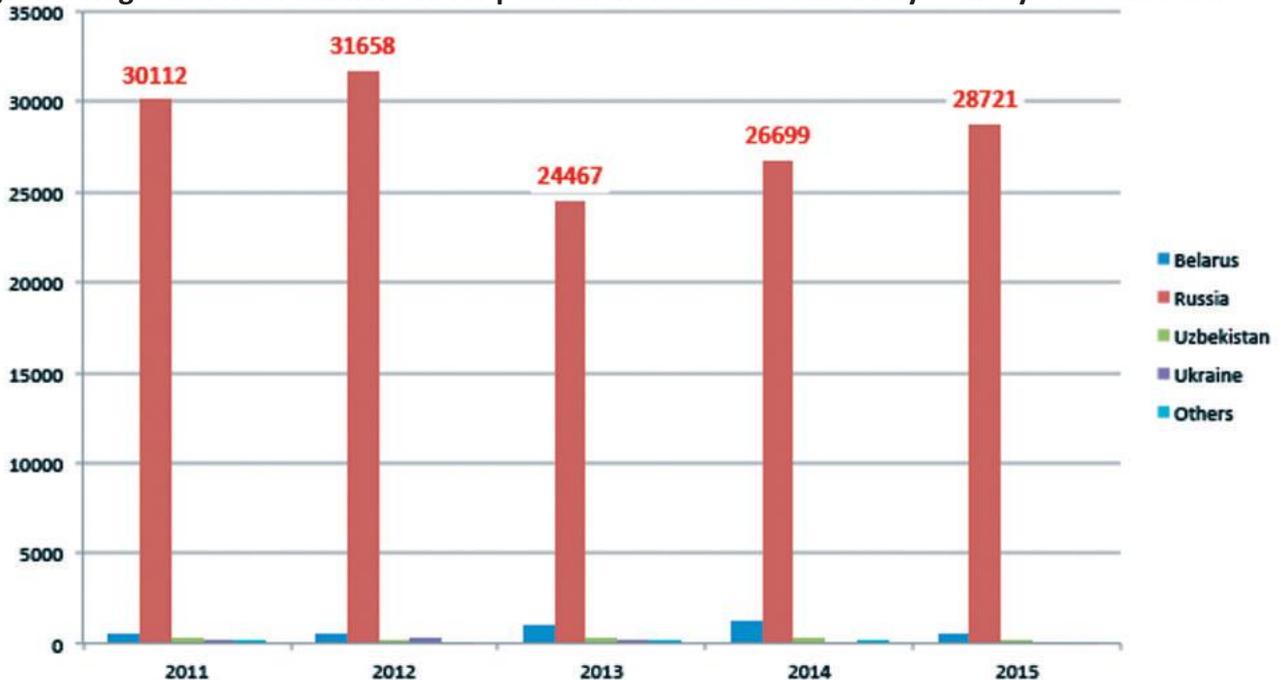
Regions with prevailing negative net migration are those that historically have higher proportions of Russian population: Karaganda, East Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, Kostanay and Akmola Regions. Emigrants are predominantly ethnic Russians and Germans; their preferred countries of destination are the Russian Federation and Federal Republic of Germany⁴ (see Table 3.3 and Fig. 3.3).

Table 3.3. Migration from Kazakhstan for permanent residence abroad by country of destination

Number of citizens departed from Kazakhstan for permanent residence abroad	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Belarus	551	493	1,051	1,314	535
Russia	30,112	31,658	24,467	26,699	28,721
Uzbekistan	340	165	338	300	168
Ukraine	234	270	226	60	35
Other countries	140	129	174	223	136
Total	31,377	32,715	26,256	28,596	29,595

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Migration Police Department, 27 April 2016

Fig. 3.3. Migration from Kazakhstan for permanent residence abroad by country of destination



Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Migration Police Department, 27 April 2016

² For more information, see IOM, Mapping on Irregular Migration in Central Asia 2014. Astana, 2015, p. 68.

³ Data provided by the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan on 26 April 2016.

⁴ Садовская Е.Ю. Международная трудовая миграция в Центральной Азии (на примере Республики Казахстан) [Ye. Sadovskaya. International labour migration in Central Asia (case study of the Republic of Kazakhstan)]. Moscow, Vostochnaya Kniga, 2013. [In Russian]

Ethnic migration from Kazakhstan to Russia and Germany continued since the beginning of the 1990s and remains at around 20,000 people in 2016 showing no sign of slowing down. The main motives for leaving are education for children, family reunification and a search for new economic and social opportunities. In the previous years, emigration was largely compensated by the arrival of ethnic repatriates – oralmans, but since 2013–2014 the negative net migration has been growing.

In this context, increasing numbers of foreigners with temporary registration in Kazakhstan are particularly noticeable. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RK, the majority of them are nationals of the Central Asian countries (see Table 3.4.).

Table 3.4. Nationals of the CIS countries, registered in Kazakhstan

	2011	2012	2013	2014
Uzbekistan	404,468	431,919	495,167	530,683
Russia	657,427	328,845	159,814	149,577
Kyrgyzstan	93,848	103,001	93,127	94,313
Azerbaijan	19,219	20,438	24,671	21,898
Tajikistan	10,915	10,193	12,917	18,463
Other countries	30,338	33,744	34,614	37,549
Total CIS countries	1,216,215	928,140	820,310	852,483

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan



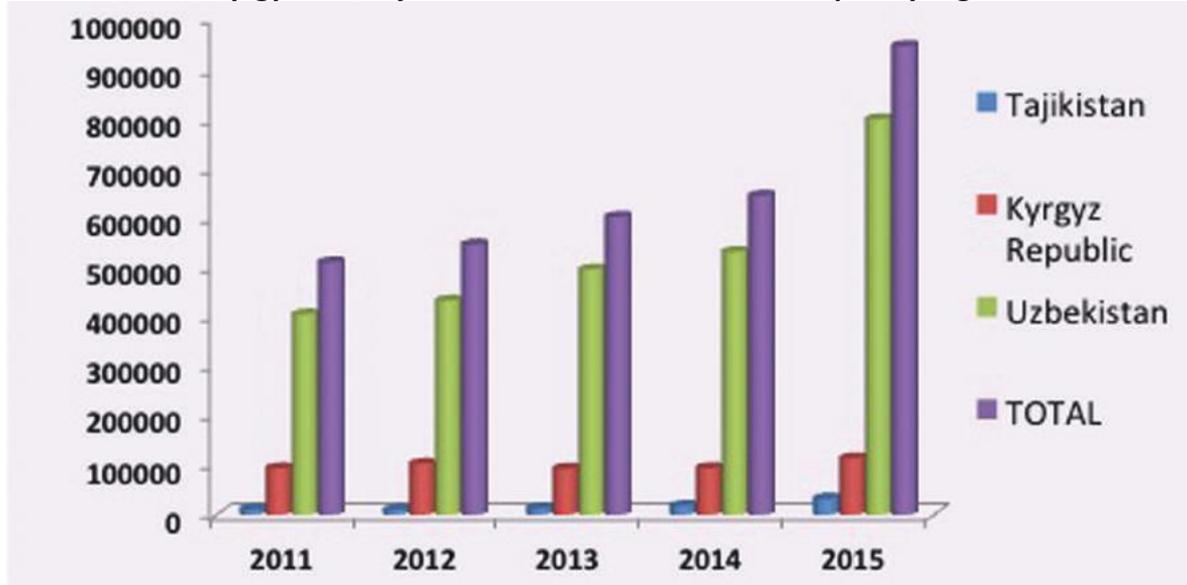
In 2015 the total number of citizens of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, registered in Kazakhstan, rose sharply reaching 945,403 people, which is 1.5 times higher than in 2014 (see Table 3.5 and Fig. 3.4).

Table 3.5. Nationals of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan with temporary registration in Kazakhstan

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Tajikistan	10,915	10,193	12,917	18,463	33,036
Kyrgyzstan	93,848	103,001	93,127	94,313	114,385
Uzbekistan	404,468	431,919	495,167	530,683	797,982
Total	509,231	545,113	601,211	643,459	945,403

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Migration Police Department

Fig. 3.4. Nationals of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan with temporary registration in Kazakhstan



Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Migration Police Department

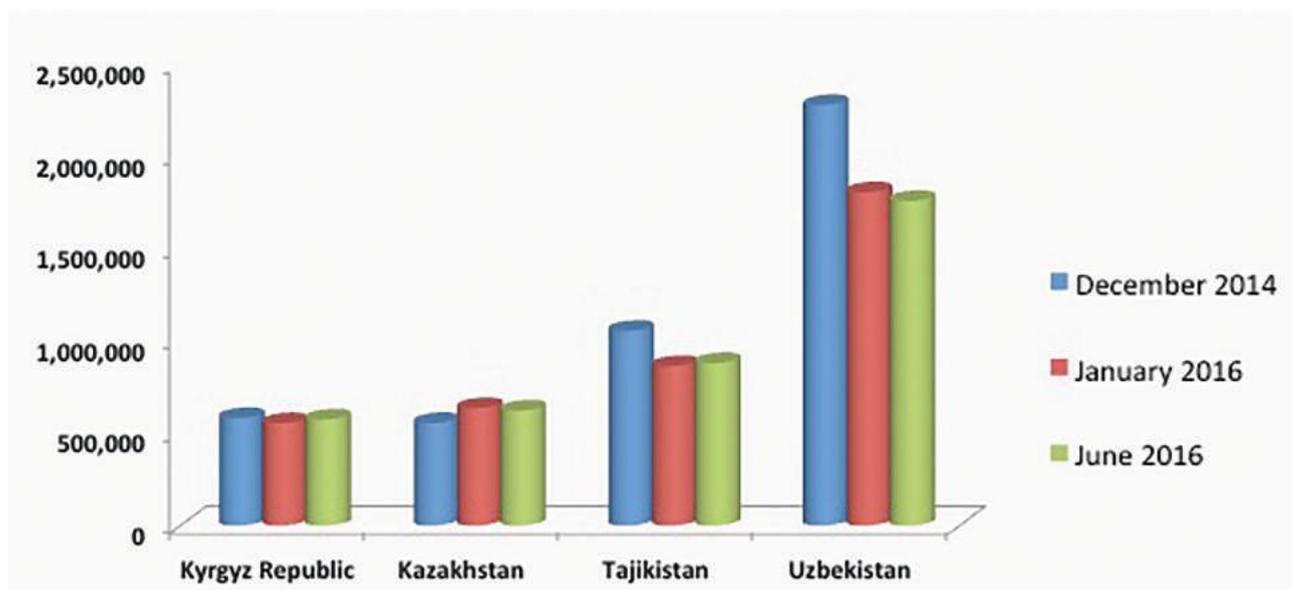
The most significant change in numbers of foreigners with temporary registration in Kazakhstan was recorded among Russian nationals (a fall from 657,457 in 2011 to 149,577 in 2014) and Uzbek nationals (an increase from 404,467 to 797,982 between 2011 and 2015) (see Tables 3.4 and 3.5). The sharp drop in the number of temporarily registered citizens of Russia is due to the alteration of the registration regime as part of joining the Single Economic Space (SES) in 2012 and the Eurasian Economic Union in 2015. The rise in numbers of Uzbek nationals in Kazakhstan is associated with the change in directions of international migration in the Eurasian region as a whole.

For example, according to the data provided by the Directorate for Migration Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation (DMA MIA), 2,275,290 citizens of Uzbekistan, 1,052,822 citizens of Tajikistan, 554,808 citizens of Kyrgyzstan and 581,516 citizens of Kazakhstan were registered in Russia as of 4 December 2014. But on 12 January 2016, according to the FMS RF data, their numbers were as follows: 1,802,707 citizens of Uzbekistan, 862,321 citizens of Tajikistan, 636,005 citizens of Kazakhstan and 553,910 citizens of Kyrgyzstan.⁵ The General Administration for Migration Issues at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation published on its website the following figures for June 2016: 1,755,781 citizens of Uzbekistan, 878,536 citizens of Tajikistan, 622,142 citizens of Kazakhstan and 574,194 citizens of Kyrgyzstan (see Fig. 3.5) had registration in the Russian Federation.⁶

⁵ Based on data published on the Federal Migration Service of RF website in 2014–2016.

⁶ https://xn--b1ab2a0a.xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/about/activity/stats/Statistics/Svedeniya_v_otnoshenii_inostrannih_grazh

Fig. 3.5. Numbers of nationals of Central Asian countries registered in the Russian Federation between December 2014 and June 2016



Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, Directorate for Migration Affairs

In one year, from December 2014 to January 2016, the Uzbek and Tajik population in Russia dropped by 21% and 18% respectively, but the Kyrgyz population rose by 3.5%. Over the same period, there was an increase in the number of Uzbek nationals registered in Kazakhstan by 33.5%, Tajik nationals by 44% and Kyrgyz nationals by 17.5%. Therefore, the sharp growth of the number of registered citizens of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in Kazakhstan is related to the changes in their migratory strategies.

Information on reasons why nationals of Central Asian countries entered Kazakhstan is not available for 2015, but the 2014 analysis demonstrated that most of them arrived in Kazakhstan without declaring business or employment as the purpose of entry.⁷ There is an enormous gap between the official data and the real scale of labour migration. The number of migrants actually working in Kazakhstan could be as high as hundreds of thousands of individuals.

The Republic of Kazakhstan is the country of destination, transit and origin of migration flows involving several hundred thousand people. According to DMA MIA, approximately 600,000 Kazakh nationals have been registered in the Russian Federation over the past few years.⁸ Dominant migration trends in recent years are predetermined by the seasonal nature of the immigrants' employment, whereas in the past the leading motive for migratory movements was ethnic immigration for permanent residence.

Labour migration trends in Kazakhstan

Access of foreign workforce to the internal labour market in Kazakhstan is regulated through special mechanisms set out in the 2011 Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Migration of the Population" with subsequent amendments.⁹ Until 2014 the number of foreign workers was mainly regulated by the job quota system. The 2014 and 2015 quotas were set at 0.7% of economically active population, that is 63,000 jobs (Fig. 3.6). Despite the fact that over the last 4 years the number of hired foreign workers was on the rise, quotas were not taken up by over 50%.¹⁰ 2014 saw the launch of a new scheme of issuing work permits on the basis of contracts for rendering services to private households, and this measure significantly increased the number of regular migrant workers.

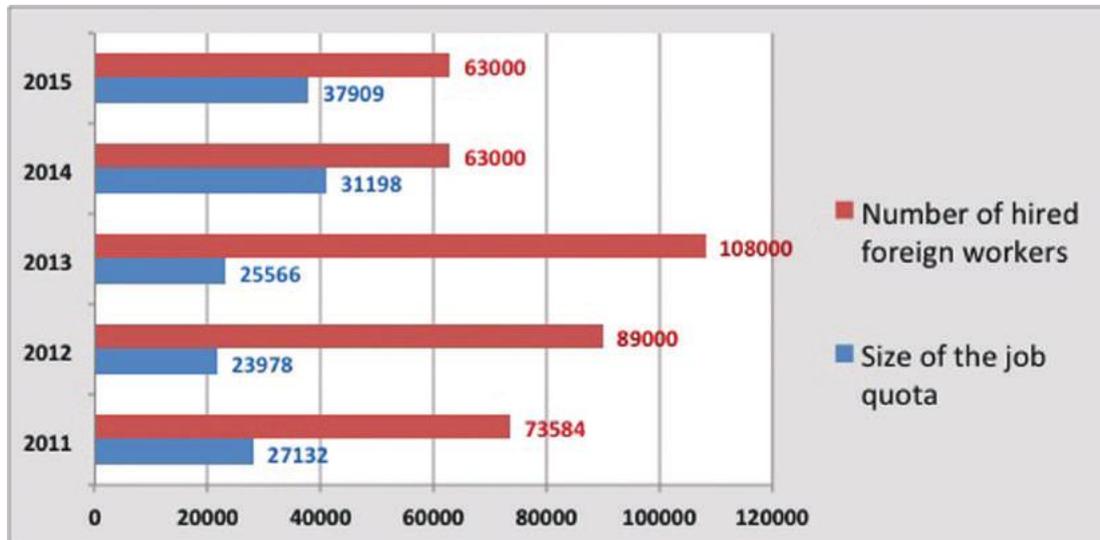
7 IOM, Mapping on Irregular Migration in Central Asia 2014. Astana, 2015. p. 45.

8 Data provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RK.

9 For more information on migration legislation of the RK please refer to the dedicated subsection of the report.

10 Information from the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the RK as of 23 April 2016.

Fig. 3.6. Job quotas and actual numbers of hired foreign workers in Kazakhstan



Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan

In 2013, just over 115,000 people were involved in all types of legal employment.¹¹ In 2015, according to the Press Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RK, 141,000 work permits were issued to foreign migrant workers employed in private households and this brought 1.3 billion tenge to the national budget in the form of preliminary payment of individual income tax.¹² Adding these figures to the number of permits to recruit foreign workers through allocated quotas for the same year brings the total number of regular migrant workers to about 180,000 people, almost reaching the level of 2008.

In the first seven months of 2016, over 165,684 work permits were issued and the national budget received 1,776,172,000 tenge.¹³ This is significantly higher than for the entire 2015. Of these, 144,518 permits were obtained by migrants for the first time and 21,166 permits were extended. It is important to note that 73,000 permits were issued in the first five months of 2016. A more than two-fold increase in the number of permits in the two summer months points to the seasonal and spontaneous nature of labour migration and the potential for further growth: in 2016 the total number of issued permits for work in private households will significantly exceed 2015 figures. Overall, since April 2014 when the new work permit scheme was launched, 390,000 permits were issued.

Over 94% (156,332) of permits for work in private households were received by Uzbek nationals in 2016, along with Tajik (3.5%; 5,813) and Azeri (1.9%; 3,283) nationals. Citizens of Uzbekistan were visibly present on the Kazakh labour market in the previous years too.¹⁴ Therefore, the sharp increase in the numbers of registered Uzbeks and Tajiks in Kazakhstan is attributed to their growing interest in the country's labour market.

Of the total number of work permits 152,271, or 91%, were issued to men and the remaining 13,413 to women. When applying for permits foreign migrant workers specify building trades (82% or 136,975), as well as domestic workers – carer, nanny, etc. (5.5% or 9,326), cook (2.4% or 3,598) and other occupations (5.5% or 8,656).

The most common duration of the work permit given to 119,414 or 72% of all foreigners is three months (the maximum allowed); 32,071 or 19% received a permit for one month and 14,199 or 8% for two months.

The most common estimated income specified by immigrants is up to 40,000 tenge (72% or 120,268 people), then up to 60,000 tenge (16% or 28,166 people), up to 20,000 tenge (10.8% or 15,917 people), up to 100,000 tenge (0.8% or 1,267 people) and over 100,000 tenge (0.03% or 66 people).

11 Mapping on Irregular Migration in Central Asia 2014. Astana, 2015. pp. 54-55.

12 <http://www.zakon.kz/4800084-pochti-90-migrantov-pribyvajushhikh-v.html>

13 Data provided by the Migration Police Department at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RK on 4 August 2016.

14 Mapping on Irregular Migration in Central Asia 2014. Astana, 2015. p. 56.

The largest number of work permits in 2016 were issued to individuals in the South Kazakhstan Region (20.4%), Almaty Region (14.8%), city of Almaty (12.3%), Atyrau Region (11.5%) and Mangistau Region (8.2%). In 2013 the most work permits within quotas were given in the Atyrau Region and in cities of Almaty and Astana. In other words, the preference of foreign workers for large cities and western regions of Kazakhstan, where oil and gas industry is located, gives way to increased interest in work in the southern regions of the country where construction and agricultural work on small private farms is more common, and this makes labour migration more difficult to control.

Factors and forecasts for labour migration trends in Kazakhstan

Attractiveness of the Kazakh labour market for foreign workforce is based on several factors.

The first group of factors, that can be referred to as “pull” factors, is dominated by the economic motive given the marked difference between the average monthly salary in Kazakhstan, on the one hand, and in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, on the other hand, in 2015. According to the Statistical Committee of the Ministry of National Economy of the RK, in Kazakhstan the average monthly wage is equivalent to 350–390 US dollars¹⁵, whereas in Kyrgyzstan approximately to 200–225 US dollars¹⁶ and in Tajikistan to 130–150 US dollars¹⁷. The geographical factor and historical and cultural affinity bear less importance and are relevant mainly for the neighbouring countries — Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. This implies not only transport accessibility of Kazakhstan but also the established strong support networks of relatives, compatriots and acquaintances due to the fact that almost 500,000 Uzbeks and 40,000 Tajiks permanently reside as citizens in the south of the country.

Another “pull” factor is the 2014 scheme enabling legal employment of foreign workers in private households which makes it possible to significantly increase the numbers of regular foreign workforce.

The “push” factors for labour migration include the changed supply and demand balance for Central Asian migrants in the Russian labour market due to new immigration regulations that resulted in hundreds of thousands of people being banned from entry to Russia. The current economic crisis in Russia has also played a significant role.¹⁸ These factors explain why some migrant workers chose to abandon the labour market in the RF and move to Kazakhstan instead.

In the short- and medium-term future these factors will affect the scenarios of labour migration development in Kazakhstan in the following way.

Scenario with dominating “pull” factors:

- foreign workforce employment schemes will be preserved and developed further;
- after several years of their forced absence from the RF, migrant workers will be better informed about the labour market in the RK, they will establish and strengthen relations with employers, intermediaries, NGOs and state authorities responsible for migrant employment in the RK.

The “push” factors present in the labour markets of other countries will only increase the attractiveness of the Kazakh labour market:

- the Russian labour market will remain less favoured by the migrants with persisting negative trends in the Russian economy not needing a large influx of migrant workers;
- the practice of issuing re-entry bans to the RF to new categories of Central Asian migrant workers will also continue, albeit on a smaller scale. This is due to the fact that some migrant workers from Central Asia have exceeded the period of legal stay in the RF but have not left the country and are now hiding from the authorities.

15 http://www.stat.gov.kz/faces/publicationsPage/publicationsOper/homeNumbersLivingStandart?_adf.ctrl-state=cpo112k75_4&_afLoop=41685317222519349

16 <http://kyrtag.kg/society/v-kyrgyzstane-srednyaya-zarplata-vyrosla-na-8-5-i-sostavila-12-tys-719-somov-natsstatkom/>

17 <http://nm.tj/economy/37027-razmer-sredney-zarplaty-v-tadzhikistane-v-2015-godu-sostavil-8623-somoni.html>

18 These factors will be explored later in a separate section of the report.

In 2016–2018 Russian law enforcement agencies will be detecting such breaches of the residence regime and nationals of Central Asian countries will be leaving Russia to join other job seekers in the labour market of Kazakhstan. The practice of issuing new re-entry bans to migrants will also continue during that period for two reasons. First, the ban issuing system has defects (errors in the automatic system of issuing re-entry bans to the RF and in the expedited court decision-making procedures on these cases were reported by Valentina Chupik, Russian expert from TONG JAHONI organization). Second, migrant workers are not sufficiently educated in legal matters to be able to contest these bans in court.

Scenario with dominating “push” factors:

- despite the fact that overall the nominal wage in Kazakhstan is the same as in Russia, the level of income in some industries in Russia remains higher than in Kazakhstan which results in a persisting impression among migrant workers from Central Asia that the Russian Federation is more attractive as a country of destination;¹⁹
- the accession of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Eurasian Economic Union in August 2015 and new regime of entry and employment that was launched for Kyrgyz citizens in the RF will redirect some of them towards the Russian labour market. It is not possible, however, to establish a clear connection between labour migration statistics and reforms undertaken in the SES countries as there are no reliable indicators for this;
- in 2016–2018 a lot of migrant workers will see their re-entry bans expire and many of them will attempt to return to the RF, their country of primary migration.

In general, migration has economic causes.²⁰ Therefore, under the influence of the above factors the number of migrant workers in Kazakhstan will increase significantly in 2016–2018. This rise may become even more pronounced if the economic downturn in the RF continues and becomes steep and prolonged. After 2018 new factors may appear related to the socioeconomic development of Kazakhstan and Central Asian countries, or the changing demand and supply pattern in the new external labour markets, for example, in South-Eastern Asia. But over the next two to three years labour migration trends in the RK will most likely follow the first scenario with dominating “pull” factors.

19 <http://cbsd.gks.ru> (Доходы и уровень жизни [Income and standards of living] → Доходы и расходы населения [Income and expenditure of the population])

20 See UN data on Poverty in Central Asia.



3.1.2. Impact of re-entry bans to the Russian Federation on Central Asian nationals in the Republic of Kazakhstan

Impact of re-entry bans to the Russian Federation on Central Asian nationals in the Republic of Kazakhstan

The list of grounds for re-entry bans to the Russian Federation (RF) issued to nationals of Central Asian countries, expanded in 2013–2015, and a sharp drop in the value of the rouble since autumn 2014 had an impact on a clear correlation between the falling number of nationals of Central Asian countries in the RF and their rising numbers in the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK).

Amendments to Russian immigration law that came into force on 9 August 2013 introduced liability for breaching rules of stay and administrative regulations by foreigners:²¹ Foreign citizens who were found to have exceeded the legal duration of their stay, or not in possession of documents confirming their right to stay in the country or not to have notified of the loss of such documents are subject to an administrative fine in the amount of 2,000 to 5,000 roubles and administrative expulsion from the RF. In case of a repeated administrative offence within three years the foreign citizen is banned from re-entering the RF. In addition, temporary re-entry bans are issued to foreign citizens and stateless persons who avoided paying taxes or administrative fines during their previous stay in the RF.

Over the last three years several hundred thousands of re-entry bans to the RF were issued annually, e.g. 449,581 foreign citizens and stateless persons were banned from Russia in 2013; 675,950 in 2014 and 481,404 in 2015.²²

The total number of foreign nationals with bans reached 1,600,000 by January 2016 – they are forced to leave Russia for their countries of origin and spontaneously seek alternative labour markets. In the first three months of 2016 re-entry bans were issued to 94,116 foreign citizens and stateless persons, whereas a year earlier, in the first three months of 2015, this figure stood at 130,868. This decline can be explained by the decrease in the total number of migrant workers in the RF, as well as by the re-entry ban exemption of the citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic after its accession to the Eurasian Economic Union. Nonetheless, it is obvious that by the end of 2016 the number of re-entry banned migrant workers from Central Asian countries will reach several hundred thousands, although it will not be as high as a year earlier.

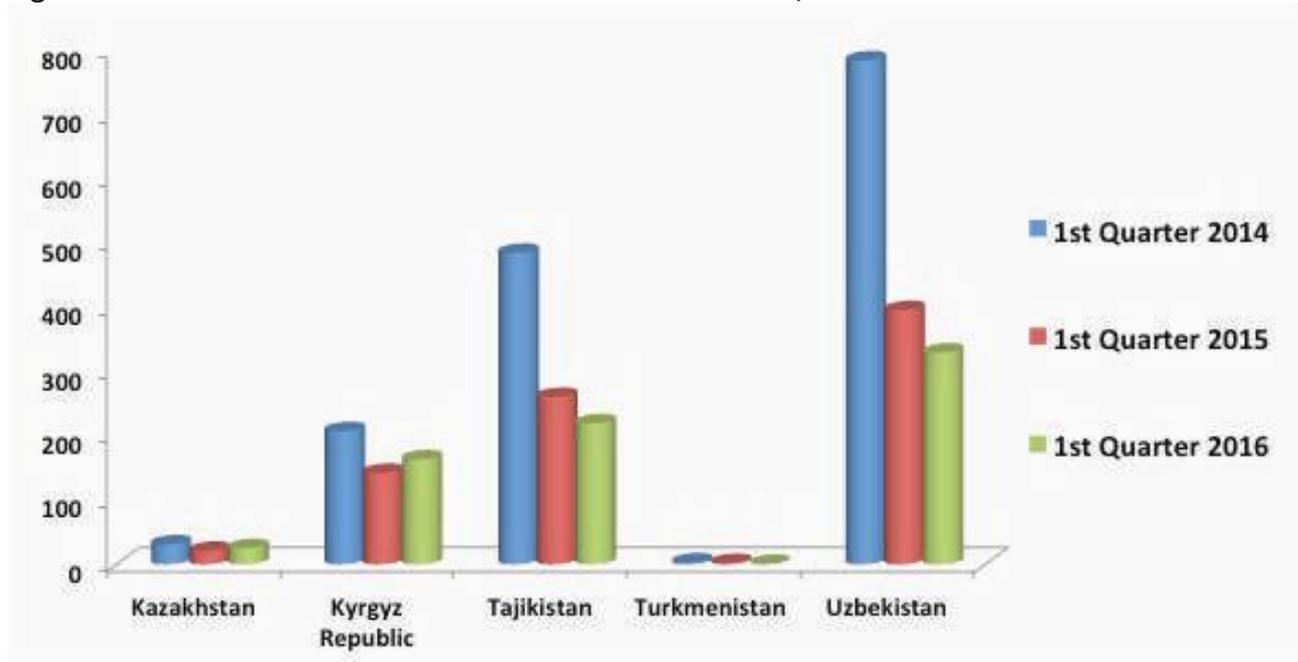
The significant increase in the number of migrants from Central Asian countries in the RK coincided with the period of the strongest decline of their numbers in the RF and reduction in remittances from the RF to the countries of Central Asia. Figure 2.7 shows a drop in cross-border transfers of non-residents of the RF to the countries of Central Asia between the first quarter of 2014 and the first quarter of 2016 based on the data provided by the Central Bank of the RF.²³ Remittances to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan reduced more than two-fold: from 783 million US dollars to 329 million US dollars and from 484 million US dollars to 219 US dollars respectively. Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan show a different trend: there was a drop between the first quarter of 2014 and the same period of 2015 from 207 million US dollars to 142 million US dollars and from 31 million US dollars to 21 million US dollars respectively. But during the following year (between the first quarter of 2015 and the first quarter of 2016) remittances grew slightly from 142 million US dollars to 163 million US dollars and from 21 million US dollars to 25 million US dollars respectively. In other words, the decline in remittances continues but the accession of these two countries to the Eurasian Economic Union has mitigated some of the negative effects.

