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## Blue Skies and Dark Clouds

### Kazakhstan and Small Arms

*By Nicolas Florquin, Dauren Aben, and Takhmina Karimova*



An Occasional Paper of  
the Small Arms Survey



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# The Small Arms Survey

The Small Arms Survey is an independent research project located at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, Switzerland. Established in 1999, the project is supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs and current contributions from the Governments of Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Survey is grateful for past support received from the Governments of France, New Zealand, and Spain. The Survey also wishes to acknowledge the financial assistance it has received over the years from different United Nations agencies, programmes, and institutes.

The objectives of the Small Arms Survey are: to be the principal source of public information on all aspects of small arms and armed violence; to serve as a resource centre for governments, policy-makers, researchers, and activists; to monitor national and international initiatives (governmental and non-governmental) on small arms; to support efforts to address the effects of small arms proliferation and misuse; and to act as a clearinghouse for the sharing of information and the dissemination of best practices. The Survey also sponsors field research and information-gathering efforts, especially in affected states and regions. The project has an international staff with expertise in security studies, political science, law, economics, development studies, sociology, and criminology, and collaborates with a network of researchers, partner institutions, non-governmental organizations, and governments in more than 50 countries.

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# Abbreviations and acronyms

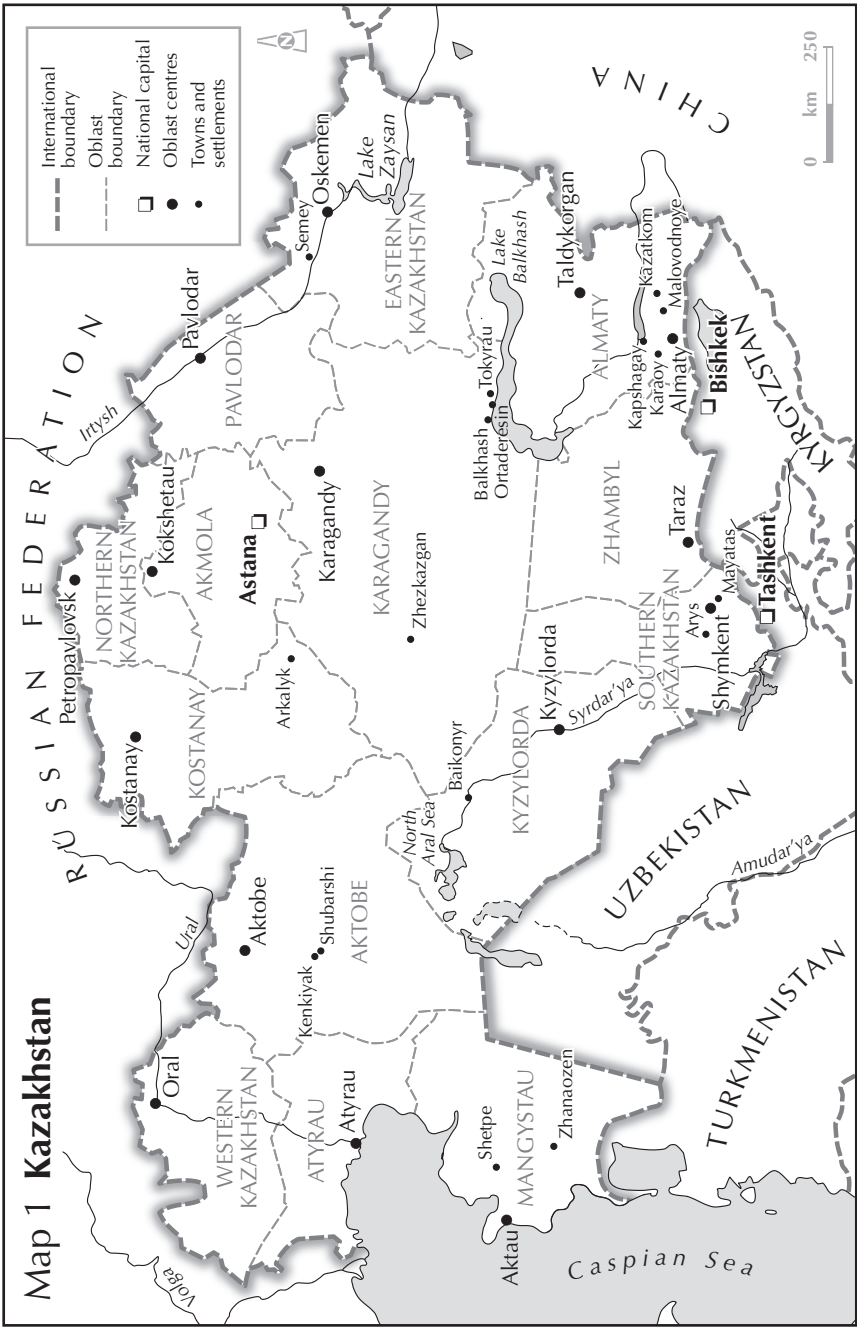
|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>CIOM</b>    | Center for the Study of Public Opinion   |
| <b>CSTO</b>    | Collective Security Treaty Organization  |
| <b>IMI</b>     | Israel Military Industries   |
| <b>KNB</b>     | National Security Committee  |
| <b>KZT</b>     | Kazakhstan tenge   |
| <b>MANPADS</b> | Man-portable air defence systems   |
| <b>MIA</b>     | Ministry of Internal Affairs   |
| <b>MoD</b>     | Ministry of Defence  |
| <b>MRP</b>     | <i>Mesyachniy raschetniy pokazatel</i> (monthly calculation index)                                     |
| <b>NISAT</b>   | Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers   |
| <b>OSCE</b>    | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe   |
| <b>ZKMK</b>    | Zapadno-Kazakhstanskaya Mashinostroitelnaya Kompaniya<br>(Western Kazakhstan Machine-Building Company) |

# Introduction

In May 2011, two deadly explosions targeted facilities of Kazakhstan's National Security Committee (KNB) in Aktobe Oblast and Astana.<sup>1</sup> One of the attacks was reportedly the first suicide bombing in the country (Lillis, 2011a). Two months later, in the same oblast, authorities conducted a two-week operation in the villages of Shubarshi and Kenkiyak to neutralize an armed group responsible for the killing of two police officers and suspected of religious radicalism. The special units killed nine members of the group and lost two more officers during the intervention (MIA, 2011; Mednikova and Bogatik, 2011). While Kazakhstan is generally perceived as a beacon of stability in an otherwise troubled region, such incidents demonstrate that economic growth and political stability do not render a country immune to home-grown armed violence.

Kazakhstan has been an active participant in the UN small arms process, submitting four national reports on its implementation of the UN Programme of Action since 2005 (PoA-ISS, 2010). The country has carried out a well-developed set of small arms control initiatives, including strengthened controls over private firearm ownership, large-scale civilian weapons collection, and the destruction of excess stockpiles of arms and ammunition inherited from the Soviet Union (RoK, 2010a). Yet beyond Kazakhstan's own national reporting, the country's small arms control efforts, as well as the nature and significance of the threats they are meant to address, have only rarely been studied.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the bulk of international attention on small arms issues in Central Asia has been directed at the country's conflict-ridden neighbours.<sup>3</sup>

This report presents the findings of research initiated in April 2010 by the Small Arms Survey. The project, supported by the Government of Norway, was designed to assess levels of small arms availability in the country, evaluate the impact of firearms on crime and security, and review government initiatives to address small arms issues. It relies on a variety of research methods, including a nationwide survey of 1,500 households as well as six focus group discussions with members of communities affected by unintended explosions at munitions sites.<sup>4</sup>



The report's main findings include the following:

- Household survey results suggest that civilians in Kazakhstan owned between 190,000 and 225,000 firearms in 2010, which translates into a low per capita rate by international standards. Civilian firearm ownership appears more prominent among young men and in urban areas; it also seems to be motivated by a perceived need for protection against criminals.
- Kazakh authorities report having collected and seized more than 60,000 firearms from civilians between 2003 and 2009. They also destroyed at least 20,000 civilian small arms during the same period.
- Kazakhstan's overall positive security outlook is clouded by an increase in crime rates since 2010, as well as recent incidents of armed violence with terrorist, ethnic, and political undertones.
- Although the country's homicide rate has decreased significantly since the 1990s, it remained above the world average, at more than 8 per 100,000, in 2010. The percentage of homicides and robberies committed with small arms has also increased in recent years, but it remains low when compared with rates elsewhere.
- The Ministry of Defence reported the destruction of more than 1.1 million rounds of surplus conventional ammunition between 2003 and 2009 (out of a declared total of 2.5 million). The Ministry also reported destroying about 38,000 state-held small arms and light weapons between 2002 and 2006.
- Kazakhstan has been disproportionately affected by unplanned explosions at munitions sites, with six major incidents known to have occurred since 2001. Focus group discussions with affected communities revealed that the authorities do not organize emergency response training for the civilian population living near ammunition depots.

This report is divided into three main sections. It first analyses Kazakhstan's security outlook and discusses some of the main threats to the country's stability. The second section examines civilian firearms—their availability, government controls over them, and their impact on security in Kazakhstan. Lastly, the report examines state-held stockpiles, including government efforts to dispose of surplus and the impact of unplanned explosions at munitions sites. 📄

# A safe haven under threat?

Kazakhstan, the world's largest landlocked country, is home to just 16.6 million inhabitants (AS, 2011). A Soviet Republic until December 1991, it now shares borders with China, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Unlike some of its Central Asian neighbours, Kazakhstan has been spared civil war and ethnic strife, earning it the reputation of a pillar of stability in an otherwise volatile region.<sup>5</sup> This section tests this assessment by reviewing key crime and security indicators and by discussing emerging threats to the country's internal stability. It finds that the overall security situation is satisfactory, although it is becoming more vulnerable to emerging negative trends. While crime rates have decreased markedly since Kazakhstan's independence, the past two years have seen a significant deterioration. Recent acts of religiously motivated terrorism, as well as instances of ethnic and political violence, further cloud the picture.

