



An image of some of the firearms seized (Photo by press center of the State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

# Coup Attempt Thwarted in Kyrgyzstan, Five Detained

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Today, the State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic (GKNB) reported the arrests of five men allegedly plotting a coup attempt. Photos were released depicting seized firearms, drones, and bomb-making equipment, along with uniforms and bulletproof vests. According to state media, the individuals arrested were religious extremists, but no details have been provided on their ideology. The suspects allegedly planned to overthrow the government and subsequently incite mass riots.

## What We Know So Far

Photos of the guns seized from the alleged criminals depict a modest firearm collection, largely composed of legally-obtainable shotguns and handguns. Also seized were a number of ARs, Tigr SVD rifles, and Saiga rifle-style AKs, along with what looked to be air rifles. It's unclear what the selected fire options for the firearms are.



Another image of some of the firearms seized (Photo by the press center of the State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic)

Photos have also surfaced depicting IED-making materials.



Photo of fatigues allegedly owned by the coup organizers (photo by the press center of the State Committee for National Security of the Kyrgyz Republic)

Although just five men were arrested, photos show a number of plated vests and dozens of fatigues, meaning security forces are likely to detain other suspects as the investigation continues.

## Kyrgyzstan's Last Coup

Kyrgyz authorities reported that mass riots were planned by the detainees.

This is the second alleged coup to be foiled by GKNB this year. In December of 2023, real estate developer Imamidin Tashov released a video claiming he had been kidnapped by the GKNB. Tashov was first accused of fraud by the GKNB and then accused of attempting to orchestrate national riots along with Kyrgyz activist Tilekmat Kurenov. In January of this year, dozens of associates of Kurenov and Tashov were reportedly detained.

In response to the accusations, Tashov accused the GKNB in December of merely trying to shake him down for money. Bishkek admittedly has a notoriously high level of corruption, with officials allegedly bought off by convicted criminals. Tashov reportedly claimed that he was pressured to give up his business assets to the state to get off the hook.



The Chairman of the State Committee for National Security, Kamchybek Tashiyeu, delivers a speech in October, 2023 (Photo from Kamchybek Tashiyeu Facebook page)

Kyrgyzstan has been criticized by Freedom House, a US think tank, for its corruption and lack of transparency. It reports that the government often uses a "catch-and-release" method of arrests for business leaders, criminals, and officials in order to generate governmental revenue and to serve political ends. Arresting a number of citizens for arbitrary reasons seems somewhat common--the arrest of the alleged coup plotters in January was never fully explained, for example. The exact reasons for the real estate developer allegedly planning a coup and the individuals subsequently arrested in January remain a secret. The photos released of the bomb-making equipment in the most recent arrests suggest the alleged coup attempt would have been violent, but how the suspects intended to utilize the coup d'état to create mass riots has not been explained by the GKNB.

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