21 Federal Law No. 224-FZ of 23 July 2013 “On Amendments to a Number of Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation”. Amendments were made to the Code of Administrative Offences, Federal Law No.114 “On the Procedure of Exit from and Entry into the Russian Federation” and Federal Law No.115 “On Legal Status of Foreign Citizens in the Russian Federation”.

22 https://xn--b1ab2a0a.xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/about/activity/stats/Statistics/Statisticheskie_svedeniya_po_migracionno

23 <http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/?Prtid=lg>

Fig. 3.7. Remittances from Russia to Central Asian countries, 2014-2016



Source: Central Bank of the Russian Federation

At present, there is no available statistical data on the number of people with re-entry bans to the RF with breakdown by their nationality. In this case expert assessment become of a greater importance, for example, the one given by Konstantin Romodanovsky, former head of the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation: as of January 2016, a total of 1,600,000 re-entry bans were issued to the citizens of CIS and the majority of them were Uzbek nationals.²⁴

As previously stated, 2015 saw a sharp rise (by 301,944 people) in the numbers of citizens of Central Asian countries registered in Kazakhstan. For instance, the number of Uzbek nationals registered in the RK as of the end of 2015 grew from 797,982 to 945,403. Since during the same period of time Russian migration legislation was amended resulting in hundreds of thousands of citizens of Central Asian countries being banned from entering Russia and the exchange rate of the rouble dropped sharply against foreign currencies, one can clearly see a cause and effect relationship between these two processes. Thus, it can be concluded that there are several hundred thousand citizens of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan whose decision to move to Kazakhstan was influenced by the changes in immigration legislation of the RF in 2013–2015 and the economic downturn in Russia.

It should be noted that migrant workers from Central Asian countries with re-entry bans to the RF staying in the RK are not recorded in statistics separately because their stay in Kazakhstan is legal only if they had time to sign a work contract within five days and hence extended the grounds for their stay in the country for the duration of that contract. That is why any estimates of the size of this group of the population can be based primarily on expert opinions. According to experts, in the first six months of 2016 several hundred nationals of CA countries with re-entry bans to Russia were known to be staying in Kazakhstan. Some of them were intending to leave and return to their homeland, others were planning to stay and find a job in the RK.²⁵

24 <http://www.fms.gov.ru/press/speeches/item/55779/>

25 From interviews with banned migrants in the Republic of Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

Re-entry bans to the Russian Federation issued to citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Information is also available on citizens of Kazakhstan who were banned from entering the RF. They are not covered by our study²⁶ as they can make use of specialized employment programmes for Kazakh citizens. Having said that, in some situations (sudden ban on stay in the RF or loss of employment there) socioeconomic status of migrants from Kazakhstan is similar to that of vulnerable migrant workers from other countries of Central Asia.

According to the statistics provided by the General Administration for Migration Issues at the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, 622,000 citizens of Kazakhstan were in the RF at the beginning of June 2016, whereas only 3,894 individuals were registered with the consulate according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RK. 29,000 people left Kazakhstan for Russia for permanent residence in 2015. It is clear that over 600,000 Kazakh nationals left the country and do not wish to register with the consulate for various reasons. According to Russian expert Olga Choudinovskikh, director of the Centre for Migration Policy at the Institute for Social Development, National Research University Higher School of Economics, based on the DMA MIA statistics, approximately 323,000 Kazakh citizens entered the RF by July 2015 specifying employment as the purpose of their travel. Experts believe that in northern parts of Kazakhstan some citizens of the RK work under a rotation system at oil producing plants and refineries in the Tyumen Region and Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Region in Russia. These companies are located not far from the Kazakh border, and many Kazakhstanis find this type of employment rather convenient.

Non-governmental organizations working with migrant workers report isolated cases of citizens of Kazakhstan approaching them for help with finding a job.

3.1.3. Legal and institutional framework for the return and reintegration of migrants

Migration legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Migration legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan is evolving in response to newly emerging trends in migration processes and possible challenges to the existing workforce distribution system. The Concept of the Migration Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2007–2015 approved by the Decree of President Nursultan Nazarbayev on 28 August 2007 sets out the following objectives as the main priorities:

- preventing, avoiding and minimising negative effects of migration processes;
- ensuring and protecting the rights and interests of migrants;
- stimulating the influx of foreign professionals with high innovation potential through simplified employment procedures for foreign highly qualified workforce and regulating the quality of the attracted foreign workforce;
- promoting the return of ethnic Kazakhs living abroad;
- facilitating and providing assistance in the accelerated adaptation and integration of immigrants;
- attracting foreign workforce to industries and areas where there is no competition with the domestic workforce.²⁷

26 See also Садовская Е.Ю. Трудовая миграция из Казахстана. [Ye. Sadovskaya. Labour migration from Kazakhstan]. Institute of Demography at the National Research University Higher School of Economics. Demoscope Weekly, No. 583-584. 27 January – 9 February 2014. 27 http://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/U070000399_

The Concept combines protection “against negative effects of migration processes” with “ensuring the rights and interests of migrants” and attraction of “foreign professionals” and “foreign workforce”. Further to the Concept of the Migration Policy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the new version of the Law “On Migration of the Population” was adopted on 22 July 2011 that defines “the main objectives of the state policy in the field of the population migration:

- protection of rights and freedoms of migrants;
- organization of rational resettlement of oralmans in recognition of interests of demographic and socioeconomic development of regions;
- engagement of highly qualified foreign workforce for carrying out of labour activity in the Republic of Kazakhstan;
- protection of the internal labour market by setting quotas for foreign workforce;
- ensuring the integration of Kazakhstan into the international labour market.”²⁸

It is clear that priorities have shifted from protection “against” negative effects of migration “to” protection of rights and freedoms of migrants, organization of resettlement of oralmans and attracting highly qualified foreign workforce.

On 14 December 2012, the Kazakhstan–2050 Strategy — the address of the President to the nation of Kazakhstan — declared that one of the important tasks of the personnel policy in the new reality is to “attract external human resources for the implementation of some of the tasks of the new course ... attract the best foreign specialists in the open market and invite them to work in our country.”²⁹

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Employment of the Population” of 30 December 1998 became the first legal act that provided for the integration of Kazakhstan into the international labour market (the latest version of the Law was adopted on 6 April 2016). Article 4 of the Law lists the main principles of the state population employment policy, in particular “organization of international cooperation in addressing employment issues of the population, including issues related to labour activity of the citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan abroad and of foreigners in the Republic of Kazakhstan”. Article 11 of the Law provides further explanation to the principle: “In order to protect the national labour market the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan sets a quota for recruitment of foreign workforce”.

Mechanisms for state regulation of foreign workforce

The legal status of immigrants who arrived in Kazakhstan with the intention to engage in labour activity is regulated by Chapter 6 of the Law of the RK “On Migration of the Population”. The articles of this chapter fully reflect the principal features of all acts adopted in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the field of migration (starting from the 2007 Concept), i.e. the need for selective migration policy.

The mechanism of state regulation of external labour migration is based on the assessment of demand for foreign workforce. For instance, “the quota for recruitment of foreign workforce is determined as a percentage of the economically active population and is set ... according to the forecast demand in the labour market for the coming year” (Article 37 of the Law). Within the set quota local authorities issue and renew permissions to recruit foreign workforce to employers as well as work permits to foreign workers. Foreign citizens willing to set up a business in Kazakhstan should, within two months, register a commercial organization and deposit to the second tier bank of the RK a sum no less than a minimal amount established by the law of Kazakhstan upon registration of a legal entity to form its authorised capital (Article 40 of the Law).

28 http://online.zakon.kz/document/?doc_id=31038298#pos=196;-205

29 <http://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/K1200002050>

Seasonal foreign workers are recruited to certain industries on the grounds of international treaties ratified by the RK or permissions to recruit foreign workforce issued to employers by local authorities. To enter the country foreign workers should present:

1. proof of funds available to them sufficient to leave the RK upon expiration of the permission to recruit foreign workforce;
2. medical certificate confirming the absence of diseases that could impede their labour activity;
3. medical insurance (Articles 41 and 42 of the Law).

In 2014, a procedure for legal employment of labour immigrants by private individuals was introduced. To enter the RK labour immigrants should present:

1. proof of criminal record or certificate of no criminal record;
2. medical certificate confirming the absence of diseases that could impede their labour activity in the chosen profession;
3. medical insurance.³⁰

The work permit is granted to labour immigrants upon submission of documents proving legality of their stay in the Republic of Kazakhstan and preliminary payment of individual income tax for the period specified in the application for the permit.

The permit is issued for one, two or three months and can be extended repeatedly up to one year upon presentation of documents proving that the migrant worker worked (provided services) for an employing private household in the previous period and paid preliminary income tax for the period of extension of the permit. One employer – physical person is not allowed to sign work (provision of services) contracts with more than five labour immigrants simultaneously (Articles 43-1 and 43-2 of the Law).

It should be noted that opportunities for independent employment and inclusion of migrant workers into the domestic labour market do not always go along with the creation of facilities that could provide them with qualified legal assistance and access to justice. However, these problems do not arise out of legal (legislative) discrimination against them as foreign citizens but rather represent shortcomings of legal practice.

Article 12 of the Constitution of the RK, having supreme legal force and direct effect, stipulates that:

“Foreigners and stateless people in the Republic shall enjoy rights and freedoms as well as bear responsibilities, established for the citizens, unless otherwise stipulated by the Constitution, laws and international treaties”.³¹

Moreover, pursuant to Article 18 of the Law of the RK “On Legal Status of Foreigners”³², foreign citizens enjoy in courts of law the same procedural rights as Kazakh citizens, except in cases provided by the international agreements to which the Republic of Kazakhstan is party. Further, Article 472 of the Civil Procedure Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan (CPC RK)³³ states that foreign citizens enjoy procedural rights and bear procedural responsibilities on an equal basis with citizens and organizations of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This said, Article 112 of the CPC RK, Article 3 of the Law of the RK “On State-Guaranteed Legal Assistance”³⁴ and Article 6 of the Law of the RK “On Advocacy”³⁵ specify cases for the provision of free legal assistance to citizens. It follows from the above legal norms that such assistance should be made available to foreign citizens, including migrant workers.³⁶

30 Law of the RK of 10 December 2013. <http://adilet.zan.kz/rus/docs/Z1300000153#z65>

31 http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=1005029

32 http://online.zakon.kz/document/?doc_id=1003764

33 http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=1013921

34 http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=31414229

35 http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=1008408#pos=1;-217

36 Interviews with representatives of the Sana Sezim Legal Center in Shymkent.

In practice foreign migrant workers can experience serious difficulties when seeking legal aid or in the course of court proceedings with their participation when they need to get their documents, issued by competent authorities of their countries, recognised or translated into the language of proceedings or use services of an interpreter (if they do not speak Kazakh or Russian language).³⁷

Latest developments in migration legislation

The growing influx of migrant workers to the Republic of Kazakhstan from the CIS countries as well as from other countries requires further improvement of legal acts and regulations on labour migration, organization of migration control and protection of rights of migrant workers (see Table 3.6).

Table 3.6. Changes in migration legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2015–2016

<p>27 October 2015: Law of the RK “On Introduction of Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan regarding its Membership in the World Trade Organization” Important innovations: Introduction of the intra-corporate transfer mechanism</p>
<p>24 November 2015: Law of the RK “On Introduction of Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Migration and Employment of the Population”³⁸ Important innovations: Introduction of the procedure for issuing a “Qualification compliance certificate for individuals independently applying for jobs”</p>
<p>6 April 2016: Regulations on setting quotas for hiring of foreign workers in the Republic of Kazakhstan and its distribution between the regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan³⁹ Important innovations: Introduction of “a quota for hiring of labour immigrants”</p>
<p>13 June 2016: Regulations on issuing foreign citizens or stateless persons with a qualification compliance certificate for individuals independently applying for jobs Important innovations: Introduction of a list of documents required to receive this certificate⁴⁰</p>

Source: IOM assessment team analysis

Therefore, migration legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan remains “protective” and mainly stimulates and facilitates the recruitment of highly qualified workforce. Changes to the Regulations on setting quotas for hiring of foreign workers in the Republic of Kazakhstan and its distribution between the regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan leave some possibility of independent employment for foreign immigrants who work for individuals in private households as introduced by the law on 10 December 2013. But nowadays, in order to prevent misuse of work permits paragraph 14 of the new Regulations introduces “a quota for recruitment of labour immigrants that is set on the basis of the demand for labour immigrants from individuals to undertake labour activity (working/providing services) in private households for the following year”. The demand for labour immigrants required by individuals to undertake work (provide services) in private households for the following year is determined by local authorities together with regional departments of internal affairs by 10 August taking into consideration the assessment of efficiency of recruiting labour immigrants in the previous year and demand forecasts for the following year (item 15 of new Regulations).

According to the Committee of Labour, Social Development and Migration of the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the RK, this measure is appropriate because before there were no mechanisms available to check where labour immigrants were actually working once they obtained the work permit and whether the actual use of

37 Article 475 of CPC RK. http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=1013921

38 http://online.zakon.kz/document/?doc_id=34580003#pos=288;-58

39 New rules are introduced pursuant to Article 37 paragraph 1 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 22 July 2011 “On Migration of the Population” and Article 6 paragraph 2, Article 32 paragraph 3 and Article 33 paragraph 2 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 6 April 2016 “On Employment of the Population”

40 <http://www.zakon.kz/4821441-v-rk-utverzhdny-pravila-vydachi.html>

their labour matches the intended use specified in the application for the permit.⁴¹ Also, the new Regulations allow foreign workers to independently apply for jobs with legal entities if they intend to work in professions included in a special list compiled by the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the RK. Nowadays, these workers are required to obtain a special certificate from competent authorities confirming their qualification and eligibility for employment in any region of Kazakhstan within three months.

At the meeting of the Security Council of the RK on 10 June 2016, President Nursultan Nazarbayev highlighted that “the Government should intensify work on development of an integrated migration control system, based on modern technology solutions, and to start work on drafting a law on dactyloscopic (fingerprint) registration. Prior to that, the existing mechanisms of population registration need to be enforced... The Government should speed up work on setting up the National Bureau for Migration at the Ministry of Internal Affairs that will be in charge of monitoring, regulation and analysis of migration processes”.⁴²

Combating exploitation, fraud and human trafficking

Human trafficking is one of the serious challenges of modern society that can take the form of sexual exploitation, forced labour, including child labour, or domestic slavery. Given such versatility of the modern slave trade it should be noted that its very existence threatens vital personal, national and state interests. Migrant workers involuntarily returning from the RF and finding themselves in the RK, including those with re-entry bans to the RF for several years, thereby fall in the risk group of becoming victims of different forms of forced exploitation.

In October 2012 the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RK and IOM signed a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in counter-trafficking. By its Resolution No. 1347 of 24 October 2012 the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan introduced the Action Plan to Combat and Prevent Human Trafficking Crimes for 2012–2014. It was extended with a new Action Plan for 2015–2017 submitted in accordance with Government Resolution No. 23 of 28 January 2015.⁴³ As part of its implementation, on 29–30 April 2016 the Ministry of Internal Affairs with support of the US Embassy and OSCE Bureau in Astana held a national seminar in Karaganda on exchange of best practices in countering human trafficking. The event brought together heads of organized crime units at the Departments of Internal Affairs in the regions and the cities of Astana and Almaty and foreign experts from Italy and Ukraine as well as delegates from international and non-governmental organizations.

1,328 incidents of human trafficking were detected between 2004 and 2015, with 163 cases identified in 2015, which is higher than in 2014 (161) and in 2013 (100).⁴⁴ The majority of victims of trafficking were citizens of Kazakhstan (45% of the total number over the 10 year period), Uzbekistan (44%) and Kyrgyzstan (4.7%). In the last two years the proportion of Kazakh nationals among newly identified victims of trafficking reduced to 31% but increased to 58% for Uzbek nationals. 56% of victims of trafficking were women and 44% were men. The most common forms of exploitation are forced labour (52%) and sexual exploitation (48%).

Most of victims of trafficking were referred to the IOM assistance programmes with support from law enforcement agencies (38%) and non-governmental organizations (23%), with some victims of trafficking getting in touch with non-governmental organizations with help from law enforcement agencies.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RK and non-governmental organizations have gained extensive experience in detecting human trafficking cases and providing help to victims. For instance, the police engage non-governmental organizations to arrange accommodation for victims of trafficking and facilitate their social adaptation.⁴⁵

Over the period between 2004 and 2015, in total 3,332 cases were instigated on criminal charges under various human trafficking articles; namely 345 proceedings were started in 2015 and 17 individuals were convicted and given sentences ranging between one and seven years imprisonment.

41 Interview at the Committee of Labour, Social Development and Migration of the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the RK on 24 June 2016.

42 http://www.akorda.kz/ru/events/akorda_news/zasedanie-soveta-bezopasnosti-pod-predsedatelstvom-glavy-gosudarstva-4

43 http://kodeksy-kz.com/norm_akt/source-Правительство /type-Постановление /23-28.01.2015.htm

44 Data provided by the IOM Office in Astana.

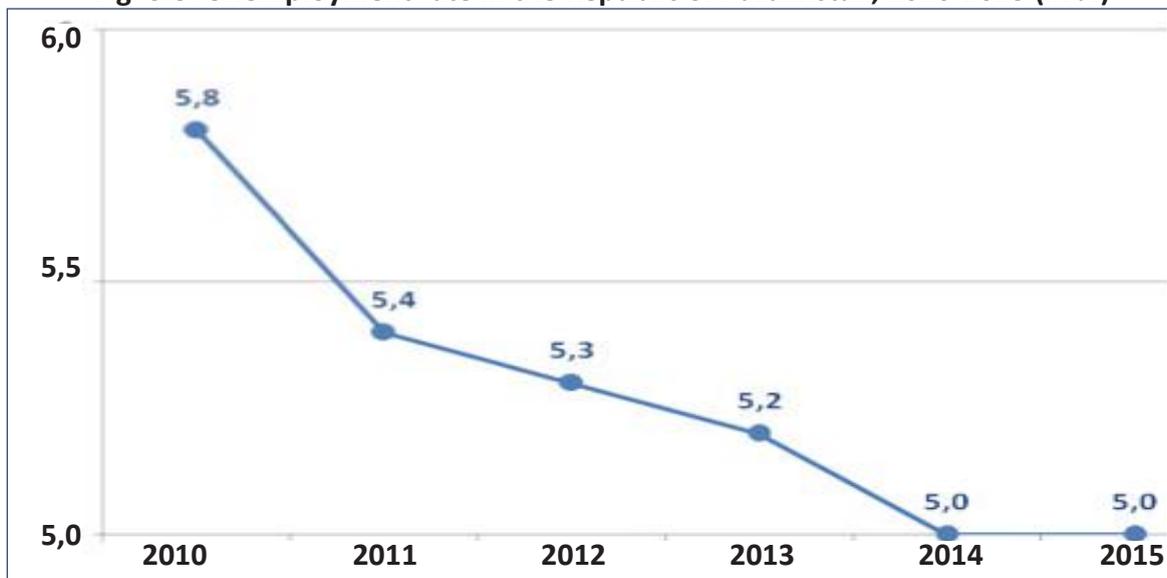
45 Interview with a victim of trafficking in the Sana Sezim Legal Center, Shymkent, on 1 June 2016.

3.1.4. Existing measures facilitating migrants' access to the labour market and integration

Migrant workers in the labour market of Kazakhstan

Over the last five years the unemployment reduction rate in Kazakhstan has significantly decreased and was accompanied by a worsening situation in the domestic labour market and shortage of newly created jobs (see Fig. 3.8).

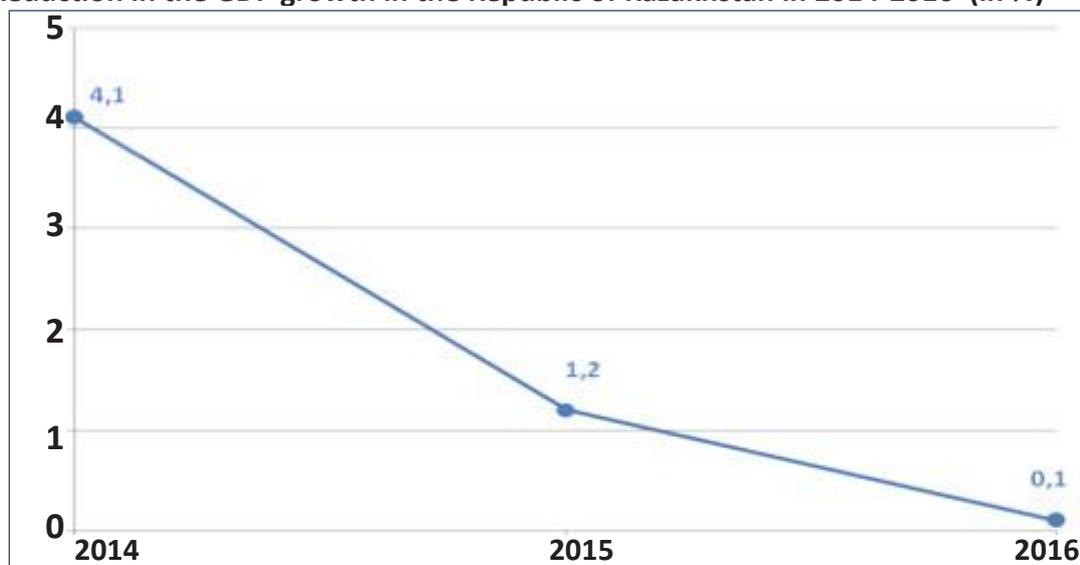
Fig. 3.8. Unemployment rate in the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2010-2015 (in %)



Source: Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The World Bank calculations show a slowdown in the growth of gross national product in the last three years in Kazakhstan, which also suggests that production of goods and services has been falling and, in consequence, the labour market has been shrinking (see Fig. 3.9).

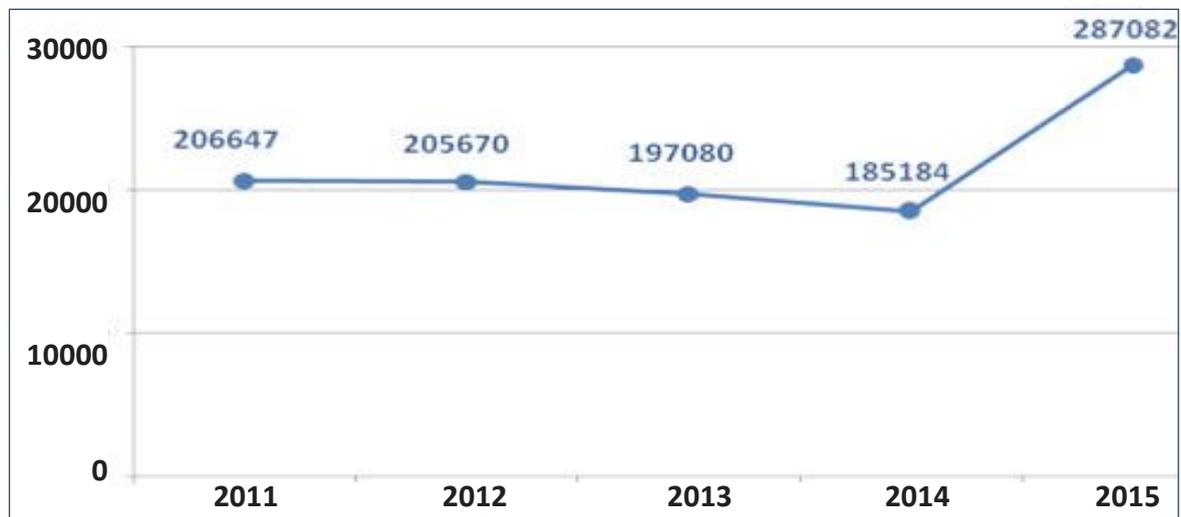
Fig. 3.9. Reduction in the GDP growth in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2014-2016 (in %)



Source: World Bank estimates⁴⁶

At the same time, according to data provided by the Employment Information and Analysis Center at the Committee of Labour, Social Development and Migration of the Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the RK, the number of vacancies submitted to job centres by employers has risen significantly in 2015 after a continuous fall in 2011–2014 (see Fig. 3.10).

Fig. 3.10. Number of vacancies submitted by employers to job centres in Kazakhstan, 2011-2015 (excluding social jobs and youth internships)



Source: Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Employment Information and Analysis Center, 27 May 2016

Despite persisting unemployment (444 000 people in 2015) among citizens of Kazakhstan, tens of thousands of migrant workers from Central Asia found jobs in the Kazakh labour market. According to the National Bank of Kazakhstan, between January 2015 and May 2016, given the changes in the exchange rate of tenge to US dollar, the volume of remittances to Uzbekistan increased more than two-fold in tenge (from 1.9 billion to 5.1 billion) and by 1.5 times in US dollars (from 10.2 million to 15.4 million) in August 2015.⁴⁷ Remittances to Tajikistan grew a little in tenge (from 485 million to 519 million) but reduced significantly in US dollars (2.6 million to 1.5 million).⁴⁸ As for Kyrgyzstan, the amount of money transfers dropped in tenge (from 2.1 billion to 1.4 billion) and in US dollars (from 6.1 million to 4.2 million) between December 2015 and May 2016, whereas over the same period transfers increased to two other countries in Central Asia. The same trends can be seen in the analysis of the amount of transactions. Between January 2015 and May 2016 the number of transfers by private individuals to Uzbekistan increased from 25,100 to 35,600 transactions a month, to Tajikistan — from 3,700 to 5,500 transactions a month and reduced in the direction of Kyrgyzstan from 14,100 to 11,100 transactions a month.

This means that the “pull” factors of the Kazakh labour market, discussed above, primarily work for citizens of Uzbekistan, whereas citizens of Kyrgyzstan are still attracted to the Russian labour market, especially after Kyrgyzstan joined the SES, and citizens of Tajikistan are influenced to some extent by the transport remoteness of Kazakhstan.

Furthermore, migrant workers from Central Asian countries do not seem to aggravate the situation in the Kazakh labour market by taking jobs from domestic workers. Therefore, it is possible to achieve relatively smooth integration of those migrants who have work permits.

However, it should be borne in mind that out of 945,000 citizens of other Central Asian countries registered in Kazakhstan in 2015, only 180,000 (including foreign workers from all countries, not just from Central Asia) were

47 <http://www.nationalbank.kz/?docid=1191&switch=russian>

48 For trends in the previous period see: Алпысбаева С.Н., Абылкасымова М.Е., Калимова Д.М. Объем трудовой миграции в Республике Казахстан [S. Alpysbayeva, M. Abylkasymova, D. Kalimova. Volume of labour migration in the Republic of Kazakhstan]. *Ekonomicheskiy Portal*. <http://institutiones.com/general/2750-obem-trudovoi-migracii-v-kazaxstane.html>

working legally. Even assuming that not all nationals of the countries of Central Asia entered Kazakhstan for the purpose of employment, the discrepancy is too great. Irregularity of labour relations leads to the breaches of legislation of the RK (see Tables 3.7 and 3.8).