## Context

Kazakhstan has prospered economically over the past decade thanks in large measure to its booming oil and gas industries. Gross national income per capita increased from USD 1,260 in 2000 to USD 7,440 in 2010 (World Bank, 2011). Kazakhstan is also Central Asia's primary recipient of foreign direct investment, with USD 50 billion received since 1991, representing around 80 per cent of total investment in the Central Asia region (Hug, 2011, p. 21). Economic growth has generally contributed to improving socio-economic conditions, particularly in the last ten years. From 2001 to 2009, the proportion of the population with income below the minimum food basket declined from 16.1 per cent to 0.6 per cent, while income inequality decreased by 30 per cent (UN, 2010, pp. 18–19). Unemployment officially stood at a low 5.3 per cent for the third quarter of 2011 (AS, 2011).



Growing economic significance and political stability have helped to turn Kazakhstan into a regional powerhouse with increasing clout in international forums. In 2010, Kazakhstan became the first Central Asian state and former Soviet Republic to chair the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). During its presidency, Kazakhstan hosted the OSCE's first heads of state summit in 11 years (Lillis, 2011b; OSCE, 2010). The country was also named chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in 2011 as well as of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in 2011–12 (RoK, 2011c; MFA, 2011).

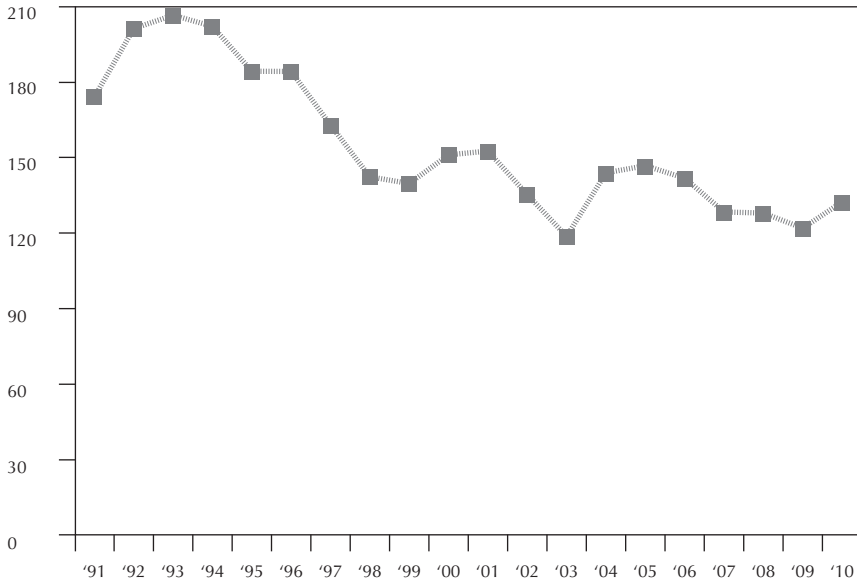
Tarnishing these positive features are persistent concerns with governance in the country. President Nursultan Nazarbayev has led Kazakhstan since 1989 and was last re-elected in April 2011 for a five-year term with 95.5 per cent of the vote. Although the turnout rate of 90 per cent was lauded, foreign observers, including the OSCE, expressed concern at the lack of opposition candidates and noted 'serious irregularities' in the electoral process (Lillis, 2011c; OSCE, 2011). Furthermore, Kazakhstan is accorded a score just above mid-level in the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index, ranking 66 out of 169 countries (UNDP, 2010). Shortcomings in the country's health-care and education systems contribute to the modest ranking and stand in sharp contrast to the flattering macro-economic trends mentioned above (ICG, 2011, pp. 28–33). Social tensions also surfaced in 2011 when massive protests by oil and gas workers demanding higher wages affected the national industry for several months (RFE/RL, 2011). In December 2011, a peaceful strike turned violent, leading to pogroms and deadly clashes in the towns of Zhanaozen and Shetpe, in which at least 17 people died after police and security forces fired on a crowd of rioters (Antoncheva, 2011).

## Crime

Similar to the macro-economic trends identified above, the crime situation in Kazakhstan has generally improved over the past 15 to 20 years. Despite some major variations from year to year, the total number of crimes recorded in 2010 was much lower than in 1991 (see Figure 1). Violent crime has also fallen markedly since independence. Homicides peaked between 1992 and 1998, a period during which they averaged about 2,500 per year, compared with fewer than 1,400 homicides in 2010 (see Figure 2).

Figure 1 **Total recorded crimes in Kazakhstan, 1991–2010**

Number of registered crimes ('000s)

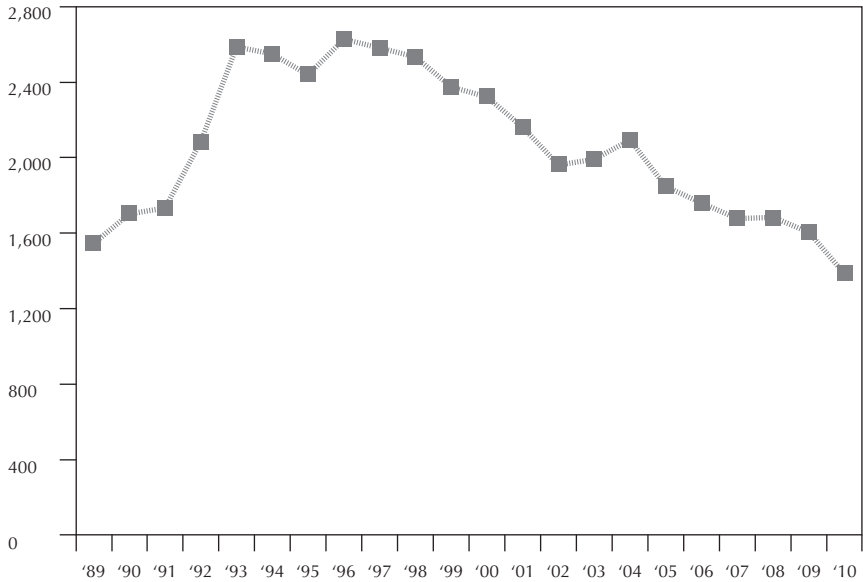


Source: AS (2011)

Recent crime trends are more worrying. After several years of decline, the general crime rate began increasing in 2010 (see Figure 1) and kept growing in the first half of 2011. In January–June 2011, law enforcement agencies recorded 80,685 crimes, an 18.6 per cent increase compared with the same period in 2010 (68,053). Regions where the crime rate in the first half of 2011 increased the most compared to 2010 are the capital Astana (a 105.1 per cent increase), Karagandy Oblast (35.5 per cent), Southern Kazakhstan Oblast (33.1 per cent), Almaty city (20.1 per cent), Kostanay Oblast (19.2 per cent), Akmola Oblast (17.6 per cent), and Eastern Kazakhstan Oblast (16.9 per cent) (PGO, 2011a; 2011b). Press reports suggest that the increasing crime rate since 2010 is due to a rise in unemployment (Radio Azattyk, 2011). More than three-quarters of the perpetrators arrested over the period January–June 2011 were in fact unemployed, while almost 14 per cent were under the influence of alcohol, and nine per cent were repeat offenders (PGO, 2011a).

Figure 2 **Intentional homicides in Kazakhstan, 1989–2010**

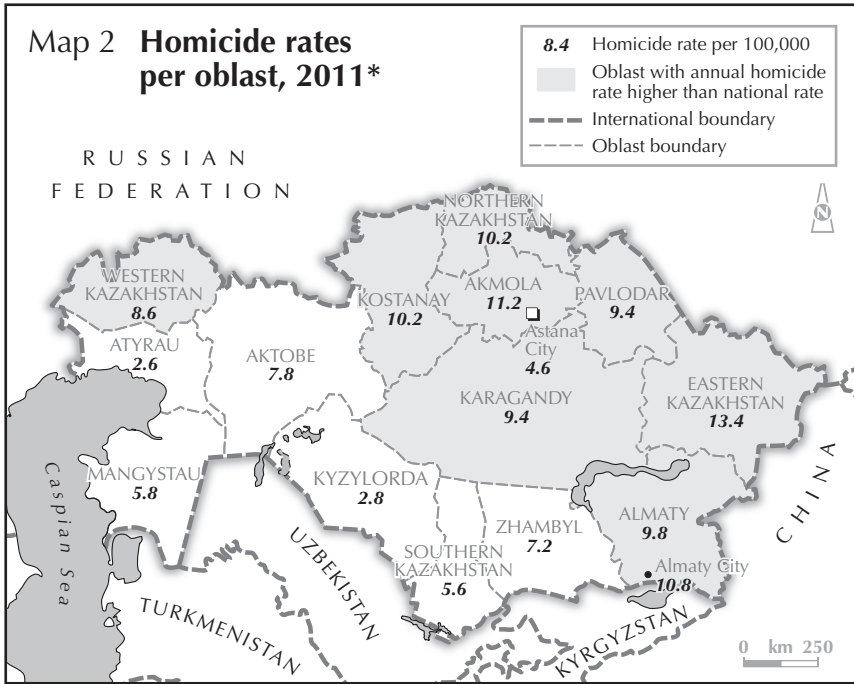
Number of intentional homicides



Sources: UNICEF (2011) for 1989–2008; PGO (2011a) for 2009 and 2010

Furthermore, despite the important decrease since 1991, Kazakhstan's homicide rate still stood at 8.35 per 100,000 people in 2010—higher than the estimated world rate of 6 per 100,000 and Central Asia's rate of 6.5 per 100,000.<sup>6</sup> Reported homicide rates for other countries in the region are clearly lower: 7.8 per 100,000 in Kyrgyzstan (2009), 1.9 in Tajikistan (2009), 3.8 in Turkmenistan (2006), and 3.0 in Uzbekistan (2007) (UNICEF, 2011). It is unclear whether Kazakhstan's higher rate actually reflects higher homicide levels, or instead more accurate recording and systematic reporting of homicides. Indeed, reporting rates are usually lower in developing countries than in richer states (van Dijk, van Kesteren, and Smit, 2007, p. 17). It may be more appropriate to compare these rates to those of the Russian Federation, a country that ranks just above Kazakhstan in the Human Development Index and whose homicide rate is higher than Kazakhstan's, at 12.5 per 100,000 in 2009 (UNDP, 2010; UNICEF, 2011).

Map 2 **Homicide rates per oblast, 2011\***



**Note:** \* The homicide rates for the cities Astana and Almaty are not included in the oblast rates. Shaded areas exhibit annual homicide rates above the national rate (8.4 per 100,000 population). Annual homicide rates are calculated based on data available at the time of writing; that is, homicides figures were multiplied by two to provide an annual rate.

