NEW ROUND OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS IN KYRGYZSTAN

On 10 October 2014 an important political event took place in Bishkek – meeting of the Council on Judicial Reform, chaired by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, who gave his “blessing” to the process of endorsement of major draft laws to ensure a judicial reform in the country. The new drafts of the Criminal Code, Code on Misdemeanors, Criminal Procedure Code, and Penal Code should “eliminate a gap in the judicial proceedings, when a judge can adjudicate both maximum and minimum punishments by means of a bribe”, - said the President. Over the last twelve months the process of drafting of the new criminal legislation has been supported by a consortium of international organizations, including UNODC, via provision of professional expertise and support to the expert working groups. The Council on Judicial Reform concluded that draft codes should be submitted to the Parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic for consideration in late 2014 or early 2015.

STRENGTHENING DRUG CONTROL IN PENITENTIARY SYSTEM

On 5 November 2014 UNODC organized a coordination meeting to discuss steps aimed at enhancing coordination between the State Service for Execution of Punishments and State Drug Control Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The main objectives of UNODC assistance include: scale-up of joint criminal investigations on illicit drugs trafficking; strengthening of prison security procedures to prevent drugs trafficking in the prison system; improvement of the enabling environment for the development and implementation of long-term evidence-based drug control programs in prisons.

STRENGTHENING CAPACITY OF THE STATE FORENSIC CENTER

From 10 to 13 November 2014 the State Forensic Centre under the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic (SFC) hosted an assessment experts’ mission from Georgia. In August 2014 international experts conducted a comprehensive assessment of the SFC’s needs and developed practical recommendations to improve its operations, including the forensic services’ quality. Assessment of implementation of the recommendations was the main task of the second mission. The number of handwriting expertise, construction, technical and economic forensic examinations increases annually. In 2013, the SFC conducted 7585 forensic examinations. However, the existing infrastructure and equipment of SFC to conduct forensic examinations is outdated and cannot provide the adequate quality level. UNODC supports improvement of the country legislation in the field of forensic expertise, enhancement of the forensic experts’ skills, while strengthening cooperation with the law enforcement agencies of the country, and improving the SFC’s infrastructure.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION FOR CRIME PREVENTION AND PUBLIC SAFETY

In mid October 2014 UNODC continued its work with local communities and police on crime prevention in pilot regions of Kyrgyzstan. With the support of its partner organization “Foundation for Tolerance International” consultations were held with representatives of local self-government, community leaders, police officers and local population on the development of a local crime prevention plan in the city of Jalal-Abad. Implementation of this Plan will contribute to decreased crime level and united efforts of the local police and communities in the process of solving the arising problems at the local community level. On the whole, this activity is aimed at strengthening cooperation between the police and local communities on crime prevention and public safety based on social partnership principles.
VISIT OF UNODC REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE TO KYRGYZSTAN

From 20 to 26 November 2014 UNODC Regional Representative to Central Asia, Ms. Ashita Mittal, visited Bishkek. During her first official visit to Kyrgyzstan, Ms. Mittal met with the Vice-Prime Minister, Mr. Mamataliev, and heads of the key ministries and agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Vice-Prime Minister emphasized the high level of interaction between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNODC. In her turn, the UNODC Regional Representative singled out Kyrgyzstan as one of the priority countries for the UNODC support in the region and confirmed the UNODC adherence to continue technical assistance in the area of the rule of law with a particular focus on prevention of the organized crime and illicit drug trafficking. Both sides of the meeting reassured of their readiness for further collaboration, including possible extension of the cooperation to such new areas as illicit financial flows and banking systems, corruption and cross border crimes, smuggling of migrants and human trafficking, radicalism and religious extremism.

LEVEL OF TRUST OF THE KYRGYZ PEOPLE TO THE POLICE

On 14 November 2014, on the UNODC’s initiative, the Kyrgyz Republic Government and Parliament members, civil society and international organizations took part in a public dialogue “Level of public trust to the police”, within UN Peacebuilding Fund project “Peace and Trust: Equal Access to Law Enforcement and Justice”, in Bishkek. The participants discussed issues related to strengthening of public trust to the police, functioning of local crime prevention centres and creation of community police units. A special attention was paid to the issue of transparency, accountability, access to information, and police performance evaluation. Deputy Minister of Interior of the Kyrgyz Republic noted that “major focus of the police work is building trust relationship with the population, modernization of field services, which influences the police image on the whole”.

FIFTH EXPERT CRIMINAL JUSTICE FORUM IN CENTRAL ASIA

On 24-25 November 2014 more than 65 policy-makers, academics, professionals and civil society representatives from Central Asia met in Bishkek to discuss reform initiatives, current challenges and good practices for criminal justice systems at the Fifth Expert Forum on Criminal Justice for Central Asia. The Expert Forum, organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), highlighted the importance of respecting the rule of law and human rights in criminal justice systems. Alternatives to pre-trial detention, legal conditions for certain coercive investigative acts as well as fair trial rights, were the focus of the discussions. Nataliya Nikitenko, Head of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, Constitutional Legislation and State Structure of the Kyrgyz Jogorku Kenesh, said: “Kyrgyzstan has embarked on an important process to reform its criminal justice-related legal codes, which will benefit from the discussions and exchange of expertise at the Expert Forum by informing the work on drafting these new codes.”