Table 3.7. Number of citizens of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan prosecuted in the Republic of Kazakhstan for administrative offences, 2011-2015

Registered	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Kyrgyzstan	12,991	6,049	5,128	3,960	5,028
Tajikistan	2,644	1,515	1,490	1,345	2,577
Uzbekistan	82,532	58,541	68,632	59,061	70,846
Total	98,167	66,105	75,250	64,366	78,451

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan

Table 3.8. Number of citizens of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan expelled from the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2011-2015

Registered	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Kyrgyzstan	833	136	127	113	545
Tajikistan	208	47	28	42	407
Uzbekistan	10,677	1,989	2,557	1,946	7,789
Total	11,718	2,172	2,712	2,101	8,741

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The number of offences has been growing over the last four years, and these are serious violations that resulted in expulsion from Kazakhstan and a 5-year re-entry ban.

Under such circumstances, there is a need for a more efficient use of the existing legal and institutional potential and introduction of new measures to provide access to the labour market for migrant workers. This will ensure that migrant workers remain within the law, subject to control from the society and competent authorities in terms of detecting potential security threats. In addition, foreign workers who enter into legal relations in Kazakhstan will be entitled to relevant legal guarantees as to working and living conditions, social and medical provision, legal assistance, etc.

Existing opportunities for the integration of migrant workers

At present, there are three predominant models of migrant integration used in the global community:⁴⁹

- assimilation model that implies complete dissolution of migrants (in social, cultural and religious aspects) into the receiving society;
- rotation model based on migrants working in the receiving country for a limited time and having limited contact with local population and then replaced with a new group of migrants;
- model of ethnic and cultural diversity (multiculturalism) defined by settlement of immigrants in the areas which they move to with preservation of their traditions, rites and other cultural norms brought from the society they lived in previously. Immigrants interact with the local population and accept the laws of the receiving society. This model also emphasises the importance of regulation and monitoring of migration flows, introduction of selection mechanisms and measures for immigrants' integration.

Let us review these models as applied to the integration of migrant workers in Kazakhstan.

49 OSCE, IOM, ILO. Handbook on Establishing Effective Labour Migration Policies in Countries of Origin and Destination. http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/osce_iom_ilo_handbook_ru.pdf; V. Ledenyova. Social adaptation and integration models of migrant workers [В.Ю. Леденёва Модели социальной адаптации и интеграции трудовых мигрантов]. Monograph. Moscow, 2014

Opportunities provided in legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan

The analysis of practical application of Kazakh migration legislation reveals a number of provisions that create obstacles for employment of migrants who recently arrived in the RK and are not able to continue work in the RF. Most significant of them is the requirement for migrants to obtain registration and a work permit and to sign a work contract — all this within five days of entry into the country. This deadline is sufficient to complete all the necessary procedures only for a migrant who has a specific intention to join the Kazakh labour market: he/she has an agreement with a potential employer, and is in possession of all the required documents (including medical insurance) and the necessary sum of money to pay preliminary income tax (Article 43-2 of the Law “On Migration of the Population”).

In the case of a stranded migrant, all these conditions (knowledge about required documents, potential employer and procedures to obtain a work permit, availability of all required documents and funds to pay the preliminary income tax and buy medical insurance) can become an insurmountable barrier for this group of migrant workers. Some experts propose to give this category of low-skilled workers an opportunity to find temporary jobs on simplified terms (for example, without a requirement to produce a qualification compliance certificate) in order to prevent these migrant workers from slipping into shadow employment. Experts also suggest that additional measures could be introduced to explain to employers, especially to private individuals hiring domestic workers, all the aspects of the new procedure for recruitment of migrant workers by private households. As a possibility, departments of internal affairs together with non-governmental organizations could run joint targeted information campaigns. Many employers still believe that these procedures are too complicated and burdensome, so they prefer to avoid them. This practice may result in reduction of quota for this category of foreign workers in the coming years because from 2017 this quota will be set based on the number of work permits issued the previous year.

*Opportunities for the integration of migrant workers in the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union*⁵⁰. As mentioned before, three articles of this Treaty cover the issues of labour migration in the Member States. In Kazakhstan they apply to the citizens of Kyrgyzstan and Russia as well as of Armenia and Belarus. Pursuant to Article 97 of the Treaty, the legal status of foreign migrant workers (workers of the Member States in terminology of the Treaty) is almost identical to that of citizens of Kazakhstan in relation to employment, occupation and place of residence opportunities: they “shall not be required to obtain employment permits, except for the restrictions determined by this Treaty and the legislation of the Member States aimed at ensuring their national security (including in economic sectors of strategic importance) and public order”. In addition, “nationals of the Member States entering the territory of another Member State for employment and their family members shall be exempt from the obligation to register within 30 days from the date of entry”. And then, “in the event of early termination of an employment contract or a civil law contract after the expiry of 90 days from the date of entry into the territory of the state of employment, the worker of a Member State shall be entitled, without departure from the territory of the state of employment, to enter into a new employment contract or a civil law contract within 15 days”. Pursuant to Article 98 of the Treaty, workers of Member States are entitled to social security (social insurance) but pensions “shall be governed by the legislation of the state of permanent residence, as well as by an international treaty between the Member States”. Only “emergency and urgent medical care” is available to workers of Member States, and other types of medical treatment should be paid from their own means. Children of workers of Member States are entitled “to attend pre-school institutions and receive education in accordance with the legislation of the state of employment”.

Thus, this Treaty helps to avoid most of the sources of vulnerability that foreign migrant workers encounter when on arrival to Kazakhstan after they were deprived of work opportunities in Russia or found themselves stranded against their will in Kazakhstan because they cannot enter the RF: they have enough time (30 days) to find work and they do not need a work permit.

Possible use of experience of the Republic of Kazakhstan in attracting repatriates-oralmans to the labour market and regional redistribution of the domestic workforce

Article 3 of the Law of the RK “On Migration of the Population”⁵¹ stipulates measures for the integration of foreign nationals, such as repatriates-oralmans, into the contemporary Kazakh society. Kazakhstani experience of providing free adaptation and integration services through specialized Adaptation and Integration Centres for Oralman in every region of Kazakhstan can be also used for integration of foreign migrant workers. The whole range of these services includes free accommodation, Kazakh and Russian language lessons, legal and social assistance, etc., but the most important for the working-age population is help with employment, professional training, retraining and updating skills. The Road Map to Employment–2020 Programme⁵² launched by Decision No. 162 of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on 31 March 2015 envisages the inclusion of oralman in its activities. The Programme is being implemented in the following fields: 1) training and assistance with employment and resettlement taking into account real demands of the employers; 2) encouragement of entrepreneurial initiative and comprehensive development of pilot villages; 3) training and assistance with employment and resettlement taking into account real demands of the employers.

Table 3.9. shows the performance of the Programme in the first two years.

Table 3.9. Results of the Road Map to Employment–2020 Programme in the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2015–2016

	2015	Jan–June 2016
Submitted applications	136,009	82,325
Became participants	136,009	81,990
Found employment, including	155,746	79,897
in permanent jobs	142,264	54,305
in infrastructure projects	4,490	5,343
in social jobs	10,431	11,904
in youth internships	10,276	9,695
Received microloan	4,385	2,924
Underwent professional training	13,323	2,058
Employed after training	10,422	1,414
Resettled	1,020	489
including those of working age	506	360

Source: Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan⁵³

The Programme’s main feature is its adaptability to the demands and abilities of different categories of the population who have varying levels of professional training, personal expectations, willingness to retrain and to move to a new place of residence and work. That is why the practical experience of this Programme can be of interest for purposes of the integration of migrant workers.

For example, in the Mangistau Region the Adaptation and Integration Centre for Oralman was partially restructured and is now located within walking distance from the job centre and the Entrepreneur Service Centre (ESC). “So now entrepreneurs learn at the ESC how to obtain a loan, how to use a road map, etc., and if they need staff and require them to be trained — right there and then there is the job centre.”⁵⁴ The regional employment promotion programme has also been developed for the Mangistau Region. The state institution Kayrat Centre was specifically set up to address the needs of employers. Unlike job centres, the Kayrat Centre can work with employers on a one-

51 http://online.zakon.kz/document/?doc_id=31038298#pos=642;-237

52 <http://dkz.mzsr.gov.kz/ru/node/8>

53 <http://dkz.mzsr.gov.kz/ru/report-by-period/5>

54 Interview at the Mangistau Regional Department of Coordination for Employment and Social Programmes, Aktau, 12 April 2016.

to-one basis and notify them of new vacancies. A new regulatory framework providing a wider range of instruments for attracting potential workers and employers was put in place specifically for the Centre's activity. It recognises specifics of the region, for instance, higher cost of living, whereas model rules were developed nationally and cannot account for such details. For example, it is possible to train qualified personnel for employers not only in Kazakhstan but abroad as well where there is the required expertise or, alternatively, invite professionals from other countries to provide training on site.⁵⁵ This is especially important for integration purposes: in Aktau they put emphasis on the fact that oralmans integrate better if they take part in national programmes. In 2016 alone, nine oralman families were resettled from the Adaptation and Integration Centre for Oralman to the neighbouring district with shortages of labour and heads of those families went straight to work. In total 105 people have already been employed in 2016 and 52 people sent into training on request from employers.⁵⁶ As a result, the Mangistau Region has the lowest number of employees in non-productive jobs (3,000) and unemployed (14,000) among all regions of Kazakhstan and the widest coverage (34%) of self-employed and unemployed population by active employment measures.⁵⁷

The Department of Coordination for Employment and Social Programmes in the North Kazakhstan Region signed a Memorandum of Understanding with local businesspeople who submitted a request for 751 families from the South Kazakhstan Region and guaranteed to provide them with accommodation. In 2016, 355 families in the South Kazakhstan Region indicated their willingness to move, 20 of them are oralmans. Eleven families already moved in winter 2016 and were housed.⁵⁸ Besides, the North Kazakhstan Region is implementing the Zhana Serpin 2050 Programme⁵⁹ designed to train young people from southern regions (Almaty, South Kazakhstan, Jambyl, Kyzyl-Orda, Mangistau), where there is an excess of workforce, and then find jobs for them in the east, north and west of Kazakhstan – regions with shortages of labour. 600 students from southern parts of Kazakhstan study at the Manash Kozybayev North Kazakhstan State University; they are looked after by the student government and the vice-rector for student affairs. After graduation assistance with employment will be provided to anyone who needs it.⁶⁰

As it stands, the experience in attracting, retraining and regional redistribution of workforce in different regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan can be used for integration of foreign migrant workers in the receiving countries and for reintegration of returned migrants in the donor countries. This was demonstrated by the practice of attracting foreign nationals (oralmans) who were also not adapted to the labour market and socio-cultural context in different regions of Kazakhstan. In the second example, the focus is on internal migrants who do not have social networks in the new place of employment either. These functions are taken on by the targeted state programmes that not only create new jobs but also put in place mechanisms for social and cultural integration into the local community, namely provision of information on socio-cultural environment of the region, legal consultations and participation in social and recreational activities.

Opportunities for integration with support from non-governmental organizations

The issues of migrant workers' integration into local labour markets and communities have been for many years a focus of attention for local authorities, Kazakh non-governmental organizations and international organizations. For instance, the Strategy for Social Integration of Migrant Workers in the Receiving Community in South Kazakhstan Region was developed in 2012 on the basis of a study conducted in Almaty and the South Kazakhstan Region in 2010 as part of the Central Asian Regional Migration Programme implemented by the IOM, UN Women and World Bank with support of the British Government (UKAID). The Strategy is the result of collaboration between state authorities (with active participation from staff of the Akimat of the South Kazakhstan Region, regional Department of Coordination for Employment and Social Programmes, South Kazakhstan Migration Police Division), non-governmental organizations (the working group for the preparation of the strategy included representatives from the Civil Alliance of the South Kazakhstan Region and Sana-Sezim Legal Center for Women's Initiatives, heads of the regional Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Tajik ethno-cultural centres, leader of the Regional Trade Union Council) and UN

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

57 <http://dkz.mzsr.gov.kz/ru/report-by-period/5>

58 Interview at the North Kazakhstan Regional Department of Coordination for Employment and Social Programmes, 15 April 2016.

59 <http://serpin-2050.kz/>

60 Interview at the Manash Kozybayev North Kazakhstan State University, 14 June 2016.

Women and MOM experts. This proves that the importance of measures aimed at strengthening internal unity and integration of all categories of the population in the region is recognised at different social levels.

The main goals of the Strategy in terms of employment are:

- to enhance inter-regional cooperation in the field of migration, including signing of the agreement for temporary labour migration with regions that have a surplus of labour resources;
- to develop infrastructure for labour migration regulation, including promotion of recruitment centres that can ensure legal employment of migrant workers;
- to set up migration job centres and vacancy fairs;
- to set up a network of legal assistance offices for migrants to get advice on matters concerning registration, residence permit, citizenship and possible employment and to set up a helpline at the relevant departments of regional and city administration to receive suggestions and complaints.

It is clear that these goals are aimed at addressing issues that most commonly become sources of vulnerabilities for migrant workers and factors that push them into the shadow labour market. For instance, “agreements for temporary labour migration with regions that have a surplus of labour resources” will improve the level of preparedness of potential foreign workers to work in Kazakhstan: they will receive comprehensive information on employment procedures and the required documents. “Establishment of recruitment centres that can ensure legal employment of migrant workers and migration job centres and vacancy fairs” will help the most vulnerable migrant workers (those who lost jobs in Russia and received a re-entry ban) to find employment independently in the shortest time possible.

These initiatives were copied and developed in other parts of Kazakhstan as well. For example, non-governmental organizations in Aktobe, Astana, Petropavlosk, Uralsk and Shymkent in cooperation with the IOM took part in a specialized programme aimed at reducing shadow employment and integrating migrant workers in the legal labour market through pilot schemes of organized recruitment.

In the course of this Programme, non-governmental organizations selected private recruitment agencies with the required level of qualification and responsibility and their employees then attended special training sessions organized by the IOM. After that a contract was signed between the regional NGO and the private recruitment agency and a bilateral agreement between the private recruitment agency and the Centre for Employment of the Kyrgyz Citizens Abroad at the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth of Kyrgyzstan and the Employment Agency at the Ministry of Labour of the Republic of Tajikistan.

There have already been examples where an employer found employees in Kyrgyzstan through this scheme who moved to Kazakhstan and now work legally. All expenses for the selection of vacancies and candidates, coordination, travel and employment procedures are paid by the employer or the agency depending on the agreement. Hence, a new scheme for attracting foreign migrant workers to the labour market of Kazakhstan was tried and tested creating additional opportunities to overcome vulnerabilities associated with shadow employment.

It should be noted that this scheme is not always successful in practice primarily because the recruitment agency and the company-employer are commercial organizations that are not necessarily prepared to bear the costs of selection of vacancies or candidates without guarantees of these expenses being repaid.⁶¹ In this case it is important to plan beforehand the mechanisms of reimbursement of inevitable expenses incurred by commercial organizations participating in such projects. Experts suggested setting up projects with the provision for special funds to be set aside for the reimbursement of recruitment expenses for a certain period of time. After that initial period this scheme for recruiting foreign migrant workers could become common practice, a routine operation method for recruitment agencies and for employers; recruitment agencies would see migrants as their clients and would be interested in working with them. It is hoped that later this practice would break even financially and become self-sufficient.

61 Interviews with the staff of the Sana Sezim Legal Center in Shymkent on 18 June 2016 and with the staff of the Women's Support Center NGO in Petropavlovsk on 21 June 2016.

The awareness raising aspect of cooperation with non-governmental organizations in promoting the integration of vulnerable foreign migrant workers into the legal environment in Kazakhstan is equally important. From 1 April 2016 the Dignity and Rights in Central Asia Project has been launched in the North Kazakhstan Region. It is supported by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and is being implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). IOM partner NGOs in 11 cities of Kazakhstan run a targeted information campaign to raise awareness among citizens about human rights law and accessible services for those whose rights are being violated or were violated in the past. It would be reasonable to include in the disseminated information special messages for those migrant workers who are no longer able to work in the RF and are returning to their countries of origin through the border cities (Kostanay, Uralsk, Aktau, Petropavlovsk) or could not enter the RF and are temporarily staying in Kazakhstan. These messages should clarify how migrant workers can receive quick consultation (within several days) on registration with the migration police and how to find legal employment or the possible ways to travel home or how to obtain temporary accommodation for several hours or days before departure.

Based on the review of the labour migration evolution trends in Kazakhstan and the available opportunities for the integration of migrant workers, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- the assimilation model is not applicable to Kazakhstan since the majority of migrants stay in the country only for a few months and do not intend to settle;
- the rotation model is not possible in Kazakhstan as a significant number of migrants remain outside the labour law;
- the most adequate model for Kazakhstan seems to be that of multicultural integration of migrant workers into the labour market and the society as it allows the inclusion of migrants into the single system of legal and social relations still preserving control over migration flows.

3.1.5. Barriers to the full integration of migrants and potential opportunities for integration of migrant workers in Kazakhstan

Overview of barriers

The main barriers to successful integration of foreign nationals into the labour market in the Republic of Kazakhstan are as follows:

Legal barriers: the Republic of Kazakhstan should continue the process of ratification of ILO conventions. International labour standards will only play an increasingly greater role in determining the legal status of migrant workers, in defending their labour rights and interests in courts and other state authorities, in conflicts with employers, in development and application of labour law. The regulatory framework for foreign labour and employment of migrants in a specific niche of the labour market (low-skilled labour) is still poorly defined. Some of the international ILO conventions are still not ratified: Conventions C97 (Migration for Employment), C143 (Migrant Workers) and other 165, so called technical, conventions.⁶² One of them, Convention C189 (Domestic Workers), in its Article 15 “determines the conditions governing the operation of private employment agencies recruiting or placing domestic workers, in accordance with national laws, regulations and practice”.⁶³ At the moment, the role of private employment agencies in recruiting migrant workers is not significant and the majority of migrants find work through social networks or illegal intermediaries which results in growing numbers of labour law violations and puts migrants at greater vulnerability risk.

The national legislation contains quite a number of ambiguous provisions, some legal norms are only declarations without specific legal framework in the field of labour migration. For example, as previously stated, Article 112 of the CPC RK, Article 3 of the Law of the RK “On State-Guaranteed Legal Assistance” and Article 6 of the Law of the RK “On Advocacy” do not stipulate that free legal assistance is to be provided to migrant workers in Kazakhstan in

62 http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11210:0::NO:11210:P11210_COUNTRY_ID:103542

63 <http://docs.cntd.ru/document/499081862>

contradiction to the norms of international law. As a result, migrant workers have limited access to justice: only 10% of surveyed migrants in the South Kazakhstan Region sought legal assistance and the mere 0.1% of all cases involving migrant workers are appealed to the higher court.⁶⁴

Administrative barriers: excessively bureaucratic procedures for the employment of foreign workers, involving many institutions, reduce the efficiency of the labour market and even produce a negative impact on it forcing some migrants and employers to go into shadow economy. According to the Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Chapter 21 “State control over observance of the labour legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan”⁶⁵ and the Entrepreneurial Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Chapter 13 “State control and supervision”⁶⁶, before state labour inspectors are given access to the places where small businesses and individuals make use of migrant workers’ labour, the act of inspection assignment must be registered with the competent body (Committee for legal statistics and special accounts of the Prosecutor General’s Office of the RK and its regional subdivisions). Unscheduled inspections can be performed in response to “applications from employees on the subject of violation of their rights”. It is not realistic to expect that foreign workers will be informed well enough about the procedures and prepared to initiate such inspections. As a result, the Labour Inspection is not able to check conditions of migrants’ employment in an efficient manner: token work contracts that do not stipulate the responsibilities of the parties and have no provision for paid sick leave are common; employers do not provide employees with medical insurance, etc.

Socio-cultural barriers: they arise from lack of mutual trust or alienation of migrants in the receiving society. Indeed, such barriers do exist in Kazakhstan because a significant number of migrants integrate in the country not through publicly accessible institutions but via their own local support networks. However, these barriers are not insurmountable as evidenced by rather low level of mutual conflicts and violence. In 2015 only 0.7% of ordinary crimes (2,720 out of 386,718) were committed by citizens of the CIS countries, most of whom are from Central Asia. There were even less crimes perpetrated against CIS citizens (1,789).⁶⁷

For easy assessment of the migrant integration model, applied in the country, it seems reasonable to introduce a set of vulnerability indicators, with each one of them reflecting possibility/impossibility for a migrant to be covered by the system of integration services provided by state and public organizations. Some of these indicators would have identical significance throughout the country, for example, whether it is possible/impossible to use employment services or social and medical assistance provided by state, private commercial and non-governmental organizations. Other indicators may be more specific to a region, for example, whether it is possible/impossible to return home quickly in case of job loss, to use the support of the existing local diaspora organizations or to find employment depending on the most commonly offered vacancies on the local labour market, etc.

The analysis of the most typical situations using the above indicators demonstrates that there are two most vulnerable categories of foreign nationals:

- migrant workers who arrived in Kazakhstan for the first time since 2013; they became susceptible to vulnerabilities due to the changes introduced into migration legislation of the RF and subsequent imposition of re-entry bans to the RF;
- migrant workers who were travelling in transit through Kazakhstan to work in the RF and found themselves stranded in Kazakhstan because at the Russian border passport control they discovered that they were banned from entering the RF and they were not able to leave Kazakhstan within five days or find legal employment in the country.

64 Interviews with representatives of the Sana Sezim Legal Center in Shymkent.

65 http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=38910832

66 http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=38259854#pos=178;-208

67 www.pravstat.kz

The sources of their vulnerability are associated, first, with the lack of information about the available providers of integration services, second, with insufficient accessibility of these services and, third, with a very short deadline set to find legal employment.

Therefore, all the integration resources should be channelled towards minimising the impact of those factors.

Proven instruments and good practice

To address the aforementioned needs some instruments have been developed that could give vulnerable migrant workers an opportunity to know as early as possible what actions to take if they find themselves in Kazakhstan because they lost their job in the RF or cannot enter the RF from Kazakhstan.

Some elements of these instruments have already been tested in practice through joint efforts of some regional non-governmental organizations, border control service and migration police. For instance, in the North Kazakhstan Region the Women's Support Center put information stands, as part of a joint project with the IOM, right at the crossing points of the Kazakh-Russian border used by foreign migrant workers on their way to the RF.⁶⁸ Similar practice was used in the South Kazakhstan Region at the Kazakh-Uzbek border.⁶⁹ The application of this practice of informing migrants needs to be expanded and diversified through the distribution of leaflets in several languages directly at checkpoints before the border crossing, on trains and in airports.

A clearly defined mechanism for quick referral of vulnerable foreign migrant workers to organizations that can help them seems to be equally important. As experience shows, such organizations often happen to be ethnic diasporas of the countries of origin — migrant workers get in touch with them as they do not know about the existing organizations that specialize in providing services for them. Such cases were reported in the South Kazakhstan and North Kazakhstan Regions.⁷⁰ In particular, the head of the Tajik ethno-cultural centre in the North Kazakhstan Region reported that only in the first six months of 2016 almost 50 citizens of Tajikistan who were refused entry to the RF contacted members of the Tajik diaspora in Petropavlovsk. The diaspora sent most of these migrants to their homeland providing them with the necessary funds, and some migrants who had professions in demand in Petropavlovsk were legally employed. Tajik citizens also reach out to the diaspora after they tried to find jobs independently with the help of intermediaries and were cheated by dishonest employers.

In fact, in some cases officers of the migration police advised migrant workers from Tajikistan who were not able to enter the RF because of the re-entry ban to contact the Tajik diaspora in Petropavlovsk and helped them to find members of the diaspora in city markets. This scenario usually happened when it was discovered that the migrant worker did not have money to return home, had no prospects of finding employment and his/her time to get registered in Kazakhstan was almost over.

Therefore, all prerequisites are in place to set up a mechanism to rapidly inform migrant workers, who lost jobs in the RF or are unable to enter the RF, about ways of obtaining assistance with employment and support, including material support for the journey home. It would be possible to find employment if recruitment agencies can be involved in selection of potential employers and, once the contract is signed, would register the migrant, assist with his/her application for the individual tax number, negotiate the conditions of stay, etc. All this would be possible if there was a mechanism for reimbursing agencies or non-governmental organizations for fulfilling those functions. During the conversations with members of the Tajik diaspora it appeared that their organization could perform those functions if their expenses were reimbursed, but at the moment it is quite onerous for them to send home even a few dozens of people at the expense of the diaspora members.

68 Interviews with the staff of the Women's Support Center in Petropavlovsk on 21 June 2016.

69 Interviews with the staff of the Sana Sezim Legal Center in Shymkent on 5 March 2016.

70 Interview with the head of the Tajik ethno-cultural centre in the South Kazakhstan Region, Shymkent on 1 March 2016; interview with the head of the Uzbek ethno-cultural centre in the South Kazakhstan Region, Shymkent on 3 March 2016; interviews with the heads of the Tajik ethno-cultural centre in Petropavlovsk on 14 April and 22 June 2016.

The mechanism of preventing risks and vulnerabilities for migrant workers who cannot continue working in the RF or enter the RF especially in the border regions is of such great importance that there is a need to explore the possibility of its development, including with support from international organizations. At the same time, the Republic of Kazakhstan is also interested in reducing the risk of hundreds of thousands of foreign migrant workers within its borders slipping into shadow employment pushed outside of the law.

The analysis of the existing integration practices and their elements made it possible to classify all the providers of integration services available in Kazakhstan in terms of opportunities that they offer and their accessibility for vulnerable categories of migrants (see Table 3.10).

Table 3.10. Providers of integration services to migrants in Kazakhstan

Providers of integration services	Services	Accessibility
Migration Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of documents • Provision of information on other integration opportunities 	Highly accessible due to its special authority to issue documents to migrants
NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of information on integration opportunities • Legal advice • Mediation between migrants and other providers 	Moderately accessible depending on available special projects run from time to time and means of information (leaflets, stands)
Private Employment Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for vacancies • Mediation between migrants and employers or migration police 	Low degree of accessibility as migrants lack funds to pay for agency's services
Ethnic Diaspora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation of return to homeland • Facilitation of employment through informal channels • Provision of information on integration opportunities 	Highly accessible due to information being disseminated through informal networks and high level of mutual trust

Source: IOM assessment team analysis of interviews with state officials, NGOs and experts, April-June 2016

Migration police is the only state-run organization among the integration providers; migrants have to come in contact with it due to its special authority stipulated in migration legislation.

The least accessible key providers of integration services are the employment agencies: they find employment for migrants and facilitate their registration but do not see them as clients. They become active providers of integration services only in the context of specialized projects that make allowance for reimbursing agencies for vacancy selection. State-run job centres can become the crucial element for employment of migrants with the shortest delay possible as they have a database of vacancies not sought after by Kazakh nationals. Due to their high level of accessibility throughout Kazakhstan, job centres can help not only with searching for available vacancies but also with legal advice. For this to become common practice some specific regulatory framework is required, so at the moment job centres are only provisionally included into possible integration schemes illustrated in Fig. 3.11.

Fig. 3.11. Possible integration schemes for migrant workers with participation of various providers of employment services in Kazakhstan



Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic

1. In this option, migration police officers inform the migrant about the integration opportunities offered by NGOs as part of specialized projects involving international organizations. A migrant seeking legal employment and registration in Kazakhstan will inevitably come into contact with migration police so this option is the most common situation. Migration police can (and sometimes already do) inform the migrant of all integration opportunities not only with support of NGOs but also through seeking help from ethnic diaspora organizations. Interaction with migration police is inevitable in other options too but in Option 1 it occurs at the very first stage. All prerequisites for this scheme are already in place (migration police have the facilities to inform migrants about all opportunities in person and through other means of communication, for example, stands and leaflets in migrant registration offices).
2. Initial interaction is between the migrant and the NGO – integration services provider. This option is possible if information (stands, leaflets) is provided as part of specialized projects in the places of arrival and accumulation of migrants (migration police, bus and railway stations, airports, market places). This contact can also happen even after the completion of the awareness raising campaigns when information about the work of these NGOs is disseminated through informal channels. Interaction between the NGO and the employment agency will be more efficient if the NGO has funds (as part of a specialized project) to pay for the agency's services.