**Sources:** AS (2011); PGO (2011a)

Geographically speaking, as Map 2 illustrates, homicide rates in the first half of 2011 were consistently above the national average in eastern and northern Kazakhstan, as well as in oil-producing Western Kazakhstan Oblast. Eastern Kazakhstan Oblast tops the list with an annual homicide rate of 13.4 per 100,000 and also experiences the country’s second-highest general crime rate after Almaty city (AS, 2011; PGO, 2011a). Authorities, including then regional police chief and subsequently minister of internal affairs Kalmukhanbet Kasymov, have pointed to alcohol and drug abuse as the main causes of Eastern Kazakhstan’s high crime rates. The fact that numerous prisons are located in the east of the country may also explain the phenomenon, as released criminals tend to stay and repeat offences in the oblast in which they were detained (Chernyavskaya, 2010).

## Victimization and security perceptions

Results of the household survey conducted for this study reveal a relatively high rate of crime and violent incidents (see Box 1). Overall, 5.1 per cent of respondents reported that at least one member of their household had been the victim of a crime or violent encounter over the previous 12 months. Victims suffered injuries in one-third of these cases. The most commonly cited incidents were robberies (40 per cent of reported cases), assaults (34 per cent), threats and intimidation (13 per cent), rape and sexual assaults (5 per cent), and burglaries (4 per cent). The survey also found that almost three-quarters of victims of crime and violence were between 15 and 29 years old. Across all age groups, the sex distribution of victims was 56 per cent women and 44 per cent men. In roughly 60 per cent of cases, crimes were perpetrated in the street or at a

### Box 1 **Household survey on perceptions of security and firearms**

In order to measure public perceptions of firearms and security in Kazakhstan, the Small Arms Survey subcontracted the Almaty-based Center for the Study of Public Opinion (CIOM) to carry out a nationwide survey of 1,500 people aged 18–60 (see Annexe 1). The survey was carried out in July 2010 using face-to-face interviews at the respondents' homes.

Kazakhstan comprises a total of 14 oblasts that are grouped together in six regions, all of which are characterized by similar geographical, climatic, and economic features. The survey sample covered one oblast per region—Aktobe in the western region, Almaty in the Almaty region, Eastern Kazakhstan in the eastern region, Karagandy in the central region, Pavlodar in the northern region, and Southern Kazakhstan in the southern region—as well as the country's two largest cities, Almaty and Astana. In each surveyed oblast, CIOM randomly selected villages, towns, and cities in order to reflect the rural–urban distribution of the population of the entire region. Interviewers chose households using random selection methods and identified respondents based on age and sex quotas.<sup>7</sup> CIOM verified 23 per cent of interviews through phone calls or onsite supervision. The confidence level of the study is 95 per cent, and the confidence interval is 2.5.

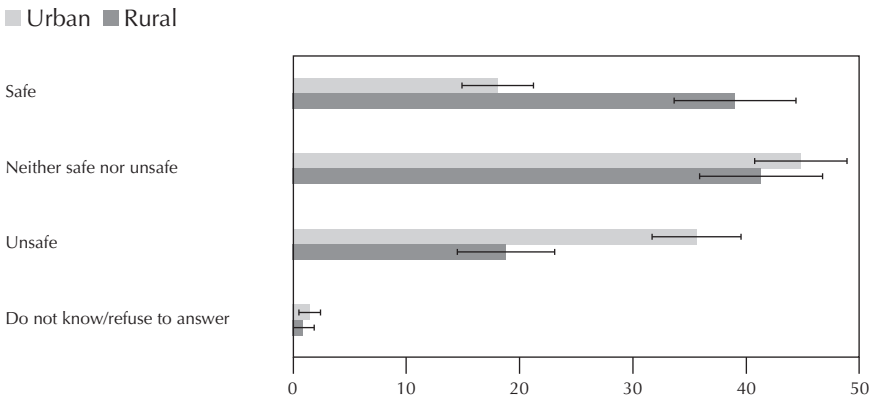
The Small Arms Survey applied statistical weighting to ensure that the final sample's demographic characteristics (such as the distribution of respondents by region, urban vs. rural settings, sex, age, and ethnicity) were commensurate with those of the national population. The weighting also factored in non-response rates. This allows for the extrapolation of results to the national population and for the comparison of findings by region, rural or urban setting, sex, and age group.

**Source:** CIOM (2010)

public gathering, as opposed to in someone’s home. Crimes usually occurred during the day or early evening. In 44 per cent of all cases, respondents said they had not reported the crime to the authorities (CIOM, 2010).

Despite relatively significant crime and victimization rates, survey respondents expressed mixed perceptions about their personal security. On the one hand, when asked about the most serious problems affecting them, they described the security of the members of their household as a relatively minor concern, ranking it fourth behind lack of or inadequate employment, healthcare, and clean water. On the other hand, almost two-thirds of respondents said they were concerned that a member of their household could become the victim of a crime or a violent encounter. Compared to the national average, a greater proportion of respondents in Astana, Aktobe, Eastern Kazakhstan, and Pavlodar Oblasts expressed concern that members of their household might become victims of crime or violence. In line with the distribution of crime statistics discussed above, Eastern Kazakhstan topped this list with more than 80 per cent of interviewees expressing concern, compared with only 18.5 per cent in Southern Kazakhstan Oblast. While respondents said they felt safe at home and during the day, they described the situation outside and at night in different terms.

Figure 3 **Responses to the household survey question, ‘Do you consider your city/town/village safe, unsafe, or neither?’ (n=1,500), (percentage)**



**Note:** Lines on each bar reveal the corresponding confidence interval. There were significant differences between responses from rural and urban interviewees regarding the extent to which they described their area to be ‘safe’ or ‘unsafe’; such differences were not significant with respect to the response ‘neither safe nor unsafe’.

**Source:** CIOM (2010)

Indeed, more than 40 per cent of respondents stated that they would feel unsafe or somewhat unsafe after sunset (CIOM, 2010).

Respondents also pointed to greater feelings of insecurity in urban areas. Nineteen per cent of respondents living in rural areas answered that there were no safety or security concerns, compared with just 3 per cent among residents of urban areas. Similarly, 26 per cent of urban respondents identified high crime rates as their main security concern, versus 15 per cent among rural respondents (CIOM, 2010). Figure 3 illustrates these differences, showing that, compared to their rural counterparts, about twice as many urban respondents consider their communities unsafe.

## Organized violence

While the threat of large-scale political, ethnic, and terrorist violence in Kazakhstan appears less pronounced than elsewhere in Central Asia,<sup>8</sup> recent incidents have led Kazakh government officials to voice their concern (Lillis, 2011d). The following sections provide examples of organized violence within Kazakhstan itself. They have been grouped according to the political, ethnic, or terrorist nature of the incident, as reported by independent and government sources.

### *Political violence*

Examples of political violence in Kazakhstan include the February 2006 shooting of prominent opposition leader Altynbek Sarsenbayev as well as his bodyguard and driver. They were found on the outskirts of Almaty, all three of them with their hands tied behind their backs and wounds to the back and head. The official investigation concluded that a senate official ordered the assassination of Sarsenbayev, allegedly motivated by long-lasting ‘personal enmity’, while a former police officer was found guilty of organizing and carrying out the contract killing with assistance from the KNB’s elite Arystan special unit officers (RFE/RL, 2006a; 2006b; 2008). In November 2005, another leading opposition figure—Zamanbek Nurkadilov—was found shot dead in his home. Despite two gunshot wounds to the chest and one to the head, the police officially ruled his death to be a suicide, claiming that no signs of a forced entry had been detected (RFE/RL, 2005).

## *Ethnic violence*

Despite the absence of large-scale ethnic strife in Kazakhstan, security agencies organized robust interventions to suppress a number of localized clashes between ethnic Kazakhs and minority groups.<sup>9</sup> In March 2007, for example, a minor brawl during a game of billiards erupted into a violent shoot-out between ethnic Kazakhs and Chechens in the villages of Malovodnoye and Kazatkom, in Almaty Oblast. The incident resulted in the death of five people, with several others wounded. The authorities managed to stop the violence only after bringing in special police forces, and the area remained cordoned off for several weeks to ensure that order was fully restored. Reports circulated in the press that armed people from other regions of the country intended to come to the scene of these events but were stopped by the police (RFE/RL, 2007; Saydullin, 2007a).

There were also allegations that firearms were used in Mayatas and other villages of the Southern Kazakhstan Oblast when the Kazakh population burned down houses and the property of local Kurds after the arrest of a 16-year-old Kurd suspected of raping a four-year-old Kazakh boy in late October 2007. According to press reports, up to 500 law enforcement personnel were involved in restoring order, and three policemen were injured during the operation (Dzhani, 2007; Saydullin, 2007b; IWPR, 2007).

## *Terrorist violence*

While the revival of Islam in Kazakhstan in the 1990s did not lead to a large-scale emergence of radical religious organizations, some extremist groups have intensified their activities in the country.<sup>10</sup> Compared to the late 1990s and early 2000s, when the majority of criminal cases related to religious extremism concerned the seizure of prohibited literature, Kazakhstan's security and law enforcement services now report more arrests of members of extremist groups who are in possession of firearms and ammunition and allegedly planning terrorist acts or even the overthrow of the government (USDOS, 2010; Vybornova, 2011).

The years 2010 and 2011 saw a sharp increase in the number of incidents of armed violence that were reportedly related to religious extremism. The 2011 attacks against KNB facilities and the above-mentioned special forces' intervention in Shubarshi and Kenkiyak made most headlines, but several other



events of a terrorist nature have also occurred. In April 2011, two suspected religious extremists were killed, and a third was arrested in a night-time assault on an apartment in Almaty. The suspects, armed with sub-machine guns and grenades, offered strong resistance, wounding 11 special police unit members (Benditskiy, 2011). There have also been several cases of Kazakh nationals being recruited by religious extremists and being killed or arrested by Russian security services for participating in guerrilla activities in the northern Caucasus (Nurseitova, 2011).

