

## Kyrgyzstan: Mosque Closures have Begun

### News:

In the Jalal-Abad region of Kyrgyzstan, a specially created commission to verify the legality of mosques began its work.

The State Committee for National Security initiated the creation of a special commission, which included employees of local self-government, the Internal Affairs Directorate, the Cadastre State Institution, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, the SSES, the State Commission for Religious Affairs (SCRA) and the SAMK, the press service of the department reports. In the course of past inspections, the commission identified 60 mosques that did not pass registration with the SAMK and the SCRA: 33 in the Suzak region, two in Bazar-Korgon, five in Nookan, three in Aksy, five in Chatkal, one in Toktogul, seven in Toguz-Toro, as well as three in Jalal-Abad and one in Mailuu-Suu. 11 mosques have prepared the relevant documents for registration with the SAMK and the SCRA, the report also says. For another 49 mosques, the interdepartmental commission gave recommendations on resolving the issue of their registration with the SAMK and the SCRA.

The report also notes that illegally functioning mosques were built arbitrarily, without the consent of local governments and the SAMK.

### Comment:

Recall that back in March of this year, some Kyrgyz media reported on the intention of the authorities to close the so-called. "substandard" mosques. To this end, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan, together with the State Commission for Religious Affairs, amended the Law "On Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations", according to which not only mosques, but also all namazkanas (prayer rooms) must be registered. **"Currently, there are more than 2,600 mosques in Kyrgyzstan. Of this number, only 1,055 have been officially registered. We control their construction. Before a particular mosque is built, we check all the relevant documents with the developer. This practice is carried out literally from last year. Those mosques that do not meet the set standards, we will close"**, - Deputy Mufti Zamir Rakiev said in March during a round table on **"Kyrgyzstan: the danger of religious extremism"**.

Before Sadyr Japarov came to power, Kyrgyzstan was in Central Asia a kind of island of relative freedom from dictatorship and persecution against Islam and its carriers. However, with the coming to power of the incumbent president and his close friend Kamchybek Tashiev, who headed the State Committee for National Security, the situation began to change dramatically: the opposition came under severe pressure, independent media were closed, and repressions against Islamic activists became systemic. Apparently, now the Japarov regime has decided to get to the mosques as well. Recall that similar procedures with the closure of mosques under the pretext of their non-compliance with some standards have long been carried out in other countries of the region. So, in Tajikistan alone, the Rahmon regime closed thousands of mosques that local residents built on their own and at their own expense: in 2011, at least 1,500 mosques were closed, in 2015 - 1,032, and in 2018 - 1,938, and many of the mosques were turned into clubs.

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