3. In this option, the initial interaction takes place between the migrant and an ethnic diaspora organization or community that is known to the migrant through informal networks outside Kazakhstan, in the country of origin. He/she also relies on compassion of the diaspora members and in most cases they do show this attitude based on the sense of belonging to the same imaginary community of fellow countrymen or compatriots. This contact is especially important if the migrant does not know about the integration activities of NGOs. At the moment, diaspora members try to find employment for migrants through their own channels or to facilitate their prompt return home as they do not have means to pay employment agency fees. Employment of migrants can be facilitated in a more efficient way through specialized projects involving ethnic diasporas working together with employment agencies. This option has a limitation: large and well-known ethnic diaspora organizations are not present in all cities and towns.
4. Involvement of state-run job centres can significantly simplify the existing migrant integration schemes as it will allow the implementation of all integration measures developed in different parts of Kazakhstan: from setting up migration job centres and vacancy fairs to creating a network of legal assistance offices accessible to migrants where they can get advice on matters concerning registration, residence permits, citizenship or employment opportunities.



3.2. KYRGYZSTAN

Introduction

Since the independence of the Kyrgyz Republic (KR), its citizens have been actively involved in international migration. For many of them migration came to be not only a source of income but also a lifestyle to a certain extent. It alters livelihoods of individuals and communities, shaping their behaviour, ways of communication and reasoning. In Kyrgyzstan, migration is one of the key factors of socioeconomic development. However, in recent years socioeconomic problems in the countries of destination as well as restrictive and prohibitive measures taken by Russian authorities against migrants encourage Kyrgyz migrants to return home.

This chapter outlines the main characteristics of migration processes in the Kyrgyz Republic. Particular attention is given to the scale and trends of return migration with cause and effect relationships of this phenomenon explained; issues regarding socioeconomic needs of returned migrants are also discussed.

The chapter comprises five subsections. The first subsection deals with the dynamics of labour migration and the characteristics of return migration in Kyrgyzstan. The second subsection focuses on the main factors influencing the return of migrants. The third subsection investigates the impact of re-entry bans and measures to mitigate the consequences of this sanction. Legal and institutional frameworks facilitating the reintegration of migrants are discussed in the fourth subsection and the fifth subsection addresses the issue of facilitating access of returning migrants to labour markets.

3.2.1. Labour migration: official statistics

Migration balance

In 2015, Kyrgyzstan ranked 194th in the list of countries by net migration (with -5.22 per 1,000 population).⁷¹ Since Kyrgyzstan gained its independence, according to official figures, over 1,357,000 people have changed their permanent place of residence.⁷² As of the end of 2015, over 540 thousand Kyrgyz nationals became citizens of the Russian Federation (RF), some 25 thousand gained citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK).

The migration flows can be characterised by their intensity, level of mobility, direction of migratory flows, composition, migrants' motives to move, legality of their movements, level of their assimilation in the new place and patterns of distribution of migrants throughout the territory of their settlement (in-migration).

According to data provided by state agencies, 3,600 people arrived in Kyrgyzstan in 2015 for permanent residence and 7,800 people left the country, so net migration amounted to -4,200 people (3,900 people arrived and 11,700 left in 2014 so migration outflow was -7,800 people). Therefore, the migration balance reduced almost two-fold. The intensity of outward migration has also fallen from -1.3 per 1000 population in 2014 to -0.7 in 2015. But at the beginning of 2016 net migration went into positive figures to 84,300 people⁷³. A major part of this increase has been return migration that mainly consisted of migrants banned from the RF.

71 Central Intelligence Agency, Net Migration Rate, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2112rank.html#kg> (accessed 23 June 2016).

72 A. Elebaeva. Migration in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan: nature, trends, and types /Central Asia and the Caucasus. 2002, No.6 (24), p.176.

73 National Statistical Committee of the KR. On Migration Situation in the Kergyz Republic in 2015. <http://www.stat.kg/ru/ekonomicheskije-zapiski/>

In 2015, the five largest ethnic groups among emigrants were Russians (43.5%), Kyrgyz (27.5%), Uzbeks (8%), Tatars (3.8%) and Ukrainians (3.5%). Compared to 2014, there are more Russians, Ukrainians and Tatars leaving Kyrgyzstan, whereas the numbers of Kyrgyz and Uzbeks among emigrants have fallen. The intensity of emigration has dropped by a third, from 20 to 13 people per 10,000 population.⁷⁴

In addition, the number of *kayrylmans* is growing year by year. Pursuant to Law No. 175 “On the State Guarantees to the Ethnic Kyrgyz People Returning to their Historic Homeland” adopted on 26 November 2007, the state provides support for immigration of ethnic Kyrgyz who are given the status of *kayrylmans*. Desire to go back to their historic homeland and some other advantages offered by the state encourage ethnic Kyrgyz from other countries to obtain the status of *kayrylman*.

Numbers of registered ethnic Kyrgyz returning to their historic homeland at the end of 2015 stood at 37,454: of these, 19,791 returned from the Republic of Uzbekistan (RUz), 17,424 from the Republic of Tajikistan (RT), 71 from the People’s Republic of China (China), 36 from the RF and 29 from other countries. Over the 12 months of 2015, 1,483 *kayrylman* certificates were issued: 339 in the Jalal-Abad Region, 331 in the Batken Region, 318 in the Chuy Region, 264 in the city of Bishkek and 121 in the city of Osh. From 1 November 2010 to 1 January 2015 the competent migration authorities issued 8,893 *kayrylman* certificates to ethnic Kyrgyz. 1,483 certificates were issued in 2015, whereas the total number of certificates issued in the first quarter of 2016 amounted to 136.

However, it must be noted that as the state authorities do not have specific instruments to record migratory movements, it is difficult to provide quantitative and qualitative description of migration flows. Incomplete data on migratory movements creates “invisible migrants” and complicates the task of establishing the motives, composition and directions of migration flows. A good example of this is contradictory statistics on returning migrants supplied by state agencies, which will be discussed further on.

Dynamics of labour migration

Labour migration in Kyrgyzstan is a complex process marked not only by large-scale movement of people in search of work but also by serious socioeconomic and political consequences.

According to the Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic compiled in 2015 by the State Migration Service under the Government of the KR⁷⁵, every fourth household (26%) sent abroad at least one migrant worker. The migration flow stabilised at approximately 50,000 migrants a year. Between 1990 and 2015 negative migration balance reached 783,000 people (Table 3.11).

74 National Statistical Committee of the KR, <http://www.stat.kg/ru/ekonomicheskije-zapiski/> (accessed 28 July 2016). Response letter No.03-15/1524 from the State Migration Service of 25 May 2016.

75 National Statistical Committee of the KR. Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic. Bishkek, 2015. https://auca.kg/uploads/Tian%20Shan%20Policy%20Center/TSPC%20Publications/Unified%20Migr%20Report_2014.pdf (accessed 24 June 2016).



Table 3.11. External migration of the population of the Kyrgyz Republic, 1990–2015

Year	Migration inflow, outflow (-)	Year	Migration inflow, outflow (-)	Year	Migration inflow, outflow (-)
1990	-41,913	1999	-9,939	2008	-37,790
1991	-33,757	2000	-22,538	2009	-29,551
1992	-77,453	2001	-26,585	2010	-50,628
1993	-120,604	2002	-27,824	2011	-39,403
1994	-51,093	2003	-16,726	2012	-7,487
1995	-18,934	2004	-19,323	2013	-7,203
1996	-11,674	2005	-26,980	2014	-7,757
1997	-6,739	2006	-31,003	2015	-4,229
1998	-5,452	2007	-50,648	Total	-783,233

Source: National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic. On Migration Situation in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2015, <http://www.stat.kg/ru/ekonomicheskie-zapiski/> (accessed 28 July 2016). Response letter from SMS KR of 25 May 2016 № 03-15/1524

Starting from the 1990s, the main migration flows of Kyrgyz nationals have been heading for the countries of the former USSR, primarily the RF and RK. According to Azamat Usenov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the KR, in total over one million Kyrgyz citizens reside abroad.⁷⁶ However, according to the figures provided by the head of the State Migration Service of the KR, as of the beginning of June 2016, over 750,000 Kyrgyz nationals are working abroad: 563,000 in the RF; 110,000 in the RK; 14,000 in South Korea; 8,000 in Turkey; 30,000 in European countries. Over 95% of migrant workers from the KR are employed in the member-states of EAEU.⁷⁷

According to available studies, the working-age population of the country is actively involved in external migration. This group is the largest among migrants. As a percentage of the total number of emigrants, individuals below working age represent 10%, working age people make up 79% and remaining 11% are above working age.⁷⁸ One of the factors stimulating migration is the growing economically active population of working age.⁷⁹

The results of a sociological study on the structure of the migrating population⁸⁰ conducted in 2013 has shown that the age composition of Kyrgyz migrants is as follows: 16-25 year olds⁸¹ – 44.5%, 26-35 year olds – 31.3%, 36-45 year olds – 17.5%, 46 year olds and over – 6.7%. In terms of gender, 56.5% of migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan are men and 43.5% are women. The majority of respondents are married (55%), although 42% are single young people who moved to Russia with relatives.

The study has also shown that the majority of surveyed migrants (42.9%) have been in labour immigration only once. For 30.8% of respondents this was their second experience of labour migration, 14.2% went abroad to work three times, 4% – four times and 8.1% – five or more times. As for the duration of labour migration, 61.5% of the

76 «Более миллиона граждан Кыргызстана находятся на заработках за рубежом» [“Over a million of citizens of Kyrgyzstan are working abroad”], <http://knews.kg/247178/bolee-milliona-grazhdan-kyrgyzstana-nahodyatsya-na-zarabotkah-za-rubezhom/> (accessed 21 September 2016).

77 Radio Azattyk, «Адылов: Миграция кызматы Орусияда өкүлчүлүгүн ачат», http://www.azattyk.org/a/kyrgyzstan_russia_migrants_bakyt_adylov/27771187.html (accessed 1 June 2016).

78 Римма Чыныбаева. «Демографическая и миграционная ситуация в КР и их прогнозы на ближайшую перспективу» [Rimma Chynybaeva. “Demographic and migration situation in the KR and short-term forecasts”]. 2015. http://www.cisstat.com/CIS_Labourstat/CIS_Labourstat_2_23-2%202015%20Bishkek%20Demographic%20and%20migration%20situation%20in%20Kyrgyzstan%20and%20their%20prognosis.pdf [in Russian] (accessed 28 July 2016).

79 See <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/zanyatost/> (accessed 29 July 2016).

80 М.А. Мамырканов, А.Б. Элебаева, Разработка концепции миграционной стратегии. [M. Mamyrganov, A. Elebaeva. Developing the concept of migration strategy.] National Institute for Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, 2013. https://www.auca.kg/uploads/Migration_Database/Publications/18_migrac_report.pdf [in Russian] (accessed 28 July 2016).

81 The proportion of minors in the total number of migrants is also rather high. According to the data for the start of 2016 provided by the Federal Migration Service of the Russian Federation, 18% or 93,700 migrants were under the age of 16. State Migration Service of the KR. Overview of the migration situation in the Kyrgyz Republic. <http://www.mz.gov.kg/reports/view/2> (accessed 28 July 2016).

respondents stayed there only for one year, 19.8% have been working abroad for two years, 12.5% over three years and 6.3% have been migrants for four years.

Fifty-two percent of Kyrgyz migrants have secondary education, whereas 37% have university degrees, 9% have incomplete higher education and 2% completed secondary vocational training. Based on the 2009 census of Kyrgyz nationals aged 15 and over (3,738,224 individuals), 12.4% of the population have higher education degrees, 57.9% have secondary education, 3.5% are undergraduates and 7% completed secondary vocational training⁸², so one can say that in Kyrgyzstan people with higher, incomplete higher and secondary vocational education more often migrate abroad for work. This means that immigration aspirations are very strong among the most educated categories of the population, which is also a sign of the “brain drain”.

Kyrgyz migrants primarily work in the construction sector (25.8%), trade industry (22.1%), services (12.4%) and catering (9%). Significantly fewer of them are employed in private households (4.6%), manufacturing (3.9%) and clothing (7.7%) industries and in transport and communications (6.2%). Only 4% of respondents are sole entrepreneurs and another 2.8% are in business partnerships, but 12.5% have future plans of opening their own business in Russia.⁸³

For the large proportion of migrants the main source of income is money earned abroad. The vast majority of respondents support their families and provide financial maintenance to their dependants. Of all migrants, 43.9% regularly help their families, 21.5% fully maintain them, another 21.1% do it from time to time and only 11.9% do not have any dependants to provide for. Sending remittances home is by far the highest expense for migrant workers. For instance, 26-50% of respondents send back home up to 38.2% of their savings, 51-75% of respondents send 34.7% of their income and 76-100% transferred home up to 18.8% of earnings.

Therefore, it is the active, young, educated and able to work part of the population that is engaged in migration in Kyrgyzstan. That is why mass return of migrants to the country can lead to serious consequences for the national economy as a whole and for the labour market in particular. Indeed, migrants not only support their families and provide financial maintenance to their dependants but also contribute significantly to the economy. However, it is not possible to say that Kyrgyzstan has developed reliable mechanisms of optimal management and use of remittances for the purposes of investment and business development.

Root causes of labour migration

Changing motives for emigration. During the first years of independence migration to other countries was associated with ethnopolitical and ethnocultural factors⁸⁴, whereas the first decade of this century saw changes in the nature of migration flows and their qualitative composition. Spontaneous and illegal flows of migrant workers from the indigenous ethnic group intensified.⁸⁵ The economic growth in the RF and the RK and high demand for workforce in the RF and the RK were the main pulling factors for Kyrgyz migrants. In the 2000s Kyrgyzstan became one of the suppliers of human resources for these countries.

Internal political problems also played a noticeable role in increasing migration flows causing particular spikes of emigration. Social and political events of March 2005 boosted migration aspirations in the society.⁸⁶ In 2005 the negative migration balance increased by 7,657 people (2004: -19,323; 2005: -26,980; 2006: -31,003). The 2010 political instability and ethnic conflict in the south of Kyrgyzstan also escalated migratory movements. The numbers

82 National Statistical Committee of the KR, <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/obrazovanie/> (accessed 28 July 2016).

83 State Migration Service of the KR. Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic.

84 Эмиль Насритдинов, Миграция в Кыргызстане: взвешивая все за и против [Emil Nasritdinov. Migration in Kyrgyzstan: Balancing All Pros and Cons]. <https://www.academia.edu> [in Russian] (accessed 20 June 2016).

85 НИСИ КР. Разработка концепции миграционной стратегии [National Institute for Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic. Developing the concept of migration strategy]. Bishkek, 2013. P. 19-20. Researcher N. Kumskova distinguishes four main stages of migration processes in the KR. See “External Migration of Kyrgyzstan”, Vestnik KRCU, 2015, Volume 15, No. 8, pp. 109-113.

86 Accession of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Eurasian Economic Union: Impact on Migration. P. 8.

of people leaving the country rose sharply because of ethnic clashes and worsening crime rates.⁸⁷ The negative migration balance increased from 29,551 to 50,628 individuals.

In recent years Kyrgyzstan has seen a more stable social and political environment. Nonetheless, the main economic indicators point to the fact that so far the country does not have favourable conditions that would help to reduce emigration.

The overall rate of unemployment in August 2015 stood at 8% of the economically active population, equivalent to 200,000 people. But according to the data provided by the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic (NSC KR), the number of officially registered unemployed people was as high as 56,703 (2.3% of economically active population).⁸⁸

The negative economic factors include strengthening of the US dollar against the national currency (as of 31 December 2015, the Kyrgyz som lost 28.9% of its value) and high interest rates on business development loans in January-December 2015 (weighted average interest rate of 19.87%).⁸⁹

The average monthly nominal wage in Kyrgyzstan in 2015 was 13,483 som or 197 US dollars⁹⁰, whereas in Russia this indicator was 43,408 roubles or 672.197 US dollars.⁹¹

Factors influencing the decision to emigrate. Experts at the National Institute for Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic identified the following main factors⁹² of labour emigration from Kyrgyzstan:

1. Economic factors. Structural changes in the labour market, unemployment, shadow economy, widespread poverty.
2. Social factors. Lower levels of educational attainment and qualification, spread of the migration culture.
3. Demographic factors. High population growth rates and rising numbers of people of working age in Kyrgyzstan help to compensate for the decline in workforce, depopulation and ageing of the population in Russia.
4. Factors associated with geography and infrastructure and culture and history. Labour migration towards the RF and the RK is facilitated by the knowledge of the Russian language, close cultural and social ties, visa-free regime and the existing infrastructure.

Sociological surveys also confirm the key role of economic and financial motives when people decide to migrate. According to a study conducted by the International Labour Organization, the main reasons why Kyrgyz nationals emigrate are:

1. higher levels of pay in the countries of destination;
2. financial difficulties in the family;
3. no opportunities to find employment at home;
4. shortages of jobs in their professional field.⁹³

87 M. Mamyrganov, A. Elebaeva, p.21.

88 State Migration Service of the KR. Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic.

89 Ministry of Economy of the KR. Information on the results of socioeconomic development of the Kyrgyz Republic in 2015. <http://mineconom.gov.kg/index.php?Itemid=159&lang=ru> (accessed 23 June 2016).

90 National Statistical Committee of the KR. <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/trud-i-zarabotnaya-plata/> (accessed 5 September 2016)

91 Federal State Statistics Service of the RF. http://www.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_main/rosstat/ru/statistics/wages/ (accessed 29 July 2016).

92 Accession of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Eurasian Economic Union: Impact on Migration. Russian International Affairs Council, National Institute for Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic, No. 26/2015, p. 10.

93 HCK KP. <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/trud-i-zarabotnaya-plata/> (accessed 5 September 2016).

Studies conducted by local research organizations⁹⁴ have shown that migrants believe that with the introduction of a visa-free regime with the RF they gained an opportunity to earn income abroad (51.7%). The second important motive is the absence of jobs in their town/village (10.5%). The third most common answer was low wages (9.5%), the fourth – no work in their speciality (7.2%). Another 6.8% were hoping to try themselves in a different field while working away from home.

Over 3/4 of the respondents (78.1%) travelled abroad to work as employees. A small number of surveyed migrants intended to start their own business (12.6%). Staying permanently in the destination country was in the initial plans of 2.7% of migrants.

The State Migration Service of the Kyrgyz Republic (SMS KR) shares the views of the United Nations Population Division that with the growing working-age population in Kyrgyzstan (from 3.5 million in 2015 to projected 4.4-4.5 million by 2030) young people will emigrate to other countries in search of work because the small Kyrgyz economy cannot absorb everyone who enters its labour market.⁹⁵ In addition, socioeconomic problems in the country gradually “rejuvenate” migration. The number of young people joining migration flows immediately after finishing secondary school is rising year upon year.

Return migration trends

Sources of data on the scale of return migration. Shrinking economic potential of Russia as the main country of destination resulted in serious changes in migration flows in recent years. Falling demand for migrants, depreciation of the Russian rouble and amendments to legislation prompted certain changes in migration trends. The issue of return migration is becoming increasingly topical, although it is difficult to assess the numbers of returned migrants in Kyrgyzstan. Not only the State Migration Service of the KR but other state authorities, including the State Border Service of the KR and the State Registration Service, do not keep any record of returning Kyrgyz nationals. At the same time, the Statute of the State Migration Service of Kyrgyzstan⁹⁶ does not specify any tasks assigned to this service pertaining to the reintegration of returning migrants.

Departure of Kyrgyz nationals for permanent residence elsewhere (in the CIS countries) and their entry into the country are not documented. For instance, those citizens of the KR who obtained citizenship of the Russian Federation (the main country of destination for migrants) use their internal Kyrgyz passports on their return to Kyrgyzstan.

The scale of return migration on the basis of available official data. According to the State Migration Service of the KR⁹⁷, in 2015 the negative migration balance not only reduced (in 2014 it was -7,700) but even turned into positive figures to 84,300.

The decrease in the negative net balance can be seen as the first sign of weakening labour emigration flows to Russia. Statistics provided by the State Registration Service of the KR⁹⁸ show that in recent years fewer Kyrgyz nationals were removed from its register as departing from the KR (Table 3.12).⁹⁹

94 M. Mamyrganov, A. Elebaeva. Developing the concept of migration strategy. P. 32-33.

95 State Migration Service of the KR. Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic.

96 Ministry of Justice of the KR, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/98243> (accessed 10 July 2016).

97 Response letter from the State Migration Service of the KR of 25 May 2016 No. 03-15/1524. See also Statistical Yearbook of the Kyrgyz Republic 2010-2014, National Statistical Committee of the KR. <http://www.stat.kg/media/publicationarchive/34570709-3c3f-42b2-b05d-e77935342767.pdf> [in Kyrgyz and Russian] (accessed 28 July 2016).

98 Response letter from the State Migration Service of the KR of 20 May 2016 No. 23-2/2591.

99 As the bilateral agreement between the RF and the KR on simplified procedure of acquiring citizenship of the RF for the Kyrgyz nationals ceased to be in effect since November 2012, the number of citizens of the KR who obtained a Russian passport dropped from 52,000 in 2011 to 8,000 in 2012, their proportion among those who acquired Russian citizenship reducing from 38% to 8%. Olga Chudnovskikh. “On Policy and Trends of Acquiring Citizenship of the Russian Federation over the Period from 1992 to 2013”. *Demokraticeskoye obozrenie*, 2014, No. 3, p.65. https://demreview.hse.ru/data/2015/02/19/1091038781/DemRev_1_3_2014_65-126.pdf [in Russian] (accessed 28 July 2016).

Table 3.12. Registered departures and arrivals in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2011-2015

Citizens of the KR removed from the register as departing from the country		Citizens of the KR arriving in the country (border crossings)	
Year	Number of people	Year	Number of people
2011	47,935	2011	2,561,683
2012	15,733	2012	3,190,209
2013	14,314	2013	3,461,290
2014	13,266	2014	3,533,304
2015	8,427	2015	3,682,489

Source: State Registration Service of the Kyrgyz Republic, State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic

The fact that in 2015, for the first time since independence, the number of Kyrgyz nationals leaving the country was lower than the number of those coming back may be a new indicator of return migration. The State Border Service of the KR has also registered a gradual increase in numbers of people arriving in Kyrgyzstan (Table 3.12).

It should be noted that officials in the state agencies provide contradictory data on the recent migration trends. As was noted above, in 2015 the SMS KR registered an increase in the numbers of returning migrants (positive migration balance with 84,300 people). However, according to the data published on the NSC KR official website, in 2015 migration outflow of the population amounted to -4,200 people.¹⁰⁰ Another document produced by the SMS KR¹⁰¹ states that “as of the start of 2016 there were over 540 thousand citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic in the territory of the Russian Federation (increase by over 20 thousand people) and 113 thousand in the Republic of Kazakhstan (increase by over 28 thousand people)”.

According to the representatives of the State Registration Service of the KR, there is no sign of a significant inflow of former Kyrgyz nationals. Applications for Kyrgyz citizenship are mostly received in small numbers (about 50 a year) from the children of migrants who acquired citizenship of another country¹⁰².

“We do not expect a significant inflow of returning migrants. In any case, the number of our migrants abroad will remain around 500 thousand people in view of the socioeconomic situation in the country.” (Representative of one of the Government agencies of the KR. Interview on 11 April 2016.)

Therefore, based on the controversial data provided by the state authorities it is difficult to monitor the current trends in this area and assess the scale of return migration in Kyrgyzstan.

Nonetheless, according to the SMS KR, the number of banned migrants is growing. At the end of the first quarter of 2016, the number of people who were banned from entering the RF was over 119 thousand.¹⁰³ According to Bakyt Adylov, chief of the State Migration Service of the KR, in six months of 2016, 6,700 Kyrgyz nationals were removed from the “black list”, but another 6,500 migrants from Kyrgyzstan were added to it after they breached Russian migration legislation.¹⁰⁴

100 НСК КР, «Миграционные изменения за истекший год характеризовались снижением основных показателей» [National Statistical Committee of the KR. Migration Changes over the Last Year Characterised by Falling Main Indicators]. <http://www.stat.kg/ru/news/migracionnye-izmeneniya-za-istekshij-god-harakterizovali-snizheniem-osnovnyh-pokazatelej/> (accessed 30 May 2016).

101 Directorate for Migration Affairs of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the RF. Information on foreign citizens staying in the Russian Federation (by country of citizenship, gender and age). https://xn--b1ab2a0a.xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/about/activity/stats/Statistics/Svedeniya_v_otnoshenii_inostrannih_grazhd/item/5850/ (accessed 6 September 2016).

102 According to statistics, after the denunciation of the bilateral agreement between the RF and the KR on simplified procedure of acquiring citizenship of the RF for the Kyrgyz nationals in 2012 there was a sharp drop in the number of Kyrgyz nationals receiving Russian passports. Olga Chudnovskikh. “On Policy and Trends of Acquiring Citizenship of the Russian Federation over the Period from 1992 to 2013.”

103 Response letter from the State Migration Service of the KR of 25 May 2016 No.03-15/1524.

104 «В «черном списке» ФМС России числятся 119 тыс. кыргызстанцев» [“119 thousand of Kyrgyz citizens are on the ‘black list’ of the FMS RF”], <http://kg.akipress.org/news:1325364?from=portal&place=last> (accessed 25 September 2016).

Measuring the impact of emigration on labour markets in the regions of origin of migrants

According to the Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic produced by the SMS KR, since people of working and reproductive age are leaving the country this results in changes in gender, age, ethnic and social structure of the society. The report states that the mass outflow of labour leads to shortages of skilled professionals, depopulation in the regions, uneven regional development, especially in border territories, worsening living conditions in rural areas and in small towns and increase in the number of depressive regions.

State officials are concerned that nowadays emigration creates a serious threat of border areas becoming deserted. The border regions, namely the Jalal-Abad and Osh Regions, have the highest levels of registered unemployed in Kyrgyzstan. The border regions also show the most significant negative migration balance in the country (Table 3.13).

Table 3.13. Inter-regional migration and unemployment in the regions of Kyrgyz Republic

Region	Inter-regional migration of the population in the KR (November 2014–October 2015)			Registered unemployed in the KR by region	
	People arriving	People departing	Migration inflow, outflow (-)	Number of registered unemployed	Percentage of the total number of registered unemployed in KR
Jalal-Abad Region	911	2,478	-1,567	12,438	21.94%
Osh Region	1,672	1,755	-83	11,463	20.22%
City of Bishkek	7,575	2,914	4,661	6,648	11.72%
Batken Region	904	1,655	-751	6,206	10.94%
Naryn Region	1,338	2,703	-1,365	5,590	9.86%
Chuy Region	5,977	3,078	2,899	5,509	9.72%
Issyk-Kul Region	1,022	2,299	-1,277	4,433	7.82%
Talas Region	389	1,311	-922	2,263	3.99%
City of Osh	1,963	3,389	-1,426	2,153	3.80%

Source: State Migration Service of the Kyrgyz Republic. Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic. Bishkek 2015. https://auca.kg/uploads/Tian%20Shan%20Policy%20Center/TSPC%20Publications/Unified%20Migr%20Report_2014.pdf (accessed 24 June 2016)

Apart from the Chuy Region that has been attracting internal migrants since 1990s as a temporary place of stay (before departure abroad), migration to other countries mainly originates from regions with high levels of poverty (Table 3.14).

Table 3.14. External migration of the nationals of the Kyrgyz Republic by region in 2015

Region	Number of						Migration inflow, outflow (-)		
	people arriving			people departing					
	both genders	men	women	both genders	men	women	both genders	men	women
Batken Region	255	129	126	369	150	219	-114	-21	-93
Jalal-Abad Region	292	114	178	540	201	339	-248	-87	-161
Osh Region	277	150	127	655	244	411	-378	-94	-284
Naryn Region	9	1	8	38	11	27	-29	-10	-19
Chuy Region	1,070	490	580	2,396	1,009	1,387	-1,326	-519	-807
Issyk-Kul Region	118	61	57	448	185	263	-330	-124	-206
Talas Region	124	57	67	344	146	198	-220	-89	-131

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic

According to the NSC KR, there is a significant disparity between the regions in gross regional product (GRP) per capita. The highest GRP per capita is in Bishkek (146,800 som) and two regions – the Issyk-Kul Region and the Chuy Region (114,500 som and 58,000 som respectively). The Osh, Batken and Jalal-Abad Regions generate the lowest GRP per capita: 25,300 som, 36,400 som and 36,900 som respectively.¹⁰⁵ This explains why in recent years there has been a sharp population growth in the northern towns and in nearby new housing developments as a result of internal migration. It is possible to predict that migrant workers from abroad will also head for the north of the country rather than to the southern regions that they originally left for other countries. Return migrants will be actively participating in the current internal migration flows by choosing big cities or more socioeconomically developed regions as their final destination in Kyrgyzstan.