Although initially reluctant to label such incidents 'terrorist' in nature, the Kazakh government has recently changed its stance. In August 2011, law enforcement officials for the first time publicly announced that they had foiled a terrorist plot in oil-rich Atyrau Oblast. In a September 2011 speech to Parliament, President Nazarbayev himself acknowledged that the country faced a problem with extremism and pledged to tackle it (Lillis, 2011d). 🗨️

# Civilian small arms: under control, in demand

This section examines the prevalence and sources of civilian-held firearms, reviews government efforts to control them, and assesses the role they play in insecurity in Kazakhstan. Generally speaking, civilian ownership of firearms is relatively low and appears to be tightly controlled by the authorities. Firearms availability and related insecurity are more pronounced in urban areas, however. Although firearms are rarely used in criminal acts, the proportion of homicides and robberies perpetrated with firearms increased between 2006 and 2010.

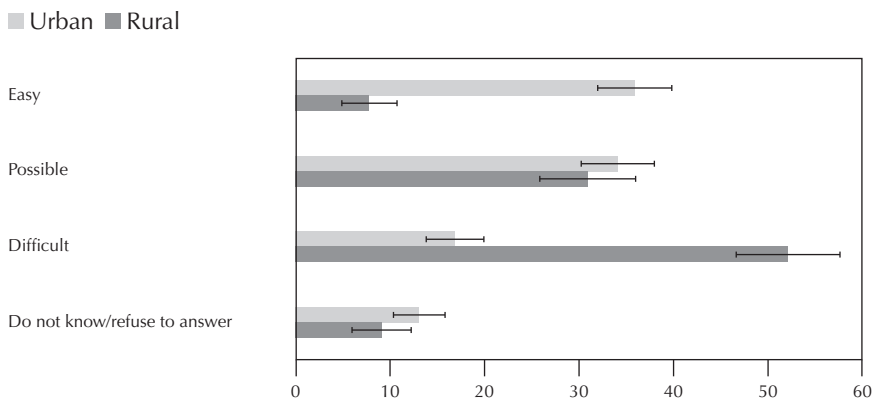
## Civilian holdings

### *General population*

About 4.4 per cent of household survey respondents said that someone in their household owned at least one firearm, with an average of five firearms for every 100 households (CIOM, 2010). The types of firearms most frequently owned were hunting rifles (61 per cent of gun-owning households), pistols or revolvers (22 per cent), air pistols (6 per cent), gas pistols (4 per cent), and air guns (4 per cent); the remaining holdings were identified as other firearms (1 per cent) and unspecified firearms (2 per cent) (CIOM, 2010). Applied nationally to Kazakhstan's 4.15 million households, this finding suggests that there are 207,500 privately owned firearms in the country or, taking into account the survey's confidence interval, a range of roughly 190,000–225,000 civilian firearms.<sup>11</sup> This translates into fewer than 1.3 firearms for every 100 Kazakhs, a low rate that places Kazakhstan at 142<sup>nd</sup> position in international rankings (Small Arms Survey, 2007).

Although household survey respondents can be expected to under-report sensitive issues such as firearm ownership, other sources suggest that 190,000–225,000 is a plausible estimate of the number of firearms in civilian hands in Kazakhstan. Previous studies also found that Kazakhstan's population of 16.6 million is relatively poorly armed by international standards. An earlier estimate

Figure 4 Responses to the household survey question, ‘How easy or difficult do you think it is to acquire a firearm in your city/town/village?’ (n=1,500), (percentage)



**Note:** Lines on each bar reveal the corresponding confidence interval.

**Source:** CIOM (2010)

offered a range of 100,000–300,000 firearms (Small Arms Survey, 2007). In 2010, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) reportedly inspected more than 139,000 firearm owners (MIA, 2010a).<sup>12</sup>

The household survey also provides insight into motivations for firearm ownership, highlighting differences across urban and rural settings. While only 16 per cent of respondents in rural areas selected criminal intent as one of the top three reasons why people in their communities owned firearms, 74 per cent cited hunting.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, 45 per cent of respondents in urban areas identified criminal intent as one of the top three motivations, while only 37 per cent selected hunting (CIOM, 2010). Responses also suggest that firearms are more accessible in urban settings than in rural areas (see Figure 4).

### *Private security companies*

The first private security companies appeared in Kazakhstan in the early to mid-1990s, but it was not until 2000 that the government adopted legislation to regulate them, namely the Law on Security Activity (Bayekenov, 2004; RoK, 2000b). It requires private security companies to obtain a licence for the provision of security services from the Directorate of State Guard Service (under the MIA Committee of Administrative Police and its regional divisions) (MIA, 2004).

According to the Association of Security Organizations of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in 2010 there were about 3,000 private security companies in Kazakhstan that employed nearly 60,000 people, a threefold increase compared to 2001 (Tashimov, 2010; Vasilyeva, 2002). At the same time, the MIA reported that the sector employed some 77,500 guards, 21,500 of whom worked for just two companies, the Kazakhstan Temir Zholy railway operator (14,000) and KazMunaiGas (7,500) (Vesti.kz, 2010; Foster, 2010). These numbers suggest that there are roughly as many private security guards as police officers in Kazakhstan, as the police numbered 69,529 in 2008 (UNODC, n.d.).

The law authorizes private security companies to arm their personnel, but the government introduced some limitations to this right in December 2010, notwithstanding strong opposition from Kazakhstan Temir Zholy and KazMunaiGas (Foster, 2011). Private security companies are now banned from using rifled long- and short-barrelled firearms, and they can only use smooth-bore firearms or barrel-less firearms with non-lethal ('traumatic') cartridges. They are also authorized to use 'electric' weapons (RoK, 2000b; 2010b). Prior to the legislative amendment, private security companies possessed about 7,000 rifled firearms (Foster, 2011).

Foreign security companies are banned from working in Kazakhstan, while foreign legal entities and nationals cannot provide security services or establish private security companies in the country. Recent legislative changes entitle domestic providers of security services to cooperate with foreign security companies in the sharing of experience, advanced training of their personnel, and use of modern security equipment and technology, provided they comply with the legal requirements related to the protection of state secrets (RoK, 2000b; 2010b). The December 2010 legislative amendments also prohibit non-security companies from relying on in-house security operations, in effect requiring them to outsource (Foster, 2011). The only exception is made for security operations established by Kazakhstan's national companies (RoK, 2000b; 2010b).

## Sources

### *Authorized trade*

At least 36 companies sell firearms and ammunition in Kazakhstan's civilian market.<sup>14</sup> They sell a variety of pistols (such as the Steyr MA1); bolt-action rifles

(such as the Steyr Classic, Elite, and Scout as well as the CZ 452, 527, and 550); and semi-automatic rifles (such as the CZ 858 and Saiga) (Chebotarev, 2010). Few of these companies actually produce civilian weapons or ammunition in Kazakhstan, however. Anna LLP, based in Almaty, is one of the few manufacturers of small arms ammunition for hunting and sports shooting destined for the Kazakh civilian market (Chebotarev, 2010). Kazakhstan Engineering reportedly had a project to set up an enterprise in Petropavlovsk to produce 5.45 mm, 7.62 mm, and 9 mm ammunition, and possibly hunting ammunition. The project had been valued at USD 19 million and production had been expected to start in mid-2007. Kazakhstan Engineering was also reported to have been in talks with Kyrgyzstan about purchasing an ammunition factory in Bishkek, but neither project appears to have materialized (Barabanov, 2008, pp. 32–33). With respect to weapons, the Western Kazakhstan Machine-Building Company (ZKMK, previously known as the Metallist factory) continues to produce a small quantity of hunting rifles (Barabanov, 2008, p. 31; Kenzhegalieva, 2007).<sup>15</sup>

Due to Kazakhstan's relatively low capacity to produce small arms domestically, most weapons and ammunition sold in the country are imported. Available customs data, as reported in the UN Comtrade database, suggests that Kazakhstan imports significantly more small arms than it exports (UN Comtrade, n.d.).<sup>16</sup> Trading partners reported that Kazakhstan imported close to USD 100 million worth of small arms and ammunition (civilian and military) for the period 1992–2008. Yet reported Kazakh exports for the same period amounted to just USD 2 million (see Table 1; UN Comtrade, n.d.).<sup>17</sup>

Reported Kazakh imports consist for the most part of sporting and hunting shotguns, rifles, and small arms ammunition—categories usually destined for the civilian market (see Table 1). Reports to the UN Register of Conventional Arms confirm this trend, as the largest imports of equipment by quantity for the years 2008–10 concerned hunting weapons (UNODA, n.d.; see Table 2). In 2009, Kazakhstan imported a variety of hunting and sporting rifles from countries including Italy (243, 308, 300 Winchester and 30.06 SPR 9.2 x 62), the Russian Federation (MP 161K calibre 22LR, 'Vepr' carbines, 'Saiga', 'Tiger', 'Sobol', 'Korshun', 'CM-2KO', 'Bars-4-1', 'Los', and 'Biathlon-7-3, 7-4'), and Czech Republic and Germany (various other models) (UNODA, n.d.).

**Table 1 Value of reported Kazakh small arms imports, by UN Comtrade category, 1992–2008 (in USD)**

| Types of weapon (UN Comtrade category)                               | Reported by Kazakhstan | Reported by exporters |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sporting and hunting shotguns (930320)                               | 6,792,782              | 23,105,081            |
| Small arms ammunition (930630)                                       | 5,041,847              | 5,068,017             |
| Sporting and hunting rifles (930330)                                 | 3,030,318              | 9,128,726             |
| Pistols and revolvers (9302)   | 2,828,276              | 1,112,119             |
| Shotgun cartridges (930621)  | 2,483,837              | 2,165,181             |
| Military rifles, machine guns, and other (930190)                    | 2,186,057              | 236,166               |
| Air gun pellets, lead shot, and parts of shotgun cartridges (930629) | 995,054                | 3,534,458             |
| Military weapons (9301)  | 980,700                | 22,674                |
| Parts and accessories of shotguns or rifles (930529)                 | 523,721                | 52,004,510            |
| Parts and accessories of revolvers or pistols (930510)               | 298,295                | 364,574               |
| Shotgun barrels (930521)   | 3,952                  | 48,764                |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>25,164,839</b>      | <b>96,790,270</b>     |

Source: UN Comtrade (n.d.)