It is commonly believed that migration has a positive impact on the domestic labour market in the country of origin through reducing the rates of unemployment and part-time employment. However, the available statistics hardly demonstrate that emigration has eased tensions on the labour market of Kyrgyzstan. According to the official data, the overall unemployment rate in the country has been fluctuating at around 8% for many years (8% in August 2015), while an increase in migration flows and spikes in emigration happened several times during that period.

The number of people officially registered as unemployed remains repeatedly around 2% of the economically active population.¹⁰⁶ There was no significant change in employment levels: in early 2015 there were 2,302,700 people in employment, whereas ten years earlier they were 1,991,200.¹⁰⁷

On the contrary, irregular migration has a negative impact on local labour markets as evidenced by the reduction of available economically active population in the regions. The State Migration Service of the Kyrgyz Republic (SMS KR) has indicated¹⁰⁸ that migration “erodes” the active part of the population from local communities, which also leads to a reduced civic society engagement. In the regions, especially in rural areas, there is a significant drop in the number of NGOs helping to address communities’ problems. About 80% of local farmers-landowners attract seasonal workers from neighbouring countries.

Despite the fact that remittances of migrants account for about 30% of the GDP, there has not been any systematic investment of these funds into the domestic economy that could improve the standards of living and alleviate poverty in the country. Due to a poorly developed financial market (commercial banks in the country offer short-term loans and are not interested in financing manufacturing industry) and growing shadow economy (that represents 60% of the Kyrgyz GDP¹⁰⁹), at present remittances of migrants are not invested in the country’s economy. Initiatives to set up investment funds for migrants have not yet been put in practice. UNDP experts believe that benefits from migrants’ remittances tend to be concentrated in a few key sectors or regions which may be only weakly linked to the rest of the economy, particularly to those sectors and regions in which most poor and vulnerable households generate income and employment.¹¹⁰

At the same time, one should remember that socio-cultural and economic considerations to a great extent also influence migrants’ decisions on how to invest their savings.¹¹¹ According to representatives of business associations, unlike in previous years, not all Kyrgyz migrants in the RF send their money to Kyrgyzstan. Instead, these days they prefer to invest their capital and build their business in Russia.¹¹² This means that people with a stable and growing income already show interest in investing their money in the country where they work or run their business.¹¹³

105 State Migration Service of the KR. Overview of the migration situation in the Kyrgyz Republic.

106 State Migration Service of the KR. *Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic*.

107 State Migration Service of the KR. <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/zanyatost/> (accessed 28 July 2016).

108 State Migration Service of the KR. *Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic*.

109 G. Kalmanbetova. “Shady employment as a development of shady economics”. *Vestnik KRSU*. 2015. Volume 15. No. 8. <http://www.krsu.edu.kg/vestnik/2015/v8/a19.pdf> (accessed 5 September 2016).

110 Eurasian Development Bank and UNDP. *Labour Migration, Remittances, and Human Development in Central Asia*, 2015, p. 64. http://www.eabr.org/r/research/centre/projectsCII/projects_cii/?id_4=48785 (accessed 28 July 2016).

111 Karine Manyonga Kamuleta Lubambu, “The impacts of remittances on developing countries”, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2014/433786/EXPO-DEVE_ET\(2014\)433786_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2014/433786/EXPO-DEVE_ET(2014)433786_EN.pdf) (accessed 5 September 2016).

112 Radio Azattyk, «Орусияда бизнесин түптөгөн мигранттар», http://www.azattyk.org/a/russia_kyrgyzstan_business/27756899.html (accessed 26 May 2016).

113 Eurasian Development Bank. *Labour Migration and Labour Intensive Sectors in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: Possibilities for Human Development in Central Asia*. Saint Petersburg, 2015, p. 73. http://eabr.org/general/upload/CII%20-%20izdania/2015/Report_CA_Labour_Migration_and_Labour_Intensive_Sectors_Full_RUS.pdf (accessed 28 July 2016).

According to the SRS KR, as a result of spontaneous migration the vast majority of new jobs (75-85%) were created in the informal economy. At the same time, high rates of mandatory levies on business and low wages of the population coupled with the lack of trust in state social and pension security systems are conducive to perpetuation of “shadow” and “grey” economy and informal employment.¹¹⁴

The average monthly wage remains low in those regions from where the majority of emigrants originate: 8,903 som in the Batken Region and 8,141 som in the Osh Region with the average national monthly wage being 13,483 som.¹¹⁵

Therefore, emigration from the regions did not lead to a reduction in unemployment, growth of income for the local population or improvement of the situation on local labour markets. On the contrary, as a result of irregularity of migration the population numbers and its composition are in decline, which aggravates the situation in rural areas that cannot develop their agricultural sector of the economy.

3.2.2. Factors of return migration

Impact of the economic crisis

There is a general agreement among experts that the main factors pushing migrants to return back home include the global economic crisis, depreciation of the rouble, downturn in the Russian economy and introduction of the more stringent rules for entry into the Russian Federation and exit from it.

There is evidence of falling volumes of remittances sent from the RF to the KR. In 2015, cross-border transfers by private individuals from Russia to Kyrgyzstan amounted to 1.383 billion US dollars from Russia against 2.062 billion US dollars in 2014 (-33%).¹¹⁶ For the first six months of 2016 the total figure stood at 487 million US dollars.¹¹⁷ The SMS KR attributes drop in remittances in direction of Kyrgyzstan to the economic slowdown in the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan due to falling world oil prices and the weakening rouble and tenge against the US dollar. This trend was also influenced by both countries switching to the floating exchange rate for their national currencies.¹¹⁸

Officials in the Ministry of Economy of the KR claim that the accession of Kyrgyzstan to the EAEU helped to prevent a more serious decline in remittances as it resulted in the increase in the number of Kyrgyz migrants and created more favourable conditions for them.¹¹⁹

Impact of accession to the Eurasian Economic Union

One of the major goals of the KR joining the EAEU was creating optimal conditions for migrant workers from Kyrgyzstan as confirmed by the words of the President of the KR Almazbek Atambaev:

“Integration implies free movement of labour within the EAEU area. It will make life and work easier for our citizens, migrant workers in Russia and Kazakhstan. Behind each one of these 600 thousand people are their parents and children – thus, at once, we solve the problems of nearly 3 million citizens or a half of our population.”

These words of the head of state demonstrate to what extent the socioeconomic situation in the country depends on the financial support from migrants and how important the role of the EAEU is. This also explains why the work of the migration services is mainly focused on improving the status of the external migrants.

114 State Migration Service of the KR. *Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic*.

115 National Statistical Committee of the KR, <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/trud-i-zarabotnaya-plata/> (accessed 5 September 2016).

116 Central Bank of Russian Federation, http://www.cbr.ru/statistics/?Prtid=svs&ch=Par_17101#CheckedItem (accessed 20 July 2016).

117 Ibid.

118 State Migration Service of the KR. Overview of the migration situation in the Kyrgyz Republic.

119 KirTAG. With the EAEU accession the number of Kyrgyz nationals leaving for Russia has increased.

Pursuant to Section 26 of the Treaty “On the Eurasian Economic Union”, Kyrgyz nationals now have a number of advantages that significantly simplify the procedure for stay and employment of migrant workers within the borders of the EAEU:

- Employers may recruit workers from the KR without consideration for any restrictions aimed at protecting their national labour market (quotas);
- Kyrgyz nationals are not required to obtain employment permits for the member states of the EAEU;
- Workers from Kyrgyzstan and their family members are exempt from the obligation to register with the competent authority (registration at the place of stay) for 30 days from the date of entry;
- The period of temporary stay depends on the duration of an employment contract signed by the worker with the employer;
- In the event of early termination of an employment contract after the expiry of 90 days from the date of entry into the country, the worker is entitled to enter into a new employment contract with the same or different employer within 15 days in accordance with the procedure and conditions provided in the legislation;
- Education certificates issued by educational institutions of the KR are recognised without any procedures of recognition of education certificates, except for workers in educational, legal, medical or pharmaceutical specialties;
- Employed (pensionable) service of workers is included in the total employed (pensionable) service for the purposes of social security (social insurance), except for pensions, in accordance with the legislation of the state of employment;
- Workers are entitled to join trade unions on a par with the nationals of the state of employment;
- Children of workers residing together with them are entitled to attend pre-school institutions and receive education in accordance with the legislation of the state of employment;
- The Member States of the EAEU grant workers and their family members the right to receive emergency medical care (emergency and urgent care) on the same conditions as their own nationals, irrespectively whether or not workers and their families have health insurance cover. In all other cases a health insurance policy will be required that can be obtained through the employer or independently by the workers.¹²⁰

In practice, however, Kyrgyz migrants do not have many advantages in employment over nationals of other countries that are not EAEU members. The majority of the KR citizens are still recruited in the RF through informal channels. Employers are still willing to save money on labour expenses, denying migrants basic proper working conditions and hiring them without employment contracts. By recruiting irregular migrant workers, employers get the chance to earn more money for themselves because they can pay less to irregular workers, let alone no need for pension and social security contributions. At the same time, irregular migrants are easier to manage (they are not able to defend their rights, they do not join trade unions, etc.).¹²¹

One Kyrgyz government official admitted that the state authorities in Kyrgyzstan feel disappointment with the results of the accession to the EAEU:

“Despite expectations, the accession of the KR to the EAEU did not improve the situation of Kyrgyz migrants. Employers use migrants illegally so that they do not have to pay taxes, and as a consequence migrants are employed without official contracts, therefore, they are in breach of law.” (Interview on 20 April 2016.)

On the other hand, some officials believe this is a temporary phenomenon:

“The economic crisis prevents Russia from fulfilling its obligations under the EAEU Treaty. There are some tacit rules for employers in Russia advising them to employ their own citizens. You have to understand their situation too.” (Official from the Government of the KR. Interview on 12 February 2016)

120 The EAEU Treaty. http://www.consultant.ru/document/cons_doc_LAW_163855/ (accessed 28 July 2016).

121 *Accession of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Eurasian Economic Union: Impact on Migration*. P. 32.

The SMS KR estimates the general situation after the accession to the EAEU as unclear¹²², highlighting some issues associated with regional departments of the Russian DMA MIA (former Federal Migration Service (FMS)), Border Services and Ministry of Interior not fully implementing the Saint Petersburg agreements¹²³ of 19 June 2015. A monitoring survey conducted from 15 August to 15 September 2015 has shown that migrants, among whom there are a lot of women and minors, are facing the effects of the economic crisis and migration legislation reforms.

The socioeconomic situation of migrants worsened with the reduction of their income. Lack of information, inability to quickly make sense of the changes in the law, regular police raids and ID checks made migrants feel vulnerable.¹²⁴ Besides, issues with observance of migrant workers' rights, shadow employment, delays in payment of wages, difficulties with registration procedures remain topical.

Migrant workers have to stand in queues for several days, they are required to provide various certificates that are difficult to obtain. Moreover, migrants in Russia often get caught in a vicious circle of "registration at the place of residence – obtaining a work permit". Since legalisation procedures are complex and expensive, employers and migrants prefer to live and work without registration or resort to the services of illegal intermediaries who supply fake registration documents.

Thus, the irregular status of migrant workers appears to be the major risk factor for their expulsion or deportation. The introduction of more restrictive migration regulations creates a precedent for illegal migration: the more irregular migrants are there, the longer grows the list of individuals who are banned from entering the territory of Russia ("black list").

One side of the dilemma for migrants is the fact that it is not yet possible to talk about any favourable conditions in their country of origin to attract Kyrgyz nationals back home. Kyrgyzstan is still experiencing serious socioeconomic difficulties that are no incentive for a potential return of migrants. The National Bank of the Kyrgyz Republic reported that in the first six months of 2016 the GDP was 176 billion som (approximately 2.5 billion US dollars) but exports from Kyrgyzstan fell by 29.3%. Foreign trade with the member-states of the Eurasian Economic Union dropped by 21.6% to 770 million US dollars in the first 5 months of 2016.¹²⁵

One Kyrgyz Government official admitted that the local labour market cannot meet the needs of return migrants and described the situation faced by returnees in the Kyrgyz labour market:

"Salaries in Russia and Kyrgyzstan are now almost on the same level because of the economic crisis and depreciation of the rouble. A migrant who used to earn 30,000 roubles in Russia can earn the same amount of money here. But in Kyrgyzstan the labour market is limited with high competition for jobs, that is why return migrants struggle to find employment with the same level of earnings back home." (Interview on 11 April 2016.)

On the other hand, falling income and more complex and stringent residence and employment rules restrict access to social services for migrants and their families. They are forced to leave Russia because of limited access to healthcare and difficulties with enrolling children into nurseries and schools.

Health problems significantly affect migrants' decision to return to Kyrgyzstan. Most common of them are tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, pregnancy and complications in childbirth and cardiovascular diseases. The number of HIV-positive migrant workers is on the increase: 1,074 in 2013 and 1,718 in 2014. In 2014 maternal mortality among migrant workers stood at 18 women or 22% of overall maternal mortality in the country (82 deaths per 100 thousand births). According to recent data from the Ministry of Health of the KR, 11 female migrant workers died in childbirth or 19.6% of overall maternal mortality in the country. The Ministry of Health of the KR has also reported that

122 State Migration Service of the KR. Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic.

123 The Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic on the rules of stay for citizens of the Russian Federation in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic and for citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic in the territory of the Russian Federation. [http://archive.mid.ru/bdomp/graf_site.nsf/webbrus/20150122/\\$FILE/15_122.pdf](http://archive.mid.ru/bdomp/graf_site.nsf/webbrus/20150122/$FILE/15_122.pdf) (accessed 28 July 2016).

124 State Migration Service of the KR. Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic.

125 «ВВП Кыргызстана в первом полугодии 2015 года сложился в объеме 172 миллиардов сомов» ["Kyrgyzstan's GDP in the first half of 2015 was worth 172 billion som"]. <https://www.akchabar.kg/article/economy/spending-money/> (accessed 28 July 2016).

the incidence of tuberculosis among migrant workers in Kyrgyzstan continues to rise: 549 external migrants were diagnosed in 2013 but in 2014 their number increased to 593.¹²⁶

According to the Social Fund of the KR, as some of the migrants have no pension savings abroad, they return to Kyrgyzstan with the intention of ensuring some level of pension provision for themselves.¹²⁷ Older migrants consider Kyrgyzstan as a place where they can find employment that would make them eligible for a pension.

Therefore, when developing measures for reintegration of returning migrant workers it is important to remember that this return migration is not the result of the presence of pull factors in Kyrgyzstan and Kyrgyz state authorities do not have any control over the main motives that force migrants to return.

For this reason, in order to manage this process efficiently and create a favourable environment for returning migrants, state authorities will need to adopt a systematic and comprehensive approach taking into account the economic, political, social and other aspects of the current situation.

Returning migrants have widely ranging expectations when it comes to working and living conditions back in Kyrgyzstan. For example, in the survey¹²⁸ conducted by the “Roza Otunbayeva Initiative” International Public Foundation expatriates named the following motives for their possible return to Kyrgyzstan:

1. Improved infrastructure/living conditions (16.9%)
2. Reduction in corruption (15.4%)
3. Better opportunities to start business (11.5%)
4. Better education for children (10.8%)
5. Opportunity to find employment in one’s professional field (10.2%)
6. Opportunity to find higher-paying employment (9.8%)
7. Improvements in democracy (6.8%)
8. Improvement of investment climate (6.2%)
9. Better healthcare services (5.9%)
10. To be nearer family, parents, relatives (1.8%)

3.2.3. Re-entry bans: their impact and mitigating measures

Impact of re-entry bans

Introduction of more stringent entry and exit rules, residence and employment regulations and the practice of blacklisting banned migrants resulted in falling numbers of migrant workers in Russia and rising irregular migration. Compared to 2014, the number of issued work permits dropped by 78%, patents by 19%.¹²⁹

Cases of deportation and expulsion of migrants are becoming more frequent. According to the data provided by the Directorate of the Federal Service of Court Bailiffs, 10% more foreign nationals were expelled from Moscow in 2015 than in 2014.¹³⁰

126 State Migration Service of the KR. Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic.

127 Social Fund of the KR. Pension Provision for Migrant Workers. <http://socfond.kg/citizens/11-Piensionnoie-obiespiechienie-trudovykh-mighrantov/> (accessed 8 August 2016).

128 IPF ROI. Mapping of the diaspora of the Kyrgyz abroad and the expert roster of Kyrgyzstan’s expats: Research and analysis report. Bishkek, 2015. http://www.mekendeshter.org/upload/publications/analytics/otchet_final.pdf (accessed 28 July 2016).

129 National Institute for Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic. Economic Situation in the Russian Federation and its Impact on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic. P. 17. http://www.nisi.kg/uploads/research_ph/research_2015/эконом_криз_МОН_report_15.pdf (accessed 28 July 2016).

130 «В 2015 число выдворенных из Москвы иностранцев выросло до 5,4 тысяч» [“In 2015 number of foreigners expelled from Moscow increased to 5.4 thousand”], <http://ria.ru/society/20160302/1383027141.html> (accessed 28 July 2016).

According to Russian law, a foreign national can be banned from entering the RF for the following reasons:

- breach of border crossing rules;
- submission of forged documents or false information;
- unexpunged or outstanding conviction for a premeditated crime;
- previous prosecution for administrative offences;
- tax evasion and non-payment of administrative fines.¹³¹

In particular, Kyrgyz migrants are blacklisted in the following cases:

- for breaching residence regulations or for late registration at the place of residence;
- for delaying the obtaining of a work patent and other documents required for foreigners to be able to work (before the accession of Kyrgyzstan to the EAEU);
- for evading registering with the tax authorities;
- for attempting to obtain the necessary documents through third parties or attempting to falsify the documents.¹³²

On the other hand, experts believe that more stringent regulations introduced into Russian legislation in recent years are not aimed at fighting the root causes of illegal migration. The excessive and corrupt bureaucratization of the existing procedures pushes migrants into irregular employment.¹³³ For example, the notion of “dummy registration”, requirement to obtain registration at the actual place of residence and to sit an exam in Russian language, history and law encourage migrants to live and work without proper paperwork and increase their risk of being re-entry banned. Studies have also shown that the majority of the respondents (38.2%) do not obtain any required permits or documents during their time in labour migration.¹³⁴

Mitigating measures

Interviews with the Kyrgyz state officials dealing with migration matters seem to suggest that the accession of Kyrgyzstan to the EAEU did not radically improve the situation of Kyrgyz migrant workers in the EAEU countries but it played a key role in removing Kyrgyz migrants from the “black list” and reducing the negative impact of the sanctions.

Even if no formal agreement has been signed between Kyrgyzstan and Russia on blacklisted Kyrgyz nationals, the parties have reached some verbal understanding on this issue.¹³⁵

In July 2015 the Russian Federation made a decision to allow entry to the nationals of the Kyrgyz Republic who were banned for three years provided their ban expires in the next 18 months. Simultaneously, it was decided to grant the nationals of the Kyrgyz Republic who breached Russian migration law a right to leave and re-enter Russia freely between 10 July 2015 and 1 November 2015 without imposing any sanctions on them. This mitigating measure did not apply to migrants banned for 5 and 10 years.¹³⁶

However, it emerged in interviews with officials that there are no specific arrangements between the authorities of the RF and the KR on removing banned Kyrgyz migrants from the “black list”. A representative of one of the Government agencies of the KR explained the situation:

“We do not have an agreement with Russia on delisting our nationals. We agree verbally between ourselves. We managed to shorten the “black list” thanks to the efforts of the President himself. We also try to persuade the chiefs in the FMS”. (Interview on 20 April 2016.)

131 Consulate General of the Kyrgyz Republic in Yekaterinburg, <http://kyrgyzconsulate.ru/?p=134> (accessed 28 July 2016).

132 Interview with an official in the SMS KR on 19 February 2016.

133 Accession of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Eurasian Economic Union: Impact on Migration, pp. 27-29.

134 M. Mamyrganov, A. Elebaeva, p.21.

135 Interview with representatives of the Kyrgyz Government on 11 April 2016.

136 Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Russian Federation, <http://kyrgyzembassy.ru/?p=13333#.V4ColEaLTIU> (accessed 28 July 2016).

The period of grace that lasted until 1 November 2015 was applicable to over 174 thousand Kyrgyz migrants in Russia classed in the “risk group”. Of these, 54 thousand migrants did not specify in their migration card at the entry into the Russian Federation that the purpose of their trip was employment. As a result, these people were able to legalise their status between 10 July and 1 November 2015 provided they exited Russia having their passport stamped at the border crossing and then returned to the Russian Federation.

Similar opportunity to redress their migration history was given to 120 thousand Kyrgyz nationals who did specify work as the purpose of their arrival to Russia but failed to register their employment contracts in due course with the competent authorities of the RF. They were able to work legally by presenting their employment contracts to the Federal Migration Service, Federal Tax Service and the Pension Fund of the RF.¹³⁷

It was not possible to find any official statistics on the number of migrants who took these legalisation opportunities. However, in 2015 the SMS KR reviewed over 6,000 applications from Kyrgyz nationals regarding their removal from the list of migrants with re-entry bans to the RF. The SMS KR reported that by the start of February 2016 the Federal Migration Service of Russia removed 76,000 citizens of the KR from the “black list”, so it was reduced to 118,507 individuals. At the end of the first quarter of 2016, the number of migrants with re-entry bans to the RF stood at 119,000.¹³⁸

Cooperation with the Russian authorities to return citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic

Russian migration authorities do not grant mass “black list” amnesties and each case has to be considered individually. However, they do make provisions for early entry in Russia for some groups of banned migrants. An individual with a re-entry ban to Russia can apply to Russian authorities for the permission to enter the RF in the following cases:

- if his or her spouse or close relatives are citizens of the RF;
- if he or she has a valid patent for work in the RF (if subjected to the re-entry ban before the accession of Kyrgyzstan to the EAEU);
- if he or she has a permit for temporary or permanent residence in the RF;
- if he or she is a student at a Russian higher education institution.

The SMS KR continues negotiations with their Russian counterparts on removing Kyrgyz nationals from the “black list”, since, according to the chief of the SMS¹³⁹, after the abolition of the FMS RF they have to restart discussions with representatives of the Ministry of the Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation. The most recent round of negotiations took place in May 2015 in Moscow where the Kyrgyz party attempted once again to reach an agreement on an amnesty for those migrants who are banned for three years.

On the other hand, the Ombudsman, the Prosecutor General’s Office and the State Migration Service of the Kyrgyz Republic continue working with their counterparts in Russian Government on issues relating to the expulsion (deportation) of Kyrgyz nationals to their homeland, specifically on ensuring compliance with the expulsion procedures and providing an opportunity to appeal.

137 State Migration Service of the KR. Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic.

138 Response letter from the State Migration Service of the KR of 25 May 2016 No. 03-15/1524.

139 Radio Azattyk, «Адылов: Миграция кызматы Орусияда өкүлчүлүгүн ачат». http://www.azattyk.org/a/kyrgyzstan_russia_migrants_bakyt_adylov/27771187.html (accessed 6 August 2016)

3.2.4. Legal and institutional framework for the return and reintegration of migrants

State priorities in migration aimed at reducing the negative impact of emigration and facilitating the return of citizens to Kyrgyzstan

Strategic documents. Along with the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic the key legislative acts that regulate migration issues in the country are the Law “On External Migration”, the Law “On Internal Migration”, the Law “On External Labour Migration” and other legal instruments.

The State Migration Service of the KR began work on the Migration Code of the Kyrgyz Republic. At this point the agency has already received comments and suggestions from other ministries and agencies on the first draft of the Code.

Simultaneously work is ongoing on the Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2030. The purpose of this document is to define a system of approaches the contents, principles and main directions of activities of the Kyrgyz Republic in the field of migration. The Concept will outline the goals, principles, tasks, key areas and mechanisms for the implementation of the state migration policy. To achieve this, an interagency working group has been set up. The structure of the draft concept is now ready and approved.

Experts in the Jogorku Kenesh (Supreme Council) of the Kyrgyz Republic believe that the country’s legislative framework on migration requires improvement. However, in their opinion, there are several barriers to overcome:

“Parliamentarians are full of enthusiasm. They are willing to act in this direction. But they lack experience and practical knowledge. They are not familiar with this field. On the other hand, civil society movements and organizations should promote and lobby migrants’ interests by exerting influence on the legislative and executive branches of the Government.” (Interview on 15 April 2016)

Institutional framework. In order to monitor, analyse and manage migration processes in the Kyrgyz Republic, the Government set up a dedicated competent body in 1999 – the State Agency for Migration and Demography under the Government of the KR.¹⁴⁰ This was one of the first attempts by the state to control migration flows. In 2000 the agency was abolished and its functions in development of the state migration policy were transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the KR where the Migration Service Department was established. This meant that the Government had intentions to address issues of Kyrgyz migrants abroad.¹⁴¹

After sociopolitical changes in 2005 the state opted for a standalone body overseeing this area – the State Committee for Migration and Employment of the KR.¹⁴² However, in 2009 the Committee was reorganised into the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Migration of the KR and a year later migration issues once again came under the responsibility of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As a result, the state authorities focused on Kyrgyz migrants abroad but the problems of internal migrants received less attention.

In 2012 migration issues were removed from the competence of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and transferred to a dedicated agency – the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth of the Kyrgyz Republic.¹⁴³ But once a new government was formed in autumn 2015, Resolution No.854 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on 11 December 2015 established the State Migration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.¹⁴⁴

140 Ministry of Justice of the KR, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/33700?cl=ru-ru> (accessed 28 July 2016).

141 Ministry of Justice of the KR, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/6852?cl=ru-ru> (accessed 28 July 2016).

142 Ministry of Justice of the KR, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/56949/20?cl=ru-ru> (accessed 28 July 2016).

143 Ministry of Justice of the KR, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/93484?cl=ru-ru> (accessed 28 July 2016).

144 Ministry of Justice of the KR, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/98242?cl=ru-ru> (accessed 28 July 2016).

This reorganization has broken the links between governmental departments overseeing labour, employment and migration areas and, as a consequence, caused structural and functional problems in the state policy as well as created barriers to the development of national strategy and institutional mechanisms in the area of migration.

Return migration in existing legal instruments. The legislative acts of the Kyrgyz Republic do not feature the terms “returning migrant” or “returned migrant”; returned migrants are not considered a separate category of migrants whose status and actions are regulated by law. The Law “On External Migration” does not address the issue of returned migrants, let alone their integration. Only Article 54 states that “upon the return to the Kyrgyz Republic for permanent residence, Kyrgyz citizens, who moved to a foreign country for permanent residence, shall enjoy all rights guaranteed by Kyrgyz legislation”.

The Law “On Internal Migration” that regulates movements of Kyrgyz citizens “within the boundaries of the Kyrgyz Republic” does not distinguish between internal migrants and returned migrants, in other words, it does not deal with the question of returned migrants separately. But this law sets out a legal and organizational framework for internal migration and for provision of the necessary conditions for internal migrants and their families at their new place of residence. Pursuant to this Law, government agencies and local government authorities, relevant social services and legal entities should provide every possible means of assistance to internal migrants as well as ensure the necessary living conditions at their new place of residence or stay.

The key programme documents, such as the 2013-2017 National Sustainable Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic¹⁴⁵ and the Programme for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic¹⁴⁶, not only do not provide for the reintegration of migrants but also fail to specify any measures aimed at regulating migration flows or addressing problems faced by migrant workers.

The Programme for Employment Promotion and External Labour Migration Regulation until 2020 approved by Resolution 485 of the Government of the KR on 6 September 2013 also does not contain any specific goals, objectives or mechanisms to deal with returned migrants. However, it does mention that “migrant workers abroad acquire new knowledge and skills, learn new technologies and familiarise themselves with new production standards that they could utilise at work on their return home”.

To sum up, in Kyrgyzstan the legislative and regulatory framework for migration management does not contain any relevant legal mechanisms regulating the return and reintegration of migrants.

Nonetheless, there are some programmes and legislative acts that could potentially be used for the purposes of migrant reintegration, including the Programme for Employment Promotion and External Labour Migration Regulation until 2020 (approved by Resolution No. 485 of the Government of the KR on 6 September 2013), the 2013-2016 Programme on Fighting Human Trafficking in the Kyrgyz Republic (approved by Resolution No. 14 of the Government of the KR on 14 January 2013), the Law of the KR “On the Principles of the State Policy on Supporting Compatriots Abroad” (voted by the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic on 27 June 2013), the Law of the KR “On Prevention and Fighting against Human Trafficking” (No 55 of 17 March 2005) and the Law of the KR “On the State Guarantees to the Ethnic Kyrgyz People Returning to their Historic Homeland” (No. 175 of 26 November 2007).

In addition, pursuant to Resolution No.51-r of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic of 21 February 2014, the Centralised External Migration Registration System (CEMRS) is being implemented to regulate external migration of Kyrgyz nationals, to record the entry and exit of foreign nationals and stateless persons and their movements within the borders of the Kyrgyz Republic, to automate interagency and intra-agency information exchange and to implement an electronic Kyrgyz visa. The fully functioning CEMRS will simplify the procedure for tracking external migration movements and will ensure an efficient migration control with the help of the single interagency information space to record external migration movements and through building analytical potential in the fight against illegal migration because, according to respondents among government officials, at the moment no agency has exact information on the scale and trends of return migration in Kyrgyzstan.

145 http://www.president.kg/ru/news/ukazy/1466_tekst_natsionalnoy_strategii_ustoychivogo_razvitiya_kyrgyzskoy_respubliki_na_period_2013-2017_godyi/ (accessed 28 July 2016).

146 http://www.gov.kg/?page_id=31364&lang=ru (accessed 28 July 2016).

The state authorities of Kyrgyzstan in charge of migrants' issues seem to concentrate their efforts mostly on removing re-entry bans from Kyrgyz nationals (shortening the "black list") and on achieving better working conditions for migrants who work abroad. So the activity of the state agencies is aimed primarily at finding solutions for external migrants rather than returned migrants.

During the interview some Government officials pointed out that, in the long term, the migration policy strategy should be focused on the reduction of the workforce outflow.

"Migrants are the most dynamic members of the society. Only old people and children are left behind. Sooner or later, the state will have to face the negative consequences of this process. So we need to think what needs to be done to make young people stay and work here". (Representative of one of the Government agencies of the KR. Interview on 12 April 2016)

Maintaining ties with migrant workers abroad

In order to enhance interaction and establish efficient cooperation between the country and compatriots for the benefit of dynamic economic, cultural and social development of the Kyrgyz Republic as well as to support compatriots and protect their rights and interests abroad, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic has established the Council on Relations with Compatriots Living Abroad.¹⁴⁷ Its composition was approved¹⁴⁸ with the Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan as its Chairman.

The agreement between the KR and the RF on the rules of stay for Kyrgyz citizens in Russia and for Russian citizens in Kyrgyzstan became one of major achievements in recent years in terms of monitoring of the socioeconomic situation of migrant workers and protection of their rights.¹⁴⁹

According to this instrument, Kyrgyz nationals can stay in Russia for 30 days without registration (instead of only 7 days) and Russians can remain in Kyrgyzstan for 30 days without registration (instead of 90 days previously); so the length of stay without the need for registration was realigned for the citizens of the both countries.

On 30 June 2015 the Jogorku Kenesh of the KR passed the Law "On Ratification of the Agreement between the Government of the KR and the Government of the RF 'On the legal status of the representative office of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth of the Kyrgyz Republic in the Russian Federation'"¹⁵⁰ signed on 15 April 2015 in Moscow. At present, the SMS KR is planning to open a representative office in Moscow, although its staff will be posted in other parts of Russia too, for instance, in Saint Petersburg, Sakhalin and Krasnoyarsk.¹⁵¹

In addition, the Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic in the RF in collaboration with Kyrgyz diasporas identified public representatives in various regions of Russia¹⁵² who would be able to defend the rights of migrant workers given growing informal employment on the Russian labour market.

In this context, great importance is attributed to the approaches adopted by state bodies and agencies in their work to protect the rights of migrants. The Akyikatchy (Ombudsman) of the Kyrgyz Republic who is in charge of defending citizens' rights and freedoms admits that the question of the protection of migrants' rights remains

147 Ministry of Justice of the KR. Resolution No. 266 of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic "On the creation of the Council on Relations with Compatriots Living Abroad under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic" of 29 April 2015. <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/97528> (accessed 28 July 2016).

148 Ministry of Justice of the KR. Resolution No. 462-r of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic "On the approval of the composition of the Council on Relations with Compatriots Living Abroad under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic" of 17 September 2015. <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/214769> (accessed 28 July 2016).

149 The Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Kyrgyz Republic on the rules of stay for citizens of the Russian Federation in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic and for citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic in the territory of the Russian Federation.

150 http://archive.mid.ru/bdcomp/spd_md.nsf/0/BEE8D51734820B1F43257FE1004695CB (accessed 28 July 2016).

151 Radio Azattyk, «Адылов: Миграция кызматы Орусияда өкүлчүлүгүн ачат».

152 State Migration Service of the KR. Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic.

challenging. Migrants come to the Ombudsman with issues regarding employment, personal documents, rights of migrants' children, "black list", illegal detention, slavery and human trafficking, etc. In his opinion, in order to address these problems the Government should work on improving the country's legislative framework. The Institute of Ombudsman is planning to post its staff in the RF in order to protect the rights of Kyrgyz nationals.¹⁵³

According to a report by the SMS KR, the Service does not possess any effective instruments to provide comprehensive assistance to citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic in the area of employment and legal and other protection in the territory of the Russian Federation.¹⁵⁴ According to its officials, only a fraction of migrants bound for abroad come to seek their advice. The majority of migrants need support in the country of destination, specifically information and legal assistance and advice.¹⁵⁵ That is why the chief of the SMS KR named "the protection of the rights of workers" as the main purpose for opening the representative office in Moscow.¹⁵⁶

Thus, in summary, the state is trying to control migration flows with prompt actions while year after year the scale of migration is growing and the state authorities are faced with more serious challenges. Contrary to expectations, the accession to the EAEU did not result in significant improvements of the migrants' circumstances. Instead, the trend of migrants returning home is gaining greater prominence.

Another topical area is the continuity in migration management. Multiple transfers of functions in relation to migration governance from one agency to another led to the lack of state regulation of migration processes in the Kyrgyz Republic. As a consequence, over the last four years migration issues were left mostly outside of state control, subject to corruption.¹⁵⁷

Therefore, we believe it is necessary to clearly formulate the position of the Government with regards to migration. In this respect, an important role should be reserved for the Concept for the State Migration Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2030 that is being developed by the SMS KR.

3.2.5. Existing measures facilitating the access of return migrants to the labour market

Opportunities and barriers for reintegration of migrants in local labour markets and communities

Returned migrants may come across problems similar to those of the internal migrants. For example, problems with registration and limited awareness of their rights and employment opportunities may well become the potential barriers for accessing public resources.

In Kyrgyzstan registration at the place of residence remains one of the main conditions for the use of social services. Pursuant to Article 9 of the Law "On Internal Migration"¹⁵⁸ and the Regulations for registration and deregistration of Kyrgyz citizens at the place of residence (approved by Resolution No. 886 of the Government of the KR of 4 December 2004), each citizen of the KR must be registered at the place of residence and the place of stay within the Kyrgyz Republic.¹⁵⁹ The SMS KR is of the opinion that it is this legal provision that in practice prevents the citizens from enjoying their rights and freedoms because the real-life practice of obtaining the registration and the list of required documents in Kyrgyzstan differs from the registration procedure and list of required documents prescribed in the

153 Interview on 19 April 2016.

154 State Migration Service of the KR. Overview of the migration situation in the Kyrgyz Republic.

155 Interview on 19 February 2016.

156 State Migration Service of the KR. <http://ssm.gov.kg/press/read/43> (accessed 22 August 2016).

157 State Migration Service of the KR. Overview of the migration situation in the Kyrgyz Republic.

158 Ministry of Justice of the KR, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/1090> (accessed 28 July 2016).

159 http://www.president.kg/ru/news/zakony/8163_podpisan_zakon_o_vnesenii_izmeneniy_v_zakon_kyrgyzskoy_respubliki_o_vnutrenney_migratsii/ (accessed 28 July 2016).

law. If not all required documents are submitted to the registration office the citizen can be refused registration. Without registration at the place of residence or stay Kyrgyz citizens are denied or limited in their opportunities to enjoy the right to labour, education, healthcare, social security, etc.¹⁶⁰

The available studies also support these conclusions of SMS KR that internal migrants who live in new housing developments on the outskirts of big cities very often encounter problems with gaining access to healthcare because of lack of registration at the place of residence, the absence of registration with a healthcare institution, missing personal documents, etc. 63.4% of the surveyed internal migrants are not registered at the place of residence. This means that over 41% of migrants do not have adequate access to healthcare.¹⁶¹ But even these figures do not reflect the reality in new housing developments where some houses were built without all required permissions.

An official from the State Registration Service of the Kyrgyz Republic explains the situation with the registration of internal migrants as follows:

“There are a lot of people with no registration in new housing developments. Inhabitants of some new houses are not able to obtain registration at the place of residence even if they live in their own properties. This is because a lot of new housing around Bishkek appeared as a result of an illegal ‘land grab’. Unfortunately, the inhabitants of new builds experience problems with access to social security.” (Interview on 12 April 2016.)

It should be taken into account that returned migrants prefer to stay in cities and nearby residential districts for the purposes of employment, so they have to face the same problems that internal migrants also encounter. Returned migrants also need social assistance and access to the necessary resources. So the issues of reintegration of returned migrant workers are closely related to the problems of internal migrants and the state policy for internal migration.

On the other hand, Kyrgyzstan does have some legislative and administrative mechanisms that do not provide for the reintegration of migrants directly but can well be used as the basis for initiating work with returned migrants. In particular, state policy provides a number of mechanisms of assistance to kayrylmans. Law of the KR No. 175 “On the State Guarantees to the Ethnic Kyrgyz People Returning to their Historic Homeland” adopted on 26 November 2007¹⁶² is aimed at “creating conditions for their socioeconomic adaptation”. Action plans and programmes approved by the Government include such objectives as providing assistance to kayrylmans with employment, skills upgrading and learning new professions.¹⁶³ Recently the State Migration Service of the KR has raised the question of making improvements to the legislation on kayrylmans. Some amendments to the law on state guarantees to ethnic Kyrgyz have been proposed for public consultation; these changes are aimed to ensure the status of kayrylman should entitle them to work without a need for work permit and to state-funded social services at the place of stay.

It should also be noted that in the current economic situation in Kyrgyzstan it is not yet possible to increase the employment rate in the regions, create more jobs, or develop private enterprise or small and medium companies. Any projects in these areas are usually implemented with support from international funding sources.

Along with the existing irregular migration to Kyrgyzstan from the neighbouring countries¹⁶⁴, the growing number of returning Kyrgyz migrants will create additional pressure on the labour market. Stronger competition for jobs and decline in wages will require the government to review its migration policy and to protect the domestic labour market.

For instance, the number of foreign nationals (from 79 countries) registered and working in different sectors of Kyrgyz economy is growing year upon year. 64,801 foreigners obtained registration in Kyrgyzstan in 2010 and 74,690 in 2011. In 2014 their number rose to 101,884, while in 2015 it reached 160,384. They come from China – 42,033,

160 State Migration Service of the KR. Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic.

161 Center for Protection of Children. Report on the quality and accessibility of healthcare services available to internal migrants in the city of Bishkek. <http://www.streetchild.ktnet.kg/index.php/ru/activity/research> [in Russian] (accessed 28 July 2016).

162 Ministry of Justice of the KR, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/202209?cl=ru-ru> (accessed 28 July 2016).

163 See National Institute for Strategic Studies of the Kyrgyz Republic, Special Aspects of Sociocultural Integration of Kayrylmans into the Receiving Community in Kyrgyzstan, www.iom.kg/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/IDFPublicationrus.pdf [in Russian] (accessed 28 July 2016).

164 State Migration Service of the KR. Overview of the migration situation in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Turkey – 8,493, India – 7,146, Pakistan – 2,511, South Korea – 1,765, USA – 1,206, Afghanistan – 1,146, Iran – 790, Germany – 377, Egypt – 234 and others – 3381. As per the set quota (12,990 individuals), 12,012 foreign professionals moved to the country in 2015; the majority of them were from China (same as in 2012-2014) – 81.1% of all foreign nationals who received a work permit. In total, for 2016 the Government of Kyrgyzstan set the foreign worker quota at 14,490.

The State Migration Service of the KR has already proposed a draft law on foreign migrants living in the country for public consultation. Bakyt Adylov, chief of the SMS KR, explained how his agency is planning to limit the inflow of foreign workforce:

“Migrants will be divided into categories. For example, in companies the number of foreign workers should not exceed 10% of all employees, the number of foreign managers and professionals – 20%. This way we give preference only to professionals in high demand without limiting their number.”

Legal, administrative and operational reintegration measures

The State Migration Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in charge of state migration policy does not have a structural unit responsible for work with returned migrants. The Statute¹⁶⁵ of the State Migration Service of the KR does not specify reintegration of returned migrants in the list of tasks assigned to this agency.

According to the representative of the SMS KR, the agency is willing and intending to work with returned migrants, most of who have re-entry bans. The chief of the SMS proposes to introduce electronic registration cards in order to keep a register of return migrants, monitor and work with them but at the moment the agency cannot afford such an expensive technology.

Nonetheless, based on the interviews with officials from the Government Office and the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, it is safe to say that in the near future the Government will not have any plan of action with regard to returned migrants. In their opinion, the question of reintegration of returned migrants is not on the agenda:

“Why do we need to integrate migrants?! They are already integrated. Migrants are already familiar with the local environment, they have the necessary skills and know how to adapt to new conditions. All they need are jobs. As for social services (healthcare, education, etc.), migrants can get them from private companies.” (An official from the Government Office of the KR. Interview on 11 April 2016.)

According to an official in the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the KR, just as any other citizens of the country returned migrants are able to use the services of state-run recruitment and employment centres, namely, for vocational training and retraining or obtaining scholarships, state benefits, microloans, etc.

A similar opinion was expressed by the representative of the Government Office of the KR who believes that returned migrants may well already be among socially vulnerable people receiving social assistance from the state. Even though no targeted action plans or programmes for the integration of returned migrants have been implemented so far, some state authorities do a significant amount of work with Kyrgyz nationals who were given a re-entry ban to the Russian Federation. The Information and Consultation Centre of the Kyrgyz State Migration Service is one of several institutions where banned migrants seek help. However, this Centre provides assistance with employment in other countries, such as the Russian Federation, Republic of Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, United Arab Emirates and Republic of Turkey. The Centre is developing a database of potential migrant workers, employers and vacancies. By 1 October 2015, consultation services were used by 13,008 people, 1,808 of them were subsequently employed.

165 Ministry of Justice of the KR, <http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/98243?cl=ru-ru> (accessed 28 July 2016).

In addition, in 2015 the Information and Consultation Centre of the SMS KR and the Association of Legal Entities “International Business Council” (that represents over 140 companies working in Kyrgyzstan) signed a Memorandum on Cooperation with the intention of ensuring employment of citizens on the domestic labour market.

An important role in addressing migration challenges in Kyrgyzstan is played by international agencies and civil society organizations that work with migrant workers on several levels. The SMS KR especially highlights the work of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Soros Foundation – Kyrgyzstan and Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Kyrgyzstan that are actively involved in labour migration issues and cooperate with state migration authorities.¹⁶⁶

In order to tackle systemic problems and streamline processes of internal and external migration, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic is planning to implement a range of measures in 2016, including:

- to improve strategic documents on national and local levels;
- to put into operation the Centralised External Migration Registration System (CEMRS);
- to develop and implement special measures for specific categories of migrants: victims of trafficking; migrants with disability that resulted from their work abroad; returned migrants with acquired social diseases (HIV, STD, tuberculosis); migrants deported for offences against the law and for breaching migration regulations;
- to ensure employment of local workforce;
- to improve coordination between international organizations in the field of migration and to achieve greater efficiency of the jointly run projects.

3.2.6. Additional measures necessary for return/reintegration of return migrant workers

As it was mentioned above, the work of the Kyrgyz state agencies is primarily aimed at finding solutions for external migrant workers rather than returned migrants. The “black list” amnesty does not solve the problems that cause emigration from the country. The negative consequences of labour migration, such as a decline in the country’s production potential, outflow of highly qualified professionals, decrease of the economically active population, deterioration of the national demographic profile and others should be minimised by stimulating the return of migrant workers.

Therefore, it is important to develop a combination of measures aimed at reintegration of returning migrant workers in Kyrgyzstan. Given that employment is the underlying purpose of travelling to Russia for Kyrgyz nationals (according to the study conducted in 2013¹⁶⁷, 78.1% of respondents went abroad to work as employees, 2.7% for permanent residence), one of the main priorities for the state authorities in Kyrgyzstan should be assisting people with finding employment locally.

Informing migrants about legal aspects of employment and running own business is an important factor for their reintegration, in particular in getting to know specifics of the local labour market. They can adapt faster if they know what services are provided by state authorities, private agencies and financial organisations because information about existing institutional infrastructure serves as a ready-made guide to the labour market.

According to official data for 2015, job centres helped to find jobs for 12.5 thousand unemployed. With rising unemployment and a shortage of available jobs, the priority should be to provide training for jobless citizens. By 1 May 2016, job centres have sent 2.4 thousand unemployed to vocational training courses to improve their competitiveness on the labour market based on the current demand in certain professions.¹⁶⁸

166 State Migration Service of the KR. Unified Report on Migration in the Kyrgyz Republic.

167 M. Mamyrganov, A. Elebaeva. Developing the concept of migration strategy. P. 32-33.

168 Information provided by the officials of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth of the Kyrgyz Republic during our visit on 11 April 2016.

However, it should be noted that due to increasing numbers of returned migrants (as mentioned above, their number reached 84,000 in 2015) additional measures will be required to provide jobs for the unemployed. As a short-term solution, the Government should set aside a job quota for migrants in the total number of newly created jobs.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the KR, in 2015 regional microloan agencies gave microloans to 136 unemployed people. Nevertheless, this figure only shows how small are the number of people covered by these microloan companies: it is hard for migrants to access loans as they are not able to meet all the necessary criteria and requirements.

In 2015 the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the KR sent 6.2 thousand people to paid public works,¹⁶⁹ which serve as only a temporary measure to support the unemployed and by no means can be considered a permanent source of income. Also, the unemployment benefit – about 10 dollars a month – received by 463 people in Kyrgyzstan cannot be enough to support an unemployed person.

In order to support former migrants the state authorities should develop a plan of action to provide funding and loans for business projects. The Russian-Kyrgyz Development Fund created in 2014 “to modernise and develop the economy of the Kyrgyz Republic” can participate as one of the creditors in this project.

Another challenging question is provision of help to returned migrants who found themselves in a desperate situation. Migrants who came back to Kyrgyzstan together with their families after an unsuccessful migration experience face serious socioeconomic challenges and hence join vulnerable groups of the society.

According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the KR, 12.7% of children (or every eighth child) in the country receive monthly allowance for low income families. In total, 370 thousand people in Kyrgyzstan receive state benefits. The number of recipients of the monthly social allowance stands at 82.3 thousands, its average amount being 2,3880 som.¹⁷⁰

Bearing in mind that the state authorities have limited resources to support vulnerable categories of the population and as the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the KR already has experience of successful projects, implemented with support from foreign sponsors, we suggest that the Ministry could develop targeted projects for assisting returned migrants in cooperation with international organizations. In particular, the “Food for Work” project, run by the UN World Food Programme involving 66 thousand families in Kyrgyzstan, makes a valuable contribution to supporting people in need.

Hence, specific plans should be prepared in collaboration with relevant ministries and agencies with the aim of implementing measures for reintegration of returned migrant workers. However, it would be hardly possible to plan and undertake any integration activities, such as informing them of employment opportunities in the labour market, teaching new professions and skills, upgrading skills, granting microloans and supporting business initiatives, etc., without registering and keeping a database of returned migrants, given that the official statistics on returned migrants do not reflect the real picture due to the shortcomings of the statistical methodology used.

169 Information provided by the officials of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Youth of the Kyrgyz Republic during our visit on 11 April 2016.

170 Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the KR, <http://www.mlsp.gov.kg/?q=ru> (accessed 28 July 2016).

3.3. TAJIKISTAN

3.3.1. Current and forecast scale and composition of return migration

Scale of emigration and return migration

In order to analyse and forecast migration flows and develop recommendations for their regulation a system of recording migrant workers has been implemented in the Republic of Tajikistan. The Government Resolution “On the registration of Tajik nationals travelling abroad and returning Tajik nationals” introduced migration registration cards to be completed at every border control checkpoint in the country.

These cards help to keep track of the number of migrant workers leaving and returning to Tajikistan. An integrated automated migration registration system is being currently developed to keep more accurate and real-time records.

The primary destination country for Tajik migrant workers is the Russian Federation. According to the data provided by the national migration service, 552,596 migrant workers (487,929 men and 64,667 women) travelled abroad in 2015. Compared to the year before, their total number (670,806) dropped by 118,210 people (18%). 541,636 of them went to the Russian Federation (98%) and 10,957 to the Republic of Kazakhstan (2%).

Table 3.15. Number of migrant workers who emigrated from Tajikistan in 2010-2015

Item No.	Description	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
1	Total number of emigrated migrant workers, including:	736,446	750,391	744,360	799,698	670,806	552,596
	Men	656,814	663,658	657,345	698,823	564,390	487,929
	Women	79,632	86,733	87,015	100,875	106,416	64,667
2	Sughd Region	154,042	172,670	235,996	200,764	216,064	173,154
3	GBAO	15,611	17,390	27,769	40,770	60,285	25,672
4	Khatlon	163,688	171,100	81,879	130,659	20,365	204,820
5	City of Dushanbe and DRD	403,105	389,231	398,716	427,505	84,285	56,826
6	DRD					106,520	92,122
7	Migrated to Russia			684,812	663,749	660,947	541,636
8	Migrated to Kazakhstan			7,744	7,800	7,429	10,957

Source: Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan, Migration Service¹⁷¹

171 Separate statistics for emigrated migrant workers from the DRD before 2012 are not available.

Meanwhile, over the same period 388,593 migrant workers returned to Tajikistan (347,954 men and 40,639 women) which is 65,392 (14%) less than the year before. The majority of migrants return home in the autumn with the onset of colder weather in the destination countries (approximately in November) and go back to work there in the spring (in March-April). In other words, they stay at home for about 4–5 months.

Table 3.16. Number of migrant workers returned to Tajikistan in 2012-2015

Item No.	Description	2012	2013	2014	2015
1	Total number of returned migrant workers, including:	581,922	642,841	453,985	388,593
	Men	500,825	552,899	377,283	347,954
	Women	81,097	899,402	76,702	40,639
2	Sughd Region	132,964	93,784	55,202	37,400
3	GBAO	382	87	41,523	27,014
4	Khatlon	76,968	106,395	188,352	170,106
5	City of Dushanbe and DRD	371,608	442,575	84,894	62,775
6	DRD			8,404	91,297
7	Returned from Russia	535,368	507,844	445,996	376,102
8	Returned from Kazakhstan	5,819	6,428	5,556	12,491

Source: Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan, Migration Service

Characteristics of Tajik labour migration

The study conducted in 2016 by the “Socservis” Information and Research Centre with the support of the IFRC surveyed 1,200 migrant workers who returned home in the previous 6 months. Its results show that the vast majority of the returned migrants were men (85.8%). There are two reasons for male predominance among migrants. Firstly, the labour market in the main destination country – Russia – has a high demand for workers in physically demanding and traditionally male occupations: builders, drivers, and industrial plant workers. Secondly, this is due to gender stereotypes that exist in Tajikistan where supporting the family is seen as exclusively men’s responsibility. Therefore, households prefer to send men abroad in search of paid work, and labour migration is perceived as part of the man’s way of life, area of employment for men or “man’s occupation”.

Age structure and family status. The age structure of returned migrants is relatively young. The largest age group (49%) are young people 20-29 years of age, i.e. the most active working-age population. The statistics regularly published by the Federal Migration Service of Russia until April 2016 also confirmed this fact.¹⁷²

Professor H. Umarov states in his report¹⁷³, funded by the IOM, that the vast majority of returned migrants have families (86.2%). The question about the number of children in migrant workers’ families received widely ranging responses: 8% of migrants have 1 child, 19.8% – 2 children, 21.6% – 3 children, 19.4% – 4 children, 31.1% – 5 or more children. Therefore, 50.6% of returned migrants had 4 or more children. These numbers of children per family are consistent with the current demographic situation in Tajikistan.

Further, according to the “Socservis” Centre study, two thirds (77.6%) of the returned migrants are married and another 9.4% intend to get married. There are no single people living alone among the surveyed returned migrants due to the fact that extended families are a very common phenomenon. Traditionally, it is the heads of the household who move abroad for work: “fathers” (45.1%) and “sons” (40%), very rarely “daughters”, in other words, those male members of the household who bear the primary responsibility to provide for their families.

172 As of 5 April 2016, by the Executive Order of the President Vladimir Putin the Federal Migration Service of Russia was abolished and its functions and powers were transferred to the General Administration for Migration Issues at the Ministry of Interior of the Russian Federation.

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As a rule, married migrants leave their wives behind (83.6%). It is not economically viable to take the entire family abroad. The earned income will not be enough to provide for family needs in the receiving country but it will be sufficient to maintain the family back home where the purchase power parity is significantly lower. Women, in turn, are generally not willing to follow their husbands in search of work abroad. Their duty is to ensure daily life of the household, look after children and elderly members of the family, and run family farms and allotments that are essential for supplying families with food.

Level of education and qualifications. The “Socservis” Centre study demonstrated that the majority of migrants, namely 62.7%, do not have any professional qualifications. Every other migrant (50.1%) completed general secondary education. 10% more women than men have vocational training, which is not the case for the domestic labour market in Tajikistan. That is, there are more individuals with professional qualifications among female migrants. No vocational training is common among young people who go to work abroad for the first time.

Traditionally, migrants leave the country without any preliminary training, except for some courses run from time to time by international organisations through local NGOs. So the majority of migrants (81%) did not attend any training courses to prepare for work and life abroad. Prior to departure less educated migrants attended foreign language classes (2.8%) and vocational training courses (6.7%). Better-educated migrants did not do any training.

This study confirms increasing professionalization of work abroad, the trend that emerged in 2008–2009. For instance, 88.2% of surveyed migrants stated working abroad as their main occupation. As for migrants who had a profession at home, the number of professionals among migrants is growing compared to 2009. If in 2009 teachers (21.8%), drivers (21%) and builders (18.8%) represented the most common professions among migrant workers, then in 2015 the five most numerous vocational groups were builders (9.5%), economists (7.9%), teachers (4.5%), drivers and motor mechanics (2.5%) and doctors (2.0%). Overall, it can be noted that only 17% of migrants had professions that could be in demand on the Russian labour market in the construction, transport, agricultural and retail sectors.

The study has shown that only 19.2% of migrants took training courses abroad, 3.5 times more than in 2009 (2.3%). Of these, 46.9% benefited from on-the-job vocational training. Evidence from numerous studies suggests that most often migrants did not receive any certificates at the end of such training.

Willingness to learn is not associated with the migrants’ level of education but rather depends on the type of work they do and on their knowledge of the foreign language. Those migrants who were employed in the construction sector were more likely to receive on-the-job training. Migrants with poor knowledge of Russian attended languages courses (14%). According to the study, foreign language proficiency among returned migrants is generally rather good with 92.4% of respondents admitting that they speak Russian to a certain degree. This linguistic competency is associated with the migration experience rather than level of education because only 1.5% of respondents studied Russian at school. Knowledge of other languages among migrants is not significant. The younger migrant workers are, the poorer their foreign language skills. The study has shown that insufficient command of foreign languages presents a serious barrier to finding employment. Knowledge of a second or third language is more common among older, more experienced migrants.

Duration and purposes of migration. According to the results of the study, the average duration of the stay abroad tends to increase. For example, in 1999 almost a third of migrants left the country to work abroad for 1–2 months. Most of them were employed (or were registered as employed) at home seeking to earn some money abroad while on annual leave.