**Table 2 Small arms imports as reported by Kazakhstan to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, by category, 2008–10**

| Exporting country  | Year | Type of weapon                                       | Quantity     |
|--------------------|------|--|--------------|
| Germany            | 2010 | Hand-held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers | 18           |
| Czech Republic     | 2009 | Revolvers and self-loading pistols                   | 500          |
| Russian Federation | 2009 | Revolvers and self-loading pistols                   | 400          |
| United States      | 2009 | Sniper rifles  | 2            |
| Germany            | 2009 | Sniper rifles of 338 calibre                         | 14           |
| Italy              | 2009 | Hunting rifles                                       | 54           |
| Russian Federation | 2009 | Hunting carbines                                     | 1,380        |
| Russian Federation | 2009 | Hunting and sport weapons                            | 330          |
| Czech Republic     | 2009 | Hunting and sport weapons                            | 1,155        |
| Germany            | 2009 | Hunting and sport weapons                            | 446          |
| Austria            | 2009 | Hunting and sport weapons                            | 50           |
| Austria            | 2008 | Revolvers and self-loading pistols                   | 100          |
| <b>Total</b>       |      |  | <b>4,449</b> |

Source: UNODA (n.d.)

**Table 3 Value of reported Kazakh small arms imports, by exporting country, 1992–2008 (in USD)**

| Exporting countries   | Value reported by Kazakhstan | Value reported by exporters |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Armenia               | 79,399                       | 0                           |
| Austria               | 785,943                      | 929,181                     |
| Belarus               | 219,300                      | 0                           |
| Belgium               | 180,730                      | 0                           |
| Brazil                | 0                            | 8,987                       |
| Bulgaria              | 126,394                      | 0                           |
| Canada                | 127,604                      | 526,349                     |
| Cyprus                | 83,816                       | 799,176                     |
| Czech Republic        | 795,764                      | 1,900,134                   |
| Denmark               | 0                            | 1,376                       |
| Finland               | 151,877                      | 86,895                      |
| France                | 2,200                        | 394,739                     |
| Germany               | 3,752,977                    | 15,590,047                  |
| Israel                | 12,399                       | 51,517,000                  |
| Italy                 | 1,999,114                    | 3,678,802                   |
| Kyrgyzstan            | 5,800                        | 495,999                     |
| Latvia                | 0                            | 22,393                      |
| Pakistan              | 0                            | 676                         |
| Poland                | 0                            | 212,399                     |
| Russian Federation    | 15,708,843                   | 15,556,753                  |
| Serbia and Montenegro | 1,100                        | 0                           |
| South Korea           | 800                          | 0                           |
| Spain                 | 188,707                      | 619,291                     |
| Sweden                | 55,910                       | 157,119                     |
| Switzerland           | 54,406                       | 445,282                     |
| Turkey                | 474,071                      | 1,610,490                   |
| Turkmenistan          | 7,800                        | 0                           |
| Ukraine               | 92,511                       | 0                           |
| United Arab Emirates  | 0                            | 98,300                      |
| United Kingdom        | 92,018                       | 1,052,048                   |
| United States         | 164,660                      | 1,086,834                   |
| Unspecified           | 696                          | 0                           |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>25,164,839</b>            | <b>96,790,270</b>           |

Source: UN Comtrade (n.d.)

Overall, the available data suggests that Germany and the Russian Federation are the largest and most regular exporters of small arms to Kazakhstan (see Table 3). In 2008, Israel declared a large export of parts and accessories of shotguns and rifles (a category usually destined for the civilian market) worth USD 51 million (see Table 3; UN Comtrade, n.d.). While this value would make Israel Kazakhstan's top source of arms, UN Comtrade data suggests that Israel is not as regular an arms exporter as Germany or the Russian Federation. Furthermore, the Israeli transfer is not confirmed by data reported by Kazakhstan (UN Comtrade, n.d.).

While the available trade data provides interesting insight, it remains incomplete. As reflected in Tables 1 and 3, the values of small arms trade reported to UN Comtrade by Kazakhstan differ markedly from those submitted by its trading partners. Overall, the partners have reported exports worth about four times as much as the imports that Kazakhstan has declared. The values of imports Kazakhstan has reported from European states are consistently much lower than the figures given by those countries, with the exception of Belgium and Finland; yet figures for the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan are almost identical (see Table 3). Table 1 also shows lower reporting by Kazakhstan for sporting and hunting shotguns and, to a lesser extent, rifles.<sup>18</sup>

### *Illicit sources*

Some sources of illicit weapons in Kazakhstan are internal. Diversion of state stockpiles was a major concern in the late 1990s. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, former Soviet military arsenals in Kazakhstan became a source of small arms and ammunition for both the international and the domestic black markets (Vasilyeva, 2010). Among the most high-profile cases of illegal arms deliveries is the 1995 sale of 57 Igla (SA-18) man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and 226 9M313 missiles to the former Yugoslavia, then under a UN Security Council arms embargo (Kenzhetaev, 2002). Kazakh authorities also investigated attempts to supply MIG-21 combat aircraft to North Korea in 1999, as well as Mi-8T helicopters to Sierra Leone in 2000, and found that they involved violations of Kazakh legislation (Holtom, 2010, pp. 5–6). There are no openly available statistics on weapons theft from the country's military stockpiles, but in 2008 the Ministry of Defence acknowledged that the armed forces re-



mained one of the sources of illegal firearms and ammunition for the criminal underworld (Severnnyy, 2008).

Another source of illicit supply to the domestic small arms market is craft production. The majority of hand-made firearms seized by police in Kazakhstan are actually gas pistols converted to shoot live rounds.<sup>19</sup> In one case in 2008, Russian authorities in Saratov seized an IZh-79 gas pistol that had been modified to shoot live 9 mm rounds. The investigation established that the perpetrator had brought weapons from Oral, Kazakhstan, where he had an accomplice, a worker at the Metallist factory, who had been converting gas and smooth-bore weapons into rifled firearms and equipping firearms with optic sights at home (Kulikov, 2008). According to official statistics, cases of illicit weapons manufacture increased more than threefold between 2006 and 2010 (MIA, 2010c; PGO, 2011a). Little analysis is available on this increase, although it may be partially explained by tightened firearms regulations, which are discussed below.

The extent of cross-border trafficking of firearms into Kazakhstan is also a concern. Central Asia is located on the 'northern' drug route linking Afghanistan to the Russian Federation and Europe (UNODC, 2008, p. 6). The extent to which drugs and firearms trafficking are intertwined in the region remains unclear, although Kazakh authorities have seized firearms in the framework of anti-drug ('Kanal') as well as migration control ('Nelegal') operations. Kanal operations have been taking place regularly since 2003 and are part of a regional effort initiated by the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which involves the law enforcement agencies of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

Data on firearms seized during such operations is not available by country but instead for all participating CSTO members. In September 2010, for instance, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, and Tajikistan carried out an anti-drug operation named 'Kanal-Yug', resulting in the seizure of more than 1,300 kg of drugs and 220 firearms.<sup>20</sup> In 2009, states participating in Kanal and Nelegal collected a total of 1,881 small arms and 52,759 rounds of ammunition; they also initiated 249 criminal law investigations related to the illegal arms trade.<sup>21</sup> From 16 to 22 November 2010, a larger operation resulted in the seizure of 18 tons of drugs, 1,129 firearms, and 17,000 units of ammunition.<sup>22</sup>

According to press reports, there are several routes for the illicit trafficking of firearms into Kazakhstan, with weapons intended mainly for domestic criminal groups. Kazakh police officials claim that the primary source countries are, in order of importance, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan (Isabekov, 2008). The majority of seized Kalashnikov assault rifles and Stechkin pistols originate in the northern Caucasus; Makarov pistols come from Rostov, Krasnodar Kray, Moscow, and St. Petersburg; Kalashnikovs, Makarovs, and Tokarevs with inscribed Latin letters and hieroglyphics are brought from Afghanistan through Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan—via the routes used for drug trafficking. Organized crime groups also increasingly use European-made pistols such as the German Sig Sauer, the Italian Beretta, and the Czech CZ smuggled from Western Europe and the Russian Federation (Isabekov, 2008).

Events in neighbouring countries can also trigger the funnelling of illicit firearms to Kazakhstan. In April 2010, Kyrgyzstan experienced a violent uprising that resulted in the overthrow of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev as well as the looting of police and military weapons by protesters, prompting Kazakhstan to close its border temporarily (*Kazakhstan Today*, 2010a). More police and military weapons, including pistols, assault rifles, light machine guns, sniper rifles, grenades, and a grenade launcher, were lost during deadly clashes, in June 2010, between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan. Despite efforts by Kyrgyzstan to recover lost firearms and ammunition, Kyrgyz authorities reported that, as of September 2010, 146 out of 278 firearms and 26,344 out of 43,045 pieces of ammunition that had been lost in June 2010 were still missing (Kylym Shamy, 2011, p. 8).<sup>23</sup> Kazakhstan has expressed concern that some of the lost Kyrgyz arms may find their way across the border (MFA, 2010).<sup>24</sup> Anecdotal reports of arms seizures at the border suggest this concern is justified, although assessing the exact volume of trafficking from Kyrgyzstan is difficult.<sup>25</sup>

## Control measures

### *National legislation*

Overall, Kazakhstan imposes tight controls on the acquisition and possession of small arms, including the registration of all privately owned firearms, requirements for their effective storage, and the screening of prospective owners.<sup>26</sup>

Kazakh legislation is similar to that of other countries in the region; many elements are holdovers from the Soviet Union. Kazakh legislation has, however, changed over time as part of efforts to address inconsistencies and improve public security.

In December 2010, new legislative amendments were introduced to strengthen the firearms control regime (RoK, 2010b). They include the following:

- a reduction in the number of arms civilians are permitted to own, from five to two;
- obligations for firearm owners to report theft, loss, and unjustified or illegal use of firearms; and
- an obligation for firearm owners to re-register their firearms when moving to a different address (RoK, 2010b).

Kazakh citizens may acquire firearms only for self-defence, sporting, or hunting purposes (RoK, 1998, art. 5).<sup>27</sup> The legal age for owning a firearm in Kazakhstan is 18 years. Applicants for a firearms licence cannot have an outstanding conviction for the commission of ‘intent crimes’ and cannot have committed two or more specified administrative offences within the same year (RoK, 1998, arts. 19.2, 19.2-1, 19.5). They are also required to provide a medical certificate of good mental health (RoK, 1998, art. 15.3).

If they meet the above requirements, individuals wishing to possess a firearm are required to obtain a number of licences and permits, each subject to a fee. They must pay a fee of about KZT 4,500 (USD 30 or, more precisely, three MRP<sup>28</sup>) for a licence to possess firearms, KZT 760 (USD 5, half an MRP) for a permit to purchase a firearm or to store firearms, and KZT 150 (USD 1, one-tenth of an MRP) for registration and re-registration of every firearm (MIA, 2010b). Failure to obtain the above permits and register a firearm is punishable by fines ranging from about KZT 1,500 to 15,000 (USD 10–100) (RoK, 2001, arts. 368, 371). Individuals may only purchase ammunition upon presentation of a valid licence to possess and carry firearms (RoK, 2000a, r. 86).

Once registered gun owners obtain licences, they must:

- undergo training in the handling of small arms based on the curriculum developed by the MIA, if acquiring firearms for the first time (RoK, 1998, art. 15.4);

Table 4 Weapons collection efforts in Kazakhstan, as reported in national reports on implementation of the UN Programme of Action, 2003–07 and 2009

| Action by the state             | Type of weapon                    | Year          |        |              |              |            |              |               | Total all years |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------|--------------|--------------|------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
|                                 |                                   | 2003          | 2004   | 2005         | 2006         | 2007       | 2009         |               |                 |
| Weapons seized and removed      |                                   | KNB           | MIA    |              | KNB          | MIA        |              |               |                 |
|                                 | Automatic weapons                 | 9             | 27     | 13           | 15           |            |              |               |                 |
|                                 | Combination firearms              |               | 42     | 33           | 50           |            |              |               |                 |
|                                 | Gas weapons                       |               | 1,549  | 1,118        | 1            | 1,249      |              |               |                 |
|                                 | Home-made weapons                 |               | 354    | 344          | 4            | 244        |              |               |                 |
|                                 | Hunting and sawn-off weapons      | 137           |        |              |              |            |              |               |                 |
|                                 | Pistols and revolvers             | 22            | 467    | 372          | 2            | 354        |              |               |                 |
|                                 | Rifled weapons (unspecified type) | 18            |        |              | 10           |            |              |               |                 |
|                                 | Rifles and carbines               |               | 706    | 532          | 435          |            |              |               |                 |
|                                 | Smooth-bore weapons               |               | 10,400 | 7,195        | 21           | 6,231      |              |               |                 |
| <b>Total seized and removed</b> |                                   | <b>13,731</b> |        | <b>9,607</b> | <b>8,616</b> | <b>n/a</b> | <b>2,305</b> | <b>34,259</b> |                 |
| Weapons voluntarily surrendered | Gas weapons                       |               | 1,270  | 989          | 761          |            |              |               |                 |
|                                 | Homemade weapons                  |               | 95     | 82           | 82           |            |              |               |                 |
|                                 | Rifled weapons                    |               | 717    | 618          | 636          |            |              |               |                 |

| Action by the state      | Type of weapon                    | Year         |              |              |              |              |              | Total all years |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
|                          |                                   | 2003         | 2004         | 2005         | 2006         | 2007         | 2009         |                 |
|                          | Smooth-bore weapons               | 6,987        |              | 4,348        | 5,043        |              |              |                 |
|                          | Other                             |              |              |              | 438          |              |              |                 |
| <b>Total surrendered</b> |                                   | <b>9,069</b> |              | <b>6,037</b> | <b>6,960</b> | <b>n/a</b>   | <b>4,453</b> | <b>26,519</b>   |
| <b>Weapons destroyed</b> | Automatic weapons                 |              | 9            | 7            |              | 22           |              |                 |
|                          | Carbines                          |              | 41           | 44           |              | 96           |              |                 |
|                          | Combination firearms              |              | 20           | 30           |              | 31           |              |                 |
|                          | Gas weapons                       |              | 467          | 980          |              | 941          |              |                 |
|                          | Home-made weapons                 |              | 259          | 170          |              | 200          |              |                 |
|                          | Pistols                           |              | 51           | 152          |              | 139          |              |                 |
|                          | Revolvers                         |              | 48           | 228          |              | 155          |              |                 |
|                          | Rifled weapons (unspecified type) |              |              |              |              | 657          |              |                 |
|                          | Rifles                            |              | 312          | 347          |              | 214          |              |                 |
|                          | Smooth-bore weapons               |              | 4,501        | 3,605        |              | 3,902        |              |                 |
| <b>Total destroyed</b>   |                                   | <b>n/a</b>   | <b>5,708</b> | <b>5,563</b> | <b>n/a</b>   | <b>6,357</b> | <b>4,569</b> | <b>22,197</b>   |

**Note:** Total figures represent the sum of the different weapon categories as listed in this table. They sometimes differ slightly from the totals provided in the sources. There was no available reporting for the year 2008.

**Sources:** RoK (2005; 2006; 2008; 2010a)

- register their firearms in an official database maintained by the MIA;
- place their firearms in a safety deposit box, a metallic cabinet, or any other storage device that makes it impossible for other persons to access licensed firearms (RoK, 2000a, r. 91);
- report any theft or loss of firearms in their possession (RoK, 2000a, r. 101); and
- renew their licences and permits in a timely manner.<sup>29</sup>

Kazakh legislation explicitly prohibits civilian possession of short-barrelled shotguns;<sup>30</sup> firearms designed for automatic fire; firearms disguised as other objects; cartridges with armour-piercing, incendiary, or percussion bullets, as well as hollow-point ammunition;<sup>31</sup> and weapons and cartridges that do not meet safety requirements (RoK, 1998, art. 7).<sup>32</sup> While the above suggests that civilian possession of automatic rifles is prohibited, it is not clear whether semi-automatic firearms are allowed for civilian ownership, although such weapons can be seen in the country's gun shops.<sup>33</sup> Firearms held by collectors must be deactivated (RoK, 2000a, r. 47). A weapon holder's licence may be revoked if he or she modifies or converts small arms (RoK, 1998, art. 19).

### *Enforcement and weapons collection*

The Kazakh government has collected significant quantities of small arms and light weapons in the past ten years. Information reported in Kazakhstan's national reports on the implementation of the UN Programme of Action reveals that authorities collected some 60,000 and destroyed more than 20,000 firearms between 2003 and 2009 (see Table 4). These are considerable numbers given the country's low level of civilian firearm ownership; they represent about one-third of the estimated total weapons held by civilians in 2010.

Weapons are collected through a combination of voluntary and more forceful schemes. The MIA, as the agency that implements Kazakhstan's firearms legislation, regularly inspects firearms at their places of storage and use, and can seize and destroy unauthorized weapons without compensation (RoK, 1998, art. 30). Table 5 provides a breakdown of the different types of weapon-related crimes as recorded in the databases of the MIA and, since 2008, the Prosecutor General's Office.

Table 5 **Weapon-related crime in Kazakhstan, 2006–10**

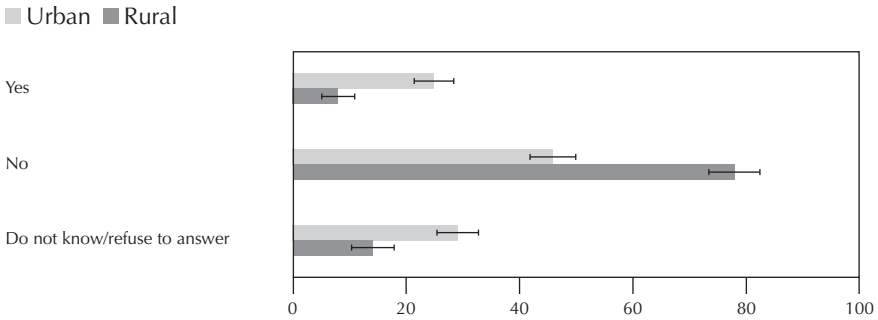
| Type of crime  | MIA   |       | Prosecutor General's Office |       |      |
|--|-------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|------|
|  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008                        | 2009  | 2010 |
| Illegal acquisition, transfer, sale, storage, transportation, or possession of weapons, ammunition, explosive substances, or explosive devices | 1,272 | 1,264 | 926                         | 1,131 | 984  |
| Negligent storage of a firearm   | 9     | 5     | 2                           | 3     | 3    |
| Improper performance of duties related to guarding weapons, ammunition, explosive substances, or explosive devices                             | 0     | 1     | 5                           | 1     | 3    |
| Theft or extortion of weapons, ammunition, explosive substances, or explosive devices  | 57    | 51    | 47                          | 83    | 59   |
| Violation of weapon handling rules   | 1     | 2     | 1                           | 6     | 2    |

Sources: MIA (2010c); PGO (2011a)

A 2007 decree established a compensation system for people who surrender arms and ammunition voluntarily to the MIA, with different cash amounts given depending on the type of weapon recovered (RoK, 2007b). All surrendered weapons must be destroyed or dismantled. In 2010, Kazakhstan reported that the government had allocated more than KZT 500 million (USD 3.4 million) in 2008 for the implementation of this legislation, resulting in more than 13,000 firearms being collected (RoK, 2010a, p. 37). As Table 5 illustrates, more than 20,000 firearms were also surrendered voluntarily before the adoption of the decree, presumably without any compensation. Official statistics do not reveal the number of weapons collected or seized in each of Kazakhstan's 14 oblasts. Results of the CIOM household survey suggest, however, that weapons collection efforts have targeted mainly urban areas (see Figure 5).