However, the pattern of migration has gradually changed. Over the last 7–8 years migration of Tajik nationals has remained seasonal with high levels of returning migrants. Almost half of migrants (49.2%) travel to work abroad every year, another 8.5% do it twice a year. Nearly a third of migrants (35%) go to work abroad rarely or on irregular basis. During their last trip, almost two thirds of migrants (59.6%) stayed abroad for up to one year and another 36.4% for between 1 and 2 years.

The reasons for moving abroad have changed in the last 10 years. In 2003, over 43.8% of migrants went to work abroad due to economic difficulties of their families, 22.8% due to unemployment and only about 5% to improve their standard of living. But at the end of 2008, 50.1% of migrants named improving living conditions as the main reason for labour migration, every tenth migrant (9.7%) stated dissatisfaction with current working conditions at home and 8.7% would like to find a better-paying job. 7.3% travelled abroad because of unemployment.

Between 2009 and 2015 motives for migration have hardly changed. The main factor that pushes people abroad still remains improving living conditions (39.2%). The important second factor is unemployment (15.3%), the third is inadequate working conditions at home (14.5%), the fourth is search for a better-paying job, and 9.6% of respondents stated a need to pay off debts. The number of migrants going abroad because of unemployment doubled compared to 2009.

This change in reasons for migration is undoubtedly linked to the economic growth in Tajikistan. After the implementation of some urgent measures the level of poverty was brought down from 83% to 32%, and the country has seen rather high levels of GDP and household income growth. There are vacant jobs in the country but low pay levels remain the main problem. The economic downturn in Russia affected Tajikistan's economy too. As the exchange rate of the national currency has plummeted, people's income from employment has dropped in value. The country is furthermore experiencing inflation and reduced purchasing power among population due to the fall in remittances from migrants abroad. Income from employment at home is not sufficient for large Tajik families.

Sectors of migrant employment. Similar to previous years (51% from 1998 to 2003, 55.8% in 2009), the majority of migrants abroad work in the construction industry (50.2%), although there is evidence of a slight drop in employment in this sector. The number of migrants employed in retail has fallen three-fold, in agriculture two-fold and in public administration almost seven-fold. More migrants work in transportation, in the processing industry and in domestic service. The most noticeable growth (two-fold) was recorded in the housing maintenance and utilities services sector.

Working conditions. Two thirds (63.6%) of migrants in Russia worked as employees, 14.9% did not have a permanent contract. Only 8.1% of migrants were employers and 5.7% were self-employed. The level and status of work performed by migrants has little bearing on their level of education but rather depends on them having required qualifications for the job abroad, knowledge of the language, social and personal skills and willingness to learn new skills.

The type of work determines the length of the working day. Only 17.8% of migrants work about 40 hours a week. For the majority of migrant workers (82.2%) the working day lasts 10 to 18 hours. According to the data reported in Professor Umarov's study, 28.2% of respondents were legally employed and 71.8% worked irregularly.

Projected levels of return labour migration

The future scale of return labour migration will depend on the economic situation in migrant workers' countries of destination (mainly the Russian Federation).

Recently, the Russian Government has adopted a policy of enhanced measures to control labour migration, evidenced by the transfer of the Federal Migration Service under the authority of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia and by statements of the President and the Prime Minister of Russia on the need to tighten migration legislation in order to prevent a situation similar to the one currently happening in Western Europe. Moreover, certain political parties and politicians call for the introduction of a visa regime with the Central Asian countries.

In reality this will result in more difficulties for migrant workers (among other things, police checks and extortions of migrants will intensify). Some regions of Russia also see the appearance of illegal bands, mainly comprised of youths with xenophobic views, who organise raids in dormitories, at construction sites, markets and in other places where migrant workers tend to congregate¹⁷⁴. All these actions could have a negative effect on the situation of migrant workers and could possibly result in them leaving Russia for home or pushing them to seek new labour markets in other countries.

174 According to some Russian mass media, TV programmes in particular.

Measuring the impact of emigration on labour markets in the regions of origin of migrants

When it comes to the impact of returning migrant workers on economic and other development of Tajikistan, it can be noted that they had the opportunity to acquire new professions and gain qualifications while working abroad that made them more competitive on the domestic labour market. For instance, fairly highly skilled construction workers from among returned labour migrants contributed to the construction boom experienced in the country in recent years.

Some migrants use their savings to set up small businesses or to buy cars and work as private taxi-drivers.

In his study, Professor Umarov highlights the negative impact of labour migration on the labour market in the regions of origin of migrant workers. According to his results, every year, starting in March, the number of men in rural areas drops dramatically – up to 80% of them leave home in search of work. This leads to the deficit of male skilled workers in rural districts, especially at busy times of intensive field works.

At the same time, an increasing number of migrants show interest in abandoned Russian villages and long-term lease of fertile unused land.

3.3.2. Factors of return migration

Reasons for return

Among the main reasons affecting migrants' decision to return home are the difficult economic situation in Russia, the Russian rouble's depreciation, rising costs of work permits and increasing numbers of Tajik nationals who committed administrative offences in the Russian Federation. According to the "Socservis" Centre study, the main motives to stop work and return home were: domestic problems – 15.7%, deportation or expulsion – 22.9%, completion of seasonal works – 16.9%, homesickness – 7.3%. 4.7% of migrants said they were dismissed by the employer upon completion of their work contract, 5.9% did not find a well-paying job, for 6.8% of migrants costs of permits became too high, work became unprofitable for 13.9%. Only 4.9% of migrants went home because they earned enough money – these were the most educated and prepared group. Less educated migrants are more prone to be employed in seasonal jobs.

Due to the fact that this survey was conducted among migrants who returned from Russia at the time of the 2014–2015 economic crash and the introduction of new, tougher regulations in January 2015, it should be noted that one in six migrants (18.8%) was forced to return home voluntarily (could not find work, could not obtain all the required permits, work was no longer profitable, etc.) and one in five migrants was expelled from Russia.

Professor Umarov's study shows that 6.3% of returned migrants named poor health as a reason for return to Tajikistan. The harsh Russian climate and lack of access to free healthcare for the majority of migrants result in a higher incidence of diseases among migrant workers compared to the local population. 1.5% of returned migrants cited deportation as the reason for their return home. Out of all respondents 27.1% said that they would like to spend winter at home – this group of migrants are seasonal workers. 6.8% of surveyed migrants stated that they came back purely due to family circumstances (weddings, funeral, etc.). Having stated that, some answers indicated that the real reason for their return was the financial crisis. For example, 5.6% of respondents said that they were unable to find a new job once work at the previous place of employment was completed; 2.9% of respondents returned home because their employers refused to extend their work contract upon its expiration. 78% of surveyed migrants answered affirmatively to the question "Is your return related to the financial crisis?"

Impact of the economic downturn

The economic downturn in Russia, the weakening rouble and its depreciation as well as new migration regulations greatly affected half of the migrants (52.9%) in terms of returning back to Tajikistan. For 39.6% of migrants the impact of the crisis was not significant. The most affected group were young, less skilled migrants with temporary jobs employed in the construction and service sectors.

Between 1998 and 2015 the poverty rate in Tajikistan fell from 83% to 32%, cash income of the population increased manifold, social infrastructure was rebuilt and hundreds of thousands of new jobs were created. However, some, mainly external, factors (global financial crisis, lower world prices for aluminium and cotton, reduced remittances from migrant workers, transport blockade by Uzbekistan, situation in neighbouring Afghanistan, barriers to the construction of Rogun Dam, the region's largest hydroelectric power plant) somewhat slowed down the Tajik economy, although it is still growing steadily (in 2014 GDP grew by 6.7%, in 2015 by 6%). This economic slowdown limits the resources for implementation of social programmes and impedes personal income growth.

In order to determine the social impact of the downturn on households more accurately, it is important to distinguish those migrants who were forced to return from those who go home after the end of the work season, so called seasonal workers. The responses of the surveyed migrants show that 43.2% of them worked in permanent jobs and 56.8% did seasonal work.

This study points out that migrants who returned because of the economic downturn command higher respect as opposed those individuals who never went abroad for work. The former are more likely to be employed on temporary or even permanent basis, their opinion is held in higher regard when discussing local issues, etc.

According to the information available on the "Cross-border transfers" page of the Central Bank of Russia's website, remittances from Russia to Tajikistan amounted to 4.155 billion dollars in 2013, 3.831 billion dollars in 2014 and 1.278 billion dollars in 2015. It is obvious from these figures that the level of remittances in dollars fell by 66.6% in 2015 compared to 2013. But according to the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, the level of remittances to Tajikistan in roubles remained the same. This is supported by the fact that over the same period the exchange rate fluctuated between 30 to 80 roubles for 1 dollar.

Economic situation of migrants' families (impact of reduced remittances and unemployment among migrants)

The devaluation of the Russian rouble had a significant impact on the income of migrant workers and their search for alternative sources of income. Although the monetary income of Russians in rouble terms remained unchanged, the inflation rate over the past 18 months has significantly reduced their standard of living. For this reason, the number of Russians living below the poverty line rose from 3 million people to 19 million people. A similar situation is observed with regard to remittances of Tajik migrants. According to the data of the National Bank of Tajikistan for 2015, the total amount of remittances in national currency has even slightly risen, but due to the devaluation of the Russian rouble and the Tajikistani somoni remittances in dollar terms have significantly fallen.

The IOM Tajikistan report¹⁷⁵ notes that for the majority of migrant workers the re-entry ban to the Russian Federation has led to a significant deterioration of their and their families' economic situation. About 24% of surveyed migrants stated that their families now have financial difficulties affording enough food, and 33% said that while their income is sufficient for food, it hardly allows them to buy new clothes and other daily necessities. Because of the shortage of jobs (which is especially severe in rural areas) and low salaries that do not allow breadwinners to provide for their families, a significant proportion of migrant workers have found themselves in a challenging economic situation.

175 A. Maier. Tajik Migrants with Re-entry Bans to the Russian Federation. Dushanbe, 2013.

The study conducted by the “Socservis” Centre highlighted the fact that families of migrants are very vulnerable and dependent on remittances. The 2008 global crisis has indeed demonstrated that families of migrants were the first to suffer from the fall in remittances. What effect the decreased level of remittances produced on migrants’ families during the 2014–2015 crisis in Russia is as yet unknown and will be a subject of a separate study.

3.3.3. Re-entry bans: their impact and mitigation measures

Impact of re-entry bans

The scale of return migration is greatly affected by the number of migrant workers who are temporarily banned from re-entering the Russian Federation for various reasons (so called banned migrants) and deported migrant workers. Yet, as practice shows, a significant number of Tajik nationals are subjected to deportation and administrative expulsion unlawfully, court hearings of migrant workers’ cases are sometimes conducted with violation of procedural rules with no defence lawyers present.

According to the information provided by the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan, the largest group of banned migrants appeared in 2013–2014. As of the end of 2015, the total number of banned migrants amounted to 333,391, as of 1 April 2016 – 330,672. Of those, nearly 36,000 migrants returned home (almost all of them are registered with the Migration Service). The rest, i.e. almost 300,000 Tajik migrant workers, have not left Russia and are waiting for their re-entry bans to expire or to be lifted early.

The duration of the re-entry ban to the Russian Federation is set according to the seriousness of the committed offence and can vary between 3 and 5 years. According to the Tajik Ministry of Labour, approximately 90% of migrants are banned for 3 years. In 2014, re-entry bans to the Russian Federation expired for 10,469 migrant workers from Tajikistan, in 2015 – for another 22,000. 103,440 re-entry bans will end in 2016, 32,000 in 2017 and 17,000 in 2018. 4,018 Tajik migrant workers, unaware that their names were put in the lists of the banned migrants, were turned away at Russian border control checkpoints in 2015. In eight months of 2016 their number has fallen to 783 individuals.

Cooperation with the Russian authorities (on a bilateral basis) in returning (expulsion) of own citizens and third country nationals

In order to regulate the matters of labour migration and protection of rights and interests of migrant workers who are citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan temporarily working in the Russian Federation, the two countries signed the Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation on the development of cooperation in the area of migration of 5 October 2012.

Under the terms of this Memorandum of Understanding, on 17 January 2014 the countries have also signed a bilateral Agreement exempting Tajik nationals from the requirement to register at the place of residence in Russia for stays less than 15 days long and a Protocol to this agreement allowing to issue Tajik nationals with work permits for the period of up to three years.

The Republic of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation have developed cooperation on several levels to address labour migration issues between the two countries. Labour migration questions are regularly discussed at the meetings of the Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation. At present, in accordance with the decisions outlined in the Minutes of the meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission for Economic Cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation held on 4 March 2015 and its Implementation Plan, work is ongoing on drafting:

- the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on cooperation in labour migration;
-

- the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on readmission and the Executive Protocol for its implementation;
- the Agreement between the Government of the Russian Federation and the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan on organised recruitment of Tajik nationals for temporary work in the Russian Federation;
- the Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tajikistan on social security (pension provision).

Following the new changes introduced into the Russian migration legislation, the Tajik party to the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Government of the Russian Federation on labour activity and protection of the rights of citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Russian Federation and of the citizens of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Tajikistan of 16 October 2004 has prepared and submitted through diplomatic channels a draft Protocol on amendments to this Agreement proposing to allow up to 90 days for applying for work permits (work patents) for Tajik migrant workers.¹⁷⁶

In order to strengthen cooperation in information exchange on the situation on the labour market, including on demand for workforce in the Russian Federation, and cooperation in other joint initiatives, a draft Agreement has been prepared between the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation.

Several educational institutions in both countries have established cooperation on the interregional level for the purposes of training skilled workers. At present, under the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the RT and the Government of the Tomsk Region of the RF and the Penza State University of 16 July 2014, students from the Republic of Tajikistan study at initial and secondary vocational education institutions in the Tomsk and Penza regions of the Russian Federation. In cooperation with the Saint-Petersburg City Administration, joint recruitment centres were set up for organised recruitment of migrant workers to production plants and factories in the city and Leningrad region.

Curricula and syllabi of initial and secondary vocational education institutions in the Republic of Tajikistan now include lessons in Russian language, history and elements of Russian legislation. In addition, all the educational institutions under the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan offer short-term Russian language courses for migrant workers. Test centres for migrant workers moving to the Russian Federation have been set up and run in collaboration with Russian universities.

Mitigating measures

Important work in protecting the rights of Tajik migrants unlawfully deported from the Russian Federation is done by the joint Tajik-Russian expert working group. To date, after the experts carefully examined applications from such individuals, the Federal Migration Service of Russia reissued entry permits to 1444 citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan (including 190 students studying at Russian universities).

Furthermore, as part of its role the joint expert working group has defined 5 categories of Tajik nationals who can appeal to the Russian migration authorities to have the temporary re-entry ban decision against them revoked:

1. those who have family ties with Russian citizens;
2. students at Russian educational institutions (full-time or part-time);
3. those who require treatment at Russian healthcare facilities and their carers;
4. holders of a permanent residence card, a work patent, a work permit or a temporary residence permit;
5. owners of real estate in the Russian Federation.

¹⁷⁶ Federal Law No. 43-FZ “On the Ratification of the Protocol on Amendments to the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Government of the Russian Federation on labour activity and protection of the rights of citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Russian Federation and of the citizens of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Tajikistan of 16 October 2004” of 2 April 2014 (current version, 2016).

Individuals from these categories are granted permission to re-enter the Russian Federation upon their application to the expert working group. In addition, the joint expert group can pass decisions on allowing migrants to re-enter Russia if their ban is to expire within next 18 months. As a result of their work to promote awareness among migrants of new provisions of the Russian migration law and possible reasons for re-entry bans, the number of migrants who could potentially be banned has dropped dramatically over the last year. This situation gives reasons to believe that the number of migrants with re-entry bans will fall significantly in the future. The work of this joint expert group should be continued and developed further.

The migration services of Tajikistan and Russia set up a joint working group with the purpose of implementing the Agreement between the Governments of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation on labour activity and protection of the rights of migrant workers. The main tasks of the joint working group are to ensure the implementation of the named Agreement signed in 2004, to elaborate and consider drafts of new agreements ready for submission to the governments and to develop ways of better cooperation between the migration services of both countries. The working group meets twice a year alternating between Dushanbe and Moscow.

The working group held its regular meetings in May and September 2015 where the preparation of four forenamed agreements between the Governments of Tajikistan and Russia was discussed, namely on readmission and draft protocol for its implementation, on cooperation in migration and social security for migrant workers (pension provision), on organised recruitment of Tajik nationals for temporary employment in Russia and on mutual recognition of medical certificates on each other's territory and on extension of work permit validity up to 3 years for the nationals of both countries.

On the basis of the Minutes of the joint working group meeting, from November 2015 citizens of Tajikistan with re-entry bans expiring within next 18 months and who do not have a criminal record are allowed to re-enter Russia. As of 20 December 2015, 5,000 Tajik nationals in that position were granted permission to re-enter Russian territory. The joint working group will continue its activity in this area. According to the Federal Migration Service of Russia, over the nine months of 2015 more than 400,000 migrant workers from Tajikistan have been officially working in Russia through obtaining a work patent, 10% more than in the same period of 2014. Moreover, the number of Tajik migrants placed in the risk group for various reasons was 353,345 in 2015, which is 234,150 or 40% less than in 2014 (when the number of migrants in the risk group stood at 587,495). This fact suggests that the scale of return labour migration to Tajikistan will be decreasing in subsequent years.

3.3.4. Opportunities and barriers for reintegration of migrants in local labour markets and communities

Challenges faced by returning migrants

The IOM Tajikistan report¹⁷⁷ points out that economic reintegration is the biggest challenge for Tajik migrants who returned from Russia with re-entry bans. Some 30% of the migrants surveyed for the purposes of that study were unemployed, but even many of those who were able to find work were struggling to make ends meet with low wages. Back from the Russian Federation where their salaries were sufficient to provide for themselves and their families, many now feel the frustration of doing the same work, but for lower pay, which has discouraged several of them from working at all. Many simply wait for their re-entry bans to be lifted so they could return to Russia. Unfortunately for some, the circumstances do not allow them to wait for so long, and there were reported cases of migrants who entered the Russian Federation with forged documents or through the help of smugglers who bring them across the border illegally¹⁷⁸. Faced with a frustrating and precarious living situation, it is highly likely that migrant workers see this step into irregularity as the only feasible way to sustain their livelihoods.

177 A. Maier. Tajik Migrants with Re-entry Bans to the Russian Federation. Dushanbe, 2013. P.6.

178 If migrants are detained for illegal border crossing they can be prosecuted for a criminal offence. In practice, there have already been cases of banned migrants trying to cross the border with fake or somebody else's travel documents which can also give rise to criminal liability.

Psychosocial reintegration was perceived as problematic in only a minority of cases. In general, Tajik migrant workers have very few difficulties readjusting to their home society, since many of them have not been away for long periods of time, returning home from time to time. Tajik culture and society remain an integral part of their identity despite staying in the Russian Federation. In fact, because of the widespread xenophobic attitudes and prejudices against Central Asian migrant workers in Russia, their home society often becomes an even stronger point of reference and part and parcel of their identity. Due to their limited integration into Russian society, none of them thought of the host country as their new home. 75% of the respondents indeed said they were happy to be back in Tajikistan despite all the problems, since it is, after all, their home and there they could be close to their friends and family again.

Around 20% of the respondents said that their financial situation now is better than when they were migrant workers and all of them stated that they have enough money to buy food, clothing and other everyday necessities. These returnees usually continue working in the same profession as they used to in Russia. Therefore, under certain circumstances successful return and reintegration at home are possible.

Situation of returning migrants in the Tajik labour market

The abovementioned study “Needs of returned migrants and of their family members in services and assessment of the Tajik state authorities’ potential in addressing migrants’ problems” conducted in 2016 by the “Socservis” Information and Research Centre reported that in general, foreign experience of migrants is increasingly in demand in Tajikistan. If in 2009 only 19.1% of surveyed migrants found jobs after they returned home, then in 2015 46.2% of returnees were in employment. Of these, once back in Tajikistan, 33.2% worked in the construction sector, 25.6% went into farming but 62.1% of them were in non-profit subsistence farming, 7.9% worked in retail, 8.1% in transport, and 3.8% in public administration.

Over 43.1% of working migrants were salaried employees, 8.3% were self-employed and 3% acted as employers. Almost every fourth returnee was employed informally, that is without a work contract (17.3%) or as an unpaid family worker (10.1%). It can be noted that, in general, the category of employment has not changed for working returnees in Tajikistan compared to their status abroad.

The majority of returned migrants were in unskilled jobs (44.5%), almost half as many migrants (24.4%) found skilled jobs, 6.7% occupied managerial positions at various levels; however, 12.2% were high level professionals. Percentages for migrants employed in the same categories abroad are lower by a quarter and this can be attributed to the fact that jobs they do at home are better matched to their educational level.

Only every ninth migrant (12.1%) went back to their old job once home. The majority of migrants (56.8%) found jobs with the help of their social networks (friends and relatives), one in six returnees (15.4%) through vacancy advertisements and only 1.8% started their own business. A higher level of education leads to using more varied sources of information. Good professionals are needed in the home country too. The main benefit of migration is not only earned income but also knowledge, professional skills and life experience gained abroad.

Furthermore, almost half of working migrants (48.4%) found work quickly, within a month. In the construction industry, as a rule, the rate of employment depends on the life experience (50.6%) and skills acquired abroad (37.1%). In other sectors this link is not so obvious. Moreover, the duration of migration does not influence employment chances of migrants in Tajikistan. Having done a different type of work abroad became a barrier in job search back home for one in two migrants.

Analysing the responses of those migrants who stated that they found it more difficult to find well-paying jobs after they came back home, one may note that returned migrants are facing the same challenges as before moving abroad: unemployment and low pay at available vacancies. In addition, some of them have failing health or are older people.

Current measures facilitating the access of returning migrants to the labour market

During the interviews with the officials from the Executive Office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, ministries and other agencies it was indicated that one of the main priorities of the socio-economic policy (reflected in the key strategic documents of the Government of Tajikistan) is to ensure effective employment of the population and to achieve the goals of the external labour migration policy. The priority in providing employment implies the use of human resources, first of all, for the purposes of achieving economic growth and social stability.

The main goals of the state policy in external labour migration are the social and legal protection of the citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan temporarily working abroad, regulation of migratory flows, prevention of irregular migration and establishment of the rule of law in the migration process.¹⁷⁹ Therefore, mitigating the negative impact that return migration has on the labour market as well as on migrants and their families should be the priority of emigration policy.

With regard to the measures aimed at assisting migrant workers, the following steps taken by the Government of Tajikistan in recent years are worth a mention:

- establishment of a permanent Inter-Agency Commission for regulation of the migration processes within the Government of Tajikistan;
- creation of the Migration Service of the Republic of Tajikistan;
- adoption of the Law “On Migration” in 1998 with some parts of it dealing with the external labour migration;
- adoption of the national Labour Migration Strategy 2011– 2015 with technical support from MOM Tajikistan;
- development and governmental approval of the Concept on Labour Migration of Tajik Nationals;
- adoption and implementation of two Labour Migration Programmes;
- signing of the Agreements on labour migration and the protection of the rights of migrant workers with the Russian Federation and Kyrgyzstan;
- approval by the Government of Tajikistan of a new Population Employment Programme for 2016–2017 in November 2015, it has a separate section on working with returning migrant workers;
- creation by the Governmental Order of a state institution “Centre for Pre-departure Consultation and Preparation of Migrant Workers” under the Migration Service of Tajikistan. At present such centres are open in Dushanbe, Khorugh and Khujand, 10 more are planned in other parts of the country.

To mitigate the consequences of the global economic crisis affecting the socio-economic situation in Tajikistan the Government has adopted the Anti-crisis Programme that, among other measures, instructs the ministries and other agencies and local authorities to provide additional job opportunities, including for migrant workers returning home. The Government of Tajikistan develops and adopts Annual Programmes for Employment of Population that provide for the creation of new jobs across all sectors of the economy, in all regions, cities and districts of the country and introduce job quotas for vulnerable categories of the population (disabled, mothers of large families, long-term unemployed, etc.). The Programmes also make provisions for temporary or permanent employment (paid public works) of unemployed nationals and training and retraining of adults in new professions.

In the context of the abovementioned governmental Anticrisis Programme, the Minister of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan approved by Executive Order No. 57 of 7 April 2015 the Programme for the employment of migrant workers who were issued with re-entry bans to the Russian Federation or other receiving countries. Under this Programme, 112,183 returned migrant workers sought advice from the Migration Service of Tajikistan in 2015, which is twice as many compared to the year before. In cooperation with the Agency for Labour and Employment and the Migration Service of the RT, for the purposes of their future successful employment IOM Tajikistan trained 600 unemployed people (returned migrants, single women – heads of household and young people) in professions that are in demand both in the domestic labour market and in the labour markets of the receiving countries; 108 grants were made available for opening of small and medium-sized businesses in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region of the RT in 2015. In addition, in collaboration with the Migration Service of the RT, 73,562 Tajik nationals were informed of the changes in the migration policy of the Russian Federation and the

¹⁷⁹ Concept on Labour Migration of Tajik Nationals, approved by the Government of the RT on 3 June 2001 (No 242).

Republic of Kazakhstan and received consultations on migration matters. With support from IOM, the Agency for Foreign Employment was set up at the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the RT aimed at finding legal employment for Tajik nationals abroad. Migrant workers and their family members received direct assistance (financial, legal, with returning to their homeland, etc.)

In fulfilment of the order given by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan in his message to the Parliament on 23 January 2015, the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan developed the draft Law of the Republic of Tajikistan “On Labour Migration” and submitted it to the Government for consideration. The draft law was prepared in collaboration with relevant ministries and agencies of the country and is aimed at ensuring the protection of the rights and interests of migrant workers. In addition, in collaboration with relevant ministries and agencies of Tajikistan, the draft of the “National Strategy for Labour Migration of Tajik Citizens for 2016–2020” was prepared and submitted to the Government for consideration. Among other actions, it specifies measures for reintegration of returning migrant workers. IOM Tajikistan provided technical support to working groups who are in charge of the development of the Strategy.

Job creation

The major factor in reintegrating returned migrant workers is to provide them with employment and adequate wages. According to the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan, 205,556 new jobs were created in 2015 overall, including 30,513 in construction, 9,876 in industry, 73,771 in agriculture and 91,396 in other sectors.

Table 3.17. Vacancies by industry in the Republic of Tajikistan in 2011–2015

No	Industry	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
1	Manufacturing sector	2,430	2,987	3,319	2,264	1,701	12,701
2	Construction	806	850	1,286	1,210	117	4,269
3	Agriculture	503	518	461	717	606	2,805
4	Transport and communications	321	255	238	312	202	1,328
5	Education and culture	1,522	1,405	1,013	1,119	801	5,860
6	Healthcare	3,430	2,818	2,399	2,326	2,120	13,093
7	Commerce and utility services	395	172	216	167	215	1,165
8	Other industries	2,287	2,970	2,348	2,220	1,485	11,310
	Total	11,694	11,975	11,280	10,335	7,247	52,531

Source: Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan, State Agency for Labour and Employment

The public sector of the economy was responsible only for 9% of newly created jobs, the remaining 91% appeared in the private sector and in companies of other forms of ownership. Of all new jobs 10,739 (5.2%) are located in GBAO (Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region), 66,111 (32.2%) in Khatlon Region, 57,259 (27.8%) in Sughd Region, 32,000 (15.6%) in Dushanbe and 39,447 (19.2%) in towns and Direct Rule Districts (DRD).

At first glance, Tajikistan is doing well with offering new job opportunities. However, a deeper analysis of the situation reveals that out of all jobs created in 2015 only 63,442 (30.5%) are permanent and the remaining 142,114 (or almost 70%) of the new jobs are temporary or seasonal. Moreover, a certain number of existing jobs is lost every year for various reasons. These negative factors significantly reduce the chances of jobless people, including returned migrant workers, to find employment.