Kazakh internal affairs agencies also undertake targeted firearm inspections through an operation named 'Karu'. Launched in 1995, the operation aims to prevent and detect crimes committed with firearms, explosives, and explosive

Figure 5 **Responses to the household survey question, 'In the last two years, have the authorities collected weapons from the population in your city/town/village?' (n=1,500), (percentage)**

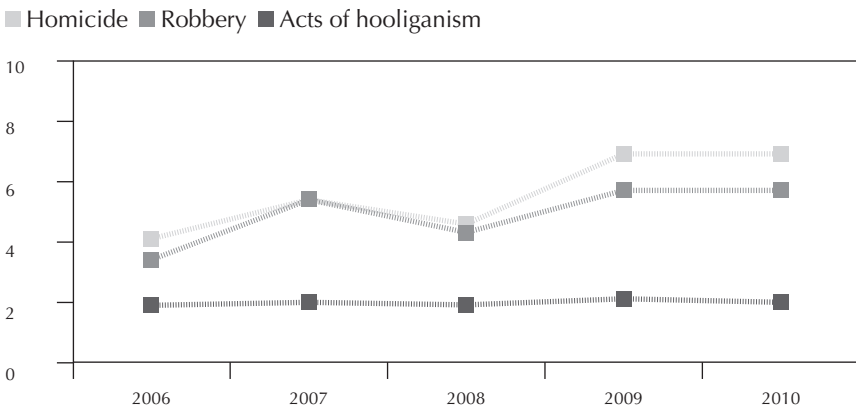


**Note:** Lines on each bar reveal the corresponding confidence interval.

**Source:** CIOM (2010)

devices and also to remove these items from illicit circulation (RoK, 2008, p. 8). Karu operations occur every three months (RoK, 2008, p. 8); the MIA regularly issues press releases to showcase results. In 2010, for instance, authorities inspected more than 139,000 firearm owners and identified more than 5,700 violations of the rules governing the circulation of firearms and 229 violations of hunting rules. A total of 5,196 registered civilian arms were confiscated in the framework of these efforts (MIA, 2010a).

Figure 6 **Proportion of crimes committed with firearms, 2006–10**



**Sources:** MIA (2010c); PGO (2011a)



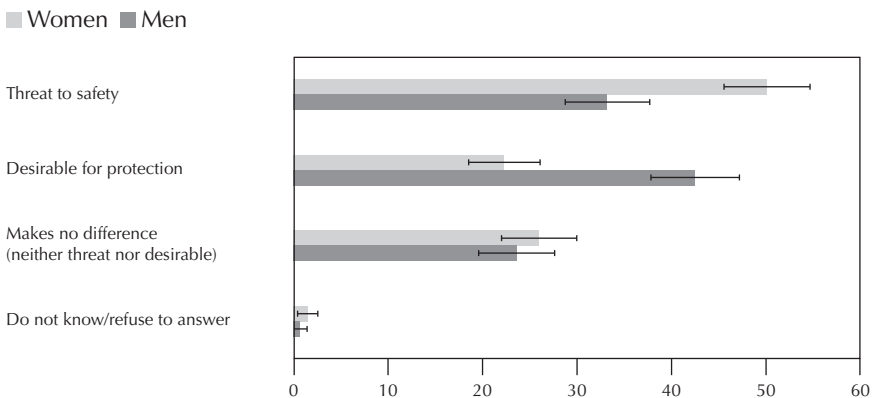
## Impact

Overall, firearms do not appear to be a common tool for perpetrating crime in Kazakhstan. In 2006–10 firearms were used in a negligible proportion—between 0.3 and 0.4 per cent—of the total number of crimes recorded in the country (PGO, 2011a). Bladed weapons appear to be more commonly used, although their use decreased from 1 per cent of all crimes in 2006 to 0.5 per cent in 2010 (MIA, 2010c; PGO, 2011a).

The types of crime in which firearms are most frequently used are homicides, robberies, and acts of hooliganism, but their use remains rare overall at below 10 per cent of all cases (see Figure 6). In contrast, the proportion of homicides perpetrated with firearms reaches 60 per cent in Latin America and the Caribbean, 24 per cent in Europe, and 22 per cent in Asia.<sup>34</sup> That said, the percentage of homicides and robberies committed with firearms in Kazakhstan increased from 4.1 per cent to 6.9 per cent and from 3.4 per cent to 5.7 per cent, respectively, between 2006 and 2010 (see Figure 6). Also noteworthy are recent incidents during which prisoners were able to acquire firearms to help them stage escapes, as well as reports of teenagers getting involved in shootings.<sup>35</sup>

Household survey results suggest that the population does not consider firearms a major problem. While one half of the respondents described firearms

Figure 7 **Responses to the household survey question, ‘How do you mainly perceive firearms?’ (by sex, n=1,497), (percentage)**

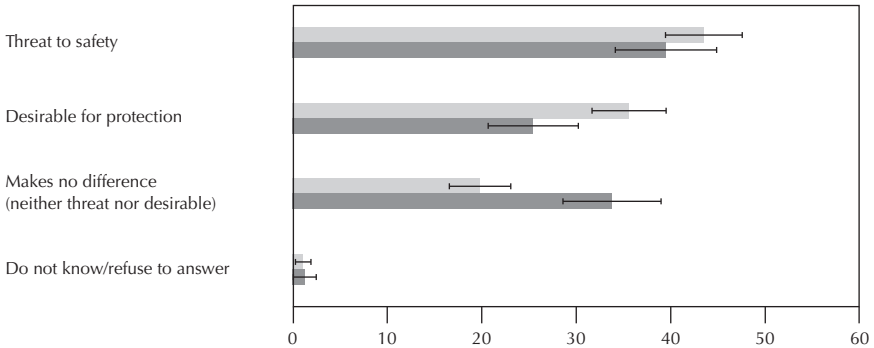


**Note:** Lines on each bar reveal the corresponding confidence interval.

**Source:** CIOM (2010)

Figure 8 **Responses to the household survey question, ‘How do you mainly perceive firearms?’ (n=1,498), (percentage)**

■ Urban ■ Rural



**Note:** Lines on each bar reveal the corresponding confidence interval.

**Source:** CIOM (2010)

as desirable for protection, the other half called them a threat to their safety (CIOM, 2010). More than 60 per cent of respondents nationwide cited personal protection from gangs and criminals as one of the top three reasons for gun ownership for people living in their areas. There were significant differences between men and women, however. As Figure 7 illustrates, 42 per cent of men said that firearms were desirable for protection, as opposed to 22 per cent of women. Similarly, more than half of women identified firearms as threats to safety, as opposed to just one-third of the men.<sup>36</sup> Younger respondents, as well as people living in urban areas, were also more likely to associate firearms with protection (CIOM, 2010; see Figure 8). 📄

# Still secret: small arms and the state

This section reviews publicly available information as well as data provided by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) of Kazakhstan on small arms and ammunition currently in state stockpiles. It also examines the number and types of surplus weapons and ammunition destroyed by the country. Lastly, it analyses the threats associated with state stockpiles, focusing on the consequences for local communities of unplanned explosions at munitions sites.

## Stockpiles

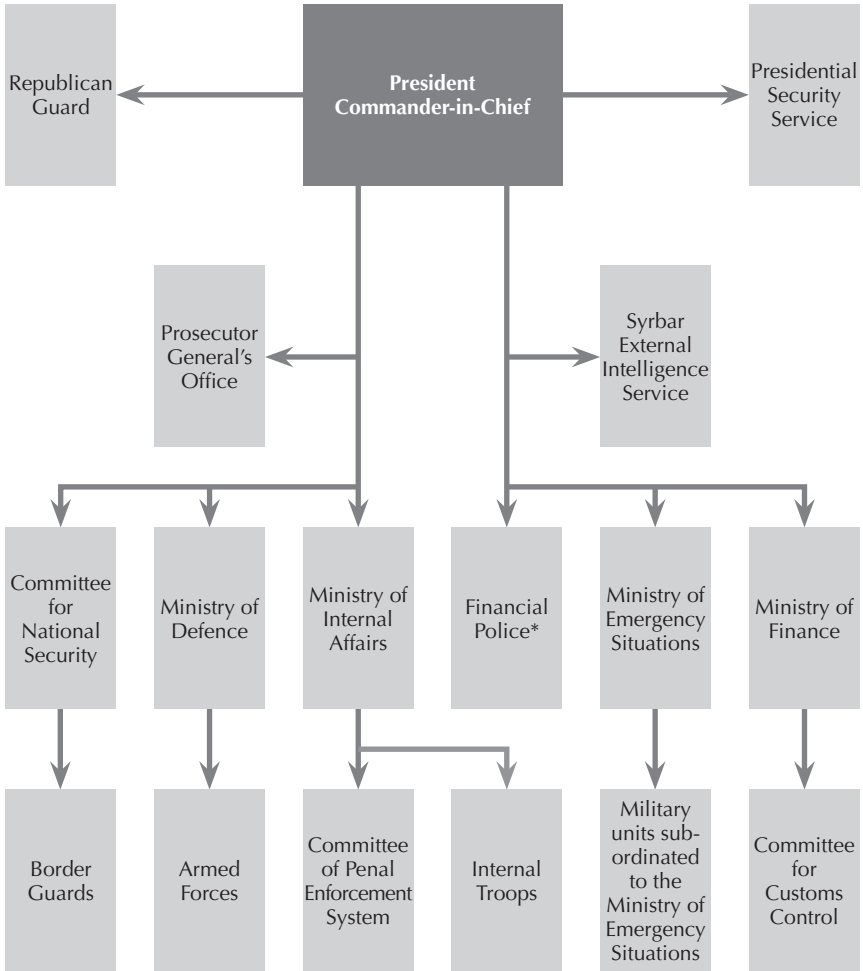
Kazakh defence, security, and law enforcement agencies include a number of institutions that respond to different ministries, each responsible for its own small arms stockpiles (see Figure 9). Kazakh law defines the size of state security forces and their arms stocks as ‘state secrets’; there is no public information on their strength or equipment.<sup>37</sup> *Military Balance*, a secondary source, reports the following strength figures for 2010:

- Army: 30,000;
- Navy: 3,000;
- Air Force: 12,000;
- Ministry of Defence: 4,000;
- Government Guard: 500;
- Internal Security: 20,000 (estimate);
- Presidential Guard: 2,000; and
- State Border Protection Forces: 9,000 (estimate) (IISS, 2010, pp. 364–65).