Table 3.18. Vacancies by region of the Republic of Tajikistan in 2011–2015

No	Regions	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	Total
1	GBAO	89	159	47	135	49	479
2	Khatlon Region	4,130	3,833	3,184	3,614	2,622	17,383
3	Sughd Region	2,881	3,614	3,113	2,728	2,220	14,556
4	City of Dushanbe	1,854	1,865	2,099	1,950	968	8,736
5	Direct Rule Districts	2,740	2,502	2,837	1,908	1,388	11,375
	Total	11,694	11,973	11,280	10,335	7,247	52,529

Source: Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan, State Agency for Labour and Employment

Low pay rates is another unfavourable factor affecting employment opportunities and hindering the reintegration of returnees in Tajikistan. According to the official statistics, in January–October 2015 the average salary in the country was only 862 somoni (approximately 150 US dollars at the time), and even if it has risen by 6.4% compared to the similar period of 2014, it still remains the lowest among the CIS countries. It is worth noting that over the recent years nominal salary in Tajikistan has been rapidly growing but a sharp rise in inflation in the second part of 2015 and at the start of 2016 has significantly reduced the purchasing power of the national currency and weakened the somoni exchange rate against US dollar. According to the official figures from the National Bank of Tajikistan, at the end of 2014 the exchange rate was 5.3 Tajik somoni per 1 US dollar, in March 2015 – 5.6 somoni, in September 2015 – 6.4 somoni, in December 2015 – 6.99 somoni, and as of 15 March 2015 – 7.87 somoni. One should also note a large gap between salaries in different sectors of the economy. For example, the pay in the farming industry is 7.5 times lower than in construction.

Services provided to returning migrants

Certain help is offered to migrant workers on their return to Tajikistan: they are registered with the Migration Service and given information on vacancies and salaries, on opportunities for professional training at vocational educational institutions under the Ministry of Labour and certification of acquired professional skills. Even so, out of 36,292 “banned” migrants registered with the Migration Service only 3,692 are employed at their place of permanent residence (overall, only 7,762 returnees are currently in work). As confirmed by the official information from jobs centres and the Migration Service, the majority of returned migrant workers, including those with re-entry bans, are not satisfied with the salary offered for available vacancies, some of them do not have the required professional qualifications for available jobs; therefore, they prefer simply to wait for their re-entry ban to expire or hope for it to be lifted early so that they can go back to Russia again. As a rule, they have no plans to find work in Tajikistan. Returned migrant workers can make use of services provided at job centres available in all towns and districts of the country. However, these job centres offer limited opportunities due to low pay offered by companies and other organisations, lack of jobs and insufficient funding of the public employment services.

For example, out of 112,961 people who sought help at job centres in 2015, only 38,952 actually found employment, 5,346 were assigned to paid public works (temporary employment), 18,397 enrolled in training courses to acquire a new profession, 9,839 were receiving an unemployment benefit (paid for 3 months maximum), and 3,370 unemployed took out loans at preferential rates (totalling 10,695,000 somoni) to set up their own business.

To ensure successful employment and reintegration of returned migrant workers it is essential that they are trained in occupations that are in demand in the Tajik labour market as well as in labour markets of the destination countries. For this purpose, new skills training programmes are run at institutions of initial professional training (vocational colleges and schools) and through the network of Adult Learning Centres under the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Tajikistan. In 2015 over 121,000 people followed short-term courses at such training institutions and received certificates recognised in the countries of destination of migrant workers.

On the basis of agreements signed between the Governments of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation and between the Governments of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan, diplomas, certificates and other proof of training documents issued in these countries are mutually recognised, although in practice there are reports of this agreement not being respected in Russia. Yet, these educational institutions also experience difficulties with inadequate funding, out-of-date syllabi and curricula, lack of facilities and equipment and insufficient professional qualification level of teaching staff.

Barriers to reintegration

Another impediment to successful reintegration of the returnees is the extremely low participation of the returned migrants in reintegration support programmes. Only a marginal 5% of the respondents stated that they sought help from specialized organizations – State or non-State – that provide reintegration assistance through vocational training, welfare benefits, certification of skills or microloans. More than half of the migrants in this sample said that they simply did not know of any such support services. Another frequent reason for not using available assistance was dissatisfaction with the conditions set by the reintegration programmes which often impose additional expenses. Without a single exception, all respondents who were close to the expiry of their re-entry bans stated that they would go to Russia again as soon as they are allowed to do so. Instead of taking steps towards a sustainable reintegration, most migrant workers choose to remain in their economically vulnerable situation and await the end of their ban to re-enter the Russian Federation.

As it was reported in the “Socservis” Centre study, at the time of their return the majority of migrants (78.4%) did not know about the existence of the official programmes that offer help to returnees from abroad. Lack of awareness about such programmes is not to be blamed on the migrants’ level of education, but rather it is caused by the lack or limited nature of such projects. Out of the very few migrants (11.6%) who knew about them only 29.7% made use of them. Migrants expect specific help from such programmes, i.e. employment. Unfortunately, this is exactly the sort of help that these programmes cannot provide.

Despite all the administrative measures in returnee reintegration taken by the Government, there is no targeted funding allocated for these activities and in reality the state agencies have limited capacity in supplying employment, teaching skills and professions in high demand in labour markets of Russia and Tajikistan or providing microloans to migrants who would like to start their own business, etc. Given its inadequate funding some of the work with Tajik diasporas abroad has been put on hold, equipment and facilities as well as the level and quality of staffing do not meet modern standards; the State Agency for Labour and Employment is in a similar position.

Additional measures to stimulate return and reintegration of migrant workers could include creation of additional jobs that would efficiently harness their skills acquired during labour migration, gradual increase in salaries in the country, incentives for SMEs and self-employment. In addition, it is important to raise awareness among migrant workers of the available opportunities for reintegration offered by the Government of Tajikistan and various NGOs (vocational training and skills upgrading, certification of skills and offers of employment).

3.3.5. Protection of migrants’ rights

Combating exploitation, fraud and trafficking

Provisions for the protection of the rights of migrant workers in terms of combating exploitation, fraud and trafficking are included in the current legislation of Tajikistan, although no specific regulatory acts have been adopted in this area as yet.

As part of implementing counter-trafficking measures Tajikistan acceded to the principal international instruments in this field. As early as 2004 the Republic of Tajikistan became the very first state in Central Asia to pass the Law “On the Fight against Trafficking in Persons”. The Law “On Counteracting Trafficking in Persons and Providing Support to Victims of Trafficking in Persons” was adopted in 2014. A counter-trafficking unit was set up within the Ministry of Interior Affairs of Tajikistan. Specialized support centres for victims of trafficking were opened in the country to provide assistance to victims of such crimes. By the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan the Inter-agency Commission on Combating Trafficking in Humans was established as early as 2005. Similar commissions were set up in the regions and in Dushanbe. The work of this Commission is fully supported by international organizations, including IOM and USAID (United States Agency for International Development). In addition, the international organizations (IOM, USAID) have completed several projects in combating trafficking in humans.

The Government of Tajikistan adopted and implemented the Comprehensive Programme to Combat Trafficking in Persons for 2011-2013. The draft of the similar programme for 2016–2018 has been submitted for the consideration of the Government. IOM provided assistance in organising a range of events in Tajikistan dealing with this problem, i.e. an international conference in 2013, a number of round tables and seminars; regular meetings are held with local communities throughout the country, including migrant workers, where challenges of preventing human trafficking are discussed.

According to the Migration Service and the State Agency for Labour and Employment under the Ministry of Labour of Tajikistan, no particular issues have been raised regarding the respect of the rights of returned migrant workers by employers, intermediaries, state agencies or third parties.

Maintaining ties with migrants abroad

Currently there are 81 officially active public organizations – Tajik cultural centres and diasporas – in the Russian Federation. Representatives of Tajik diasporas visit Tajikistan to take part in celebrations of national holidays (the Independence Day, the Festival of Navruz, the Day of National Reconciliation and Unity, etc.).

With the intention to attract further investment into the national economy from diasporas abroad and to provide for the protection of the rights and interests of migrant workers, the Government has adopted and is implementing the Concept on Engaging Compatriots in Development of Tajikistan. In accordance with the Action Plan for the implementation of this Concept, the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of Tajikistan has established contacts with compatriots abroad and Tajik diasporas. In 2015 the Ministry of Labour in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a conference of Tajik diasporas in Russia where they elected their leader. With the assistance of the European Commission a round table on “Strengthening cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and diasporas” was organised in December 2015.

As part of cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation in the field of labour migration, national migration authorities of both countries have opened their respective representative offices on each other’s territory. The work of the representative office of the Tajik Ministry of Labour in the Russian Federation is aimed at the protection of the rights and interests of migrant workers in Russia (reclaiming migrants’ salaries from their employers, contesting unlawful decisions of courts of various levels, organised employment of migrants). This work is carried out with assistance from the Embassy and Consulate Sections of Tajikistan in Russia. The staff of the representative office in cooperation with national NGOs and Tajik diasporas run information and awareness-raising campaigns among migrants on the issues of legal stay and labour in the Russian Federation, prevention of radicalization of migrant workers and their involvement in terrorist organizations.



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ANNEX 1.

LIST OF STATE INSTITUTIONS BY COUNTRY

Official Name of Agency/ Organization/Ministry	Официальное название Агенства/Организации/ Министерства	Date of Interview
Republic of Kazakhstan	Республика Казахстан	
Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development	Министерство здравоохранения и социального развития Республики Казахстан	23.02.2016; 23.05.2016; 24.06.2016
Committee for Religious Affairs	Комитет по делам религий Министерства культуры и спорта Республики Казахстан	23.02.2016
Astana Regional Department for Employment	«Управление занятости, труда и социальной защиты», ГУ, Акимат г. Астаны	23.02.2016; 24.05.2016
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Министерство иностранных дел Республики Казахстан	23.02.2016
Ministry of Finance	Министерство финансов Республики Казахстан	23.05.2016
Ministry of Internal Affairs	Министерство внутренних дел Республики Казахстан	23.02.2016
Ministry of National Economy	Министерство национальной экономики Республики Казахстан	23.05.2016
General Prosecutor's Office	Генеральная прокуратура Республики Казахстан	24.02.2016
Almaty Regional Department of Employment	«Управление занятости, труда и социальной защиты», ГУ, Акимат г. Алматы	1.03.2016; 2.06.2016
Almaty Regional Employment Center	КГУ «Центр занятости Алматы», акимат Алматы	2.06.2016
National Bank of Kazakhstan	Национальный банк Республики Казахстан	2.06.2016
Almaty Migration Police	Управление миграционной полиции	1.03.2016
Astana Migration Police	Управление миграционной полиции ДВД города Астаны	25.05.2016
Aktau Akimat Department for Employment	Управление координации занятости и социальных программ Мангистауской области	11.04.2016
Aktau Migration Police	Управление миграционной полиции ДВД Мангистауской области	11.04.2016
Aktau Regional Department for Employment	Государственное учреждение «Центр занятости населения» Акимат Мангистауской области	12.04.2016
Aktau Kyrgyz cultural centre	Кыргызский национальный этнокультурный центр г. Актау	13.04.2016
Petropavlovsk Tajik diaspora of the Northern Kazakh Province	Общественное объединение «Таджикская община «Сомониён Север» Северо-Казахстанской области	14.04.2016
Astana Regional Employment Center	КГУ «Центр занятости Астаны», акимат Астаны	24.05.2016
Kazakh Strategic Institute under the President	Казахстанский институт стратегических исследований при Президенте Республики Казахстан (КИСИ)	24.05.2016

Official Name of Agency/ Organization/Ministry	Официальное название Агенства/Организации/ Министерства	Date of Interview
Republic of Tajikistan	Республика Таджикистан	
Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan	Министерство труда, миграции и занятости населения Республики Таджикистан	4.04.2016; 2.06.2016
Centre for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan	Центр стратегических исследований при Президенте Республики Таджикистан	5.04.2016; 8.04.2016
State Agency of Labour and Employment of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan	Государственное Агентство труда и занятости населения Министерства труда, миграции и занятости населения Республики Таджикистан	5.04.2016; 22.04.2016
Migration Service of the Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment of the Republic of Tajikistan	Миграционная служба Министерства труда, миграции и занятости населения Республики Таджикистан	5.04.2016; 22.04.2016
Centre for Islamic Studies under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan	Центр исламских исследований при Президенте Республики Таджикистан	7.04.2016
Committee for Youth Affairs, Sport and Tourism under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan	Комитет по делам молодежи, спорта и туризма при Правительстве Республики Таджикистан	9.04.2016
Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan	Министерство внутренних дел Республики Таджикистан	11.04.2016; 20.04.2016; 2.06.2016
Executive office of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan	Исполнительный аппарат Президента Республики Таджикистан	13.04.2016
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan	Министерство иностранных дел Республики Таджикистан	13.04.2016
Office of the General Prosecutor of the Republic of Tajikistan	Генеральная прокуратура Республики Таджикистан	18.04.2016
Informational-Analytical Unit of the Chief Department of Border forces under the State Comity for National Security of the Republic of Tajikistan	Информационно-аналитический отдел Главного управления пограничных войск Государственного комитета национальной безопасности Республики Таджикистан	19.04.2016
Department on Religious Affairs of the Local Executive Body of the State Authority in Dushanbe	Отдел по делам религии Местного исполнительного органа государственной власти в г. Душанбе	21.04.2016
Grand Mufti	Верховный Муфтий	30.04.2016
Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan	Министерство экономического развития и торговли Республики Таджикистан	2.06.2016
Vice-Chairman on Economic Affairs of the Local Executive Body of the State Authority in Dushanbe	Заместитель председателя Местного исполнительного органа государственной власти в г. Душанбе по экономическим вопросам	2.06.2016

Official Name of Agency/ Organization/Ministry	Официальное название Агенства/Организации/ Министерства	Date of Interview
Republic of Kyrgyzstan	Республика Кыргызстан	
Department of Social Development of the Government Administration of the Kyrgyz Republic	Отдел социального развития Аппарата Правительства Кыргызской Республики	11.04.2016
Committee on Social Affairs, Education, Science, Culture and Health Care of the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic	Комитет по социальным вопросам, образованию, науке, культуре и здравоохранению Жогорку Кенеша КР	15.04.2016
Ministry of Labour and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic	Министерство труда и социального развития КР	11.04.2016
Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic	Министерство внутренних дел КР	20.04.2016
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic	Министерство иностранных дел КР	20.04.2016
General Prosecutor's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic	Генеральная прокуратура КР	20.04.2016
State Service on Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic	Государственная служба миграции при Правительстве КР	11.04.2016; 25.04.2016
State Registration Service of the Kyrgyz Republic	Государственная регистрационная служба при Правительстве КР	12.04.2016
State Border Service of the Kyrgyz Republic	Государственная пограничная служба КР	12.04.2016
Akyikatchy (Ombudsman) of the Kyrgyz Republic	Акыйкатчы (Омбудсмен) Кыргызской Республики	19.04.2016
State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic	Государственная комиссия по делам религий КР	20.04.2016
Information and Consulting Center under the State Service on Migration of the Kyrgyz Republic	Информационно-консультационный центр при Государственной службе миграции КР	21.04.2016

ANNEX 2 :

PROFILES OF RESPONDENTS OF THE SOCIOLOGICAL FIELD ASSESSMENT

1. Kazakhstan

Men and Women

No	Name (all changed and invented)	Age	Marital status	Education	Re-entry ban (date)	# years of experience in the RF	Regular status in the RF	Year of return	Employed back home	Region of origin
1	1TJ/Anvar	22	Unmarried	Secondary	2015	2	N	2015	No	Khudzhand (Tajikistan)
2	2Uz/Bilol	33	Married	Secondary	2009	5	Y	2011	Y	Namangan (Uzbekistan)
3	3 Uz/Sherali	30	Married	Secondary	2013	3	N	2013	Y	Namangan (Uzbekistan)
4	4Uz/Shavkat	31	Unmarried	High	N	4	Y	2015	No	Tashkent (Uzbekistan)
5	5Uz/Bakhram	29	Married	High	2015	5	Y	2015	No	Khorezm (Uzbekistan)
6	6Uz/Rashid	22	Unmarried	Secondary	N	NA	Y		No	Khorezm (Uzbekistan)
7	8Tj/Abubakr	35	Unmarried	Secondary	2015	16	N	2015	No	Khatlon region (Tajikistan)
8	1Uz/Khadzhira	34	Divorced (woman)	Secondary	2015	10	N	2015	No	Tashkent (Uzbekistan)
9	2Uz/Bekzod	26	Unmarried	Secondary	2015	4	N	2015	No	Khorezm (Uzbekistan)
10	3Uz/Aslan	29	Married	Secondary	N	5	Y	2014	Y	Khorezm (Uzbekistan)
11	4Uz/Sharafat	30	Married	Secondary	2015	6	N	2013	No	Samarkand (Uzbekistan)
12	K/Umar	21	Unmarried	Secondary	2015	1,6	N	2015	No	Khudzhand (Tajikistan)
13	R/Usmon	21	Unmarried	Secondary	2015	2	N	2015	No	Khudzhand (Tajikistan)
14	S/Ali	22	Unmarried	Secondary	NA	3	N	2014	No	Khudzhand (Tajikistan)
15	Zakirzhon	29	Married	Secondary	NA**	6	N	2014	Yes	Kashkadarja (Uzbekistan)
16	Kholmurod	27	Married	Secondary	NA**	5	N	2013	No	Kashkadarja (Uzbekistan)
17	Rovshan	24	Unmarried	Secondary	NA**	4	N	2014	No	Kashkadarja (Uzbekistan)

No	Name (all changed and invented)	Age	Marital status	Education	Re-entry ban (date)	# years of experience in the RF	Regular status in the RF	Year of return	Employed back home	Region of origin
18	Bakhadyr	26	Married	Secondary	NA**	4	N	2014	no	Kashkadarja (Uzbekistan)
19	TJM1/Salmon	24	Married	Secondary	Y, 2013	3	N	2013	Self-employed in country of origin (IOM assisted)	Khatlon (Tajikistan)
20	TJM2/Ibrakhim	40	Married	Higher	Y, 2012	9	N	2012	Self-employed in country of origin (IOM assisted)	Khatlon (Tajikistan)
21	KYM1/Aydar	21	Single	Unfinished Higher	Y, 2015	2	N	2015	N (irregular in KZ at the moment of the interview)	Osh (Kyrgyzstan)
22	TJM3/Yodgor	56	Married	Secondary	N*	5	N	2015	N	Khatlon, Tajikistan
23	TJM4/Pulod	35	Married (unofficially)	Secondary	N	3	N	2016	N	Tajikistan
24	UZM1/Murat	32	Single	Secondary	Y, 2011	3	N	2011	NA	Andijan, (Uzbekistan)
25	UZM2/Yasir	27	Divorced	Secondary	N	1	N	NA	Employed in Y (in KZ)	Tashkent, Uzbekistan
26	FTJM1/Rakhima	30	Second wife (woman)	Higher	Y	3	N	NA		Tajikistan
27	TJM6/Akbar	40s	Married	Secondary	Y	4	N	NA	Y (in KZ)	Tajikistan
28	TJM7/Akmal	40s	Married	Secondary	Y	5	N	NA	Y (in KZ)	Tajikistan
29	KYM2/Almazbek	41	Married	Secondary	N	1	N	NA	N	Kyrgyzstan
30	UZM3/Khasan	26	Single	Secondary	N**	2	N	NA	Y (in KZ)	Khorezm, Uzbekistan
31	UZM4/Muslim	25	Single	Secondary	Y	3	N	2012	Y (in KZ)	Khorezm, Uzbekistan
32	UZM5/Dastan	22	Single	Secondary	N	0	N	-	Y (in KZ)	Uzbekistan
33	FUZM1/Al'fiya	50s	Divorced (woman)	Secondary	N	0	-	-	Occasionally	Uzbekistan
34	TJMX/Ismoil	40s	Married	Secondary	Y	7	N	2014	N	Khatlon, Tajikistan

2. Kyrgyzstan

Men

No	Name (all changed and invented)	Age	Marital status	Education	Re-entry ban	# years of experience in the RF	Regular status in the RF	Year of return	Employed back home	Region of origin
1	MK1/Uluk	20	Single	Secondary	N	2	Y	2015	N	Bishkek
2	MK2/Nurbek	21	Single	Secondary	N	1	N	2015	N	Village in Osh oblast
3	MK3/Suyun	29	Married	Unfinished higher	Y	5	N	2014	N	Jalalabad
4	MK4/Kanybek	27	Single	Secondary	Y	6	Y	2016	N	Bishkek
5	MK5/Muzaffar	21	Single	Secondary	Y	3	N	2013	N	Osh
6	MK6/Davron	36	Married	Professional	N	5	N	2015	Occasionally	Osh
7	MK7/Mansur	52	Married (2 wives)	Professional	Y	8	Y	2015	N	Osh
8	MK8/Bolot	20	Single	Secondary	Y	2	N	2015	N	Naryn
9	MK9/Kuban	23	Single	Secondary	N	2	N	2015	Occasionally	Bishkek
10	MK10/Zamir	18	Single	Secondary	Y	1	N	2015	Occasionally	Jalalabad
11	MK/11Umar	36	Married	Higher	Y	5	N	2016	N	Osh
12	MK/12Mirbek	28	Married	Secondary	Y	2	N	2014	N	Naryn
13	MK/13Altynbek	26	Single	Secondary	Y	5	N	2015	N	Jalalabad
14	MK/14Sultan	42	Married	Professional	N	18	Y	2015	N	Jalalabad
15	MK/15Temir	40	Married	Higher	N	15	Y	2014	Y	Chuy
16	MK/16Joomart	27	Married	Higher	Y	6	N	2014	Y	Jalalabad
17	MK/17Siezdbek	37	Widow	Professional	Y	13	N	2015	Occasionally	Chuy
18	MK/18Adyl	56	Married	Professional	N	7	Y	2014	N	Jalalabad
19	MK/19Kanat	29	Widow	Secondary	Y	6	N	2015	N	Bishkek
20	MK/20Kutman	27	Single	Secondary	N	6	N	2015	Y	Jalalabad
21	MK/21Taalay	26	Married	Secondary	N	4	N	2016	N	Jalalabad
22	FM-K/Nurgul	25	Married	Professional	Y	2	N	2015	N	Osh
23	FM-K/Feruza	48	Widow	Secondary	Y	4	N	2015	N	Osh
24	FM-K/Zuura	51	Widow	Higher	Y	5	N	2015	Y	Osh

Women

No	Name (all changed and invented)	Age	Marital status	Education	Re-entry ban	# years of experience in the RF	Regular status in the RF	Year of return	Employed back home	Region of origin
1	FMK1/ Fatima	38	Married	Higher	N	3	N	2011	Y	Bishkek
2	FMK2/ Altnay	25	Abandoned	Higher	N	1	N	2015	N	Village in Chuy Region
3	FMK3/ Mirim	50 ca.	Married at the time of migration/ recently widow	Secondary	N	3	Y	2014	N	NA, outside Bishkek
4	FMK4/ Ayana	45	Widow	Higher	Y	6	Y	NA	N	Batken
5	FMK5/ Miryam	23	Abandoned	Secondary	Y	2	N	2015	N	Issyk kul
6	FMK6/ Syl dys	45 ca.	Divorced	Professional	Y	2	N	2015	N	Bishkek
7	FMK7/ Aliya	30s	Married	Professional	Y	3	N	2013	Occasionally	Naryn
8	FMK8/ Anara	27	Single	Higher	N*	3	N	2014	N	Batken
9	FMK9/ Masuda	27	Married	Higher	Y	3	N	2014	N	Batken
10	FMK10/ Nursulu	32	Married	Higher	N	10**	N	2015	Y	Jalalabad
11	FMK11/ Nargul	22	Single	Unfinished higher	N	1	N***	2015	N	Jalalabad

* she was not sure about it.

** husband worked in Russia. She didn't go there.

*** regular only in the first period.

3. Tajikistan

Men

No	Name	Age	Marital status	Education	Re-entry ban (date)	# years of experience in the RF	Regular status in the RF	Year of return	Employed back home	Region of origin
1	Mtj1 / Naseem	26	married	secondary	Y	8	N	2014	no	Tajikobod
2	MTj2 / Najeem	32	married	secondary	Y	6	N	2015	No	Tajikobod
3	MTj3 / Irdavs	30	married	secondary	Y	6	N	2014	No	Tajikobod
4	MTJ4 / Davlatmurod	32	married	Secondary, religious education in Kurgan-tube	N*	8	Y	2013	Yes	Tajikobod
5	MTj5 / Rauf	30	married	secondary	N*	6	No	2015	No	Tajikobod
6	MTj6 / Jamshed	62	married	Secondary						
	N*	8	No	2014	Yes	Tajikobod				
7	MTj7 / Amon	30	married	secondary	Y	6	Yes	2014	Yes	Tajikobod
8	MTj8 / Ikhtiyor	26	married	Secondary						
	N*	4	Yes	2015	No	Tajikobod				
9	MTj9 / Umar	58	married	secondary	N*	10	Yes	2014	no	Tajikobod
10	MTj10 / Ismon	36	married	Secondary						
	Y	11	No	2014	no	Tajikobod				
11	MTj11 / Dilmurod	45	married	secondary	Y	10	No	2014	no	Tajikobod
12	MTj12 / Afzalshoh	23	Not married	secondary	Y	3	No	2014	no	Tajikobod
13	MTj13 / Jurajon	34	married	secondary	N	9	yes	2014	No	Tajikobod
14	MTj14 / Aliakbar	32	married	secondary	N	6	yes	2013	No	Tajikobod
15	MTj15 / Hurshed	24	Not married	secondary	N	3	no	2014	No	Tajikobod
16	MTj16 / Asror	58	married	secondary	N*	14	yes	2014	No	Farkhor
17	MTJ17 / Firuz	22	Not married	High not enrolled	N	2	yes	2015	no	Farkhor
18	MTj18 / Sohibnazar	27	married	secondary	Y	5	no	2014	no	Farkhor
19	MTj19 / Khokimzhon	31	married	Professional college	Y	7	no	2015	no	Farkhor
20	MTj 20 / Kholmurod (with RUS and KZ experience)	50	married	secondary	Y	16	no	2013	yes	Farkhor
21	MTj21 / Ghairatali	33	married	secondary	NA	6	no	2014	yes	Farkhor
22	MTj22 / Alikhon	30	married	secondary	Y	10	no	2014	No	Farkhor

23	MTj23 / Jamshed	34	married	secondary	Y	8	no	2013	Yes	Farkhor
24	MTj24 / Aynizom	29	married	Pedagogical college	N*	3	no	2014	yes	Farkhor
25	MTj25 / Akhror	47	married	secondary	N*	17	no	2013	No	Farkhor
26	MTj 26 / Ismatullo	26	married	secondary	N*	7	no	2015	yes	Farkhor
27	MTj27 / Saidumar	28	married	secondary	Y	5	yes	2015	yes	Farkhor
28	MTj28 / Nurmukhamad	33	Married	secondary	N*	7	yes	2014	no	Farkhor
29	MTj29/ Saidmahmad	47	married	secondary	Y	9	no	2013	No	Farkhor
30	Mtj 30 / Ismoil	31	married	Professional college	Y	8	yes	2015	no	Farkhor
31	Mtj31 / Ilhomjon	47	Married	Higher	Y	9	No	2015	Yes	Kulyab
32	Davron	50s	Married	Secondary	y	NA	No	2015	Partly	Kulyab

* They claimed that they could not go enter the RF again, but were unclear on whether they had a re-entry ban or not.

Women

No	Name	Age	Marital status	Education	Re-entry ban	# years of experience in the RF	Regular status in the RF	Year of return	Employed back home	Region of origin
1	TJFM1/ Mansura	34	Married	Secondary	Y	2	N	2015	Y (IOM)	Khatlon
2	TJFM2/ Firuza	42	Married	Secondary	Y	2	N	2015	Y (IOM)	Khatlon
3	TJFM3/ Shukriya	40s	Without husband*	Higher	Y	3	N	2013	Y (IOM)	Khatlon
4	TJFM4/ Madina	42	Married	Unfinished higher	Y	1	N	2014	Y (IOM)	Khatlon
5	TJFM5/ Laylo	35	Married (2nd wife, abandoned)	Secondary	Y	7	N	2014	N	Khatlon
6	TJFM6/ Gulnoza	21	Single	Unfinished higher	Y	1	N	2015	N	Khatlon
7	TJFM7/ Sulman	40s	Married	Secondary	Y	5	N	2015	N	Khatlon
8	TJFM8/ Yasmina	55	Without husband*	Secondary	N	1	N	2013	Self-employed	Khatlon
9	TJFM9/ Shamsa	25	Married	Secondary	N	2	N	2014	Y	Khatlon
10	TJFM10/ Mariyam	24	Married	Secondary	N	2	Y	2015	N	Khatlon
11	TJFM11/ Nabiga	30	Second wife/ abandoned	Unfinished higher	N	7	N	2015	N	Khatlon
12	TJFM/ Nadzhikha	29	Abandoned	Secondary	N	1	N	2015	N	Khatlon



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