An informed observer judges the size of the army to be closer to 42,000, with the Navy approximately 2,000 strong, as of mid-2010.<sup>38</sup>

No inventory of state security forces’ small arms holdings has been made public. Secondary reports indicate there are five main ammunition depots in the country (Ashkenazi, 2010, p. 138). Existing estimates go as high as 550,000–

Figure 9 **Kazakhstan's defence, security, and law enforcement infrastructure**



**Note:** \* Agency for the Fight against Economic and Corruption Crimes.

**Source:** description of Kazakhstan's government agencies in RoK (2011b)

950,000 military small arms and light weapons in the country's armouries, and 200,000–400,000 tons of surplus conventional ammunition (Ashkenazi, 2010, p. 138). The weapons estimates are based on the reported strength of the Kazakh armed forces in the late 1990s and early 2000s (a period during which manpower was at its height), combined with estimated weapons-per-soldier multipliers

Table 6 **Firearms and ammunition assigned to Kazakh state agencies**

| Government agency  | Weapons   | Ammunition  |
|--|---|---|
| Agency for the Fight against Economic and Corruption Crimes (Financial Police) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.45 mm PSM pistol;</li> <li>• 9 mm Makarov pistol;</li> <li>• 5.45 mm Kalashnikov assault rifle, model AKS-74 or AKS-74U;</li> <li>• 7.62 mm Kalashnikov assault rifle, model AKM or AKMS;</li> <li>• 9 mm PP-90 sub-machine gun</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5.45 mm small-size centre-fire cartridge;</li> <li>• 5.45 × 18 mm pistol cartridge;</li> <li>• 7.62 mm standard bullet and tracer bullet cartridge;</li> <li>• 9 mm pistol cartridge (9 × 18 mm, 9 × 19 mm)</li> </ul> |
| Committee for Customs Control under the Ministry of Finance                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 mm Baikal 442 pistol, Makarov pistol, model PM-9;</li> <li>• 12-gauge shotguns, models IZH-81 and Mossberg;</li> <li>• 9 mm Kobalt revolver, also known as RSA/TKB-0216 (Revolver Stechkina-Avraamova, after the names of designers, Stechkin and Avraamov)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 mm ammunition for handguns;</li> <li>• 12-gauge ammunition for shotguns</li> </ul>   |
| State Courier Service  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 mm Makarov pistol;</li> <li>• 7.62 mm AK gun, model AKMS;</li> <li>• 9 mm Stechkin automatic pistol</li> </ul>   | n/a   |

Sources: RoK (2000a; 2003; 2010c)

derived from ratios in other countries in the region.<sup>39</sup> More recently, Kazakhstan’s MoD reported a surplus of 2.5 million units of conventional ammunition for 2003, 1.1 million units of which were destroyed by 2009—implying a remaining 1.4 million units of surplus ammunition in 2010 (RoK, 2011a).

For some agencies, including the Financial Police, Customs, as well as the State Courier Service (subordinated to the Prime Minister’s Office), national legislation specifies what types of small arms different agencies are to use (see Table 6). Secondary sources report that the armed forces’ arsenal includes the following small arms and light weapons (Jane’s World Armies, 2010):

- mortars: 82 mm M37M (150 units), 107 mm M107 (50), 120 mm M-43 (100), 120 mm 2S11 Sani, 120 mm 2S9, Aibat;
- anti-tank weapons: 9K111/AT-4 'Spigot' (200 units), 9P148/AT-5 'Spandrel' (50 units), 9K114 Metis/AT-6 'Spiral', 9K115 Metis/AT-7 'Saxhorn' (24 units), 100 mm T-12 (150 units), RPG-7 (250 units);
- MANPADS: 9K32/9K32M/Strela-2/2M/SA-7a/b 'Grail' (250 units), Strela 3/SA-14 'Gremlin' (50 units), Igla-1/SA-16 'Gimlet';
- pistols: 5.45 mm PSM, 7.62 mm Tokarev, 9 mm Makarov;
- assault rifles: 5.45 mm AK-74, 7.62 mm AKM;
- sniper rifles: 7.62 mm Dragunov;
- sub-machine guns: 5.45 mm AKS-74U;
- light machine guns: 5.45 mm RPK-74;
- general-purpose machine guns: 7.62 mm PKS; and
- heavy machine guns: 12.7 mm DShK.

## Sources

Some 50 factories were involved in the production of conventional arms and defence equipment in Kazakhstan before independence from the Soviet Union. By 1995, only 24 military-industrial factories remained operational (Burnashev and Chernykh, 2010). Among them, the state-owned, Oral-based Metallist company was the only one still producing small arms (Chebotarev, 2010; IA, 2004, p. 21). In April 2003, Metallist was incorporated into ZKMK and converted into a producer of oil and gas equipment. The unpredictability of orders for military weapons from both domestic agencies and the international market, as well as growing wage arrears and debt contributed to this conversion (Chebotarev, 2010). Reports also indicate that ZKMK attempts to develop and manufacture new small arms, such as the 9 mm Kobalt revolver and the folded PP-90 sub-machine gun, were not particularly successful (Barabanov, 2008, p. 31).

Kazakhstan's defence manufacturing sector was given new momentum when President Nazarbayev approved a revised military doctrine on 21 March 2007. The doctrine called for the provision of new models of weapons and equipment for the army as well as the modernization and upgrade of existing armaments (RoK, 2007c, p. 16). On 15 May 2009, the president instructed his government

to develop a programme to implement the doctrine, including the technological upgrading of the armed forces and arms-producing facilities (RoK, 2009). Official statements indicate that Kazakhstan intends to manufacture arms not only for its armed forces, but also for export to foreign countries (Akhmetova, 2008, p. 4).

On 27 January 2010, Minister of Defence Adilbek Dzhaksybekov revealed that ZKMK had begun producing ammunition for 30 mm BMP-2-mounted machine guns and continued to produce the NSV 12.7 mm 'Utes' heavy machine gun. While meeting with the minister, the plant management expressed ZKMK's intention to expand production to include more small arms ammunition (Parpura, 2010). During the KADEX-2010 arms exhibition, held in Astana in May 2010, ZKMK announced it had reached an agreement with Israel Military Industries (IMI) to jointly produce a new-generation 'WAVE 300-Tolkyn' small-arms system. This remote-controlled weapon station will reportedly be a combination of the ZKMK-produced NSV 12.7 mm heavy machine gun and the IMI-produced electronic guidance, aiming, and control system. Central Asian states, as well as the Russian Federation, are seen as potential markets for the new weapon (KazTAG, 2010; Kedrov, 2010).

The country's limited military small arms production capacity appears to be reflected in its low levels of military small arms exports. Reported Kazakh exports of these weapons amounted to just over USD 100,000 for the 1992–2008 period (UN Comtrade, n.d.). Kazspetseksport, a state-owned company, is the only entity authorized to export military small arms. The company sells the following types of equipment: 12.7mm NSV machine gun without optical sights; 9 mm PM pistols; 7.62 mm AKM assault rifles; 7.62 mm SKS rifles; 5.45 mm AK-74, AKS-74, and AKS-74U assault rifles; 5.6 mm TOZ-8 and TOZ-17 sports rifles; 26 types of ammunition ranging from 4.5 mm to 23 mm (Chebotarev, 2010).

As domestic production capacity is limited, Kazakhstan is likely to import most of the military small arms it needs for the foreseeable future. According to Defence Vice Minister Ratmir Komratov, the country imports about 70 per cent of its military supplies (of all types) (Moldabayev, 2010, p. 5). Detailed information on military small arms imports is scarce, however. UN Comtrade data as reported by Kazakhstan suggests total imports of military rifles, machine guns, and other light-calibre military weapons amounted to just over USD 3 million for the period 1992–2008, a relatively small proportion of the country's

Table 7 **MoD procurement of small arms, parts, and ammunition, 2009**

|  | Quantity<br>(units) | Value       |                  |
|--|---------------------|-------------|------------------|
|  |                     | KZT         | USD<br>(rounded) |
| Small arms and devices for reconnaissance battalions             | 0                   | 201,989,400 | 1,383,500        |
| Firing mount for handheld firearms                               | 1                   | 1,700,000   | 11,600           |
| Sniper rifles  | 36                  | 126,000,000 | 863,000          |
| Ammunition, 7.62, 338  | 4,125               | 3,300,000   | 22,600           |
| Large-calibre sniper rifle                                       | 2                   | 7,000,000   | 47,900           |
| Ammunition, 12.7 × 99 mm   | 1,000               | 3,500,000   | 24,000           |
| Closed collimating sight   | 222                 | 26,640,000  | 182,500          |
| AK-107 machine gun (Russian Federation)                          | 100                 | 38,000,000  | 260,300          |
| 5.66 mm APS (underwater assault rifle)                           | 44                  | 16,368,000  | 112,100          |
| 5.66 mm APS ammunition for underwater firing                     | 50,000              | 46,500,000  | 318,500          |
| 5.66 mm ammunition for underwater firing                         | 9,000               | 8,680,000   | 59,500           |
| 4.5 mm SPP-1 (underwater pistol)                                 | 44                  | 12,584,000  | 86,200           |
| 4.5 mm SPS ammunition for underwater firing                      | 50,000              | 39,500,000  | 270,500          |
| Installation and acquisition of shotgun rib for sub-machine guns | 1,000               | 15,000,000  | 102,700          |

Source: MoD (2009)

reported total small arms imports (see Table 1). The low value of exports of military small arms to Kazakhstan, as reported by its trading partners, probably reflects the fact that many of the states that regularly export to Kazakhstan, such as the Russian Federation, do not report on military transfers to Comtrade. Kazakh reports to the UN Register on Conventional Arms include some information on military imports. In 2009, for instance, Kazakhstan reported importing sniper rifles from the United States and Germany, as well as grenade launchers from Switzerland (UNODA, n.d.). Imports as reported by Kazakhstan fall well below the actual scale of procurement, however. MoD data, for instance,



reveals the procurement of KZT 547 million (USD 3.7 million) worth of small arms and ammunition for 2009 alone (see Table 7).

## Control measures

The Security Council of the Republic of Kazakhstan's Inter-Departmental Commission on the sale of weapons, military technology, and dual-use goods decides how to deal with surplus weapons and ammunition, based on recommendations made by the MoD's Military–Technical Commission (RoK, 2008, p. 13). Until recently, KazArsenal was the only contractor licensed to destroy ammunition in Kazakhstan, but it had no experience dismantling complex ammunition such as MANPADS missiles (NAMSA, 2007, pp. 2–3). KazArsenal's ammunition disposal facilities were located in Kapshagay and Arys, and were reportedly able to destroy up to 250,000 pieces of ammunition per year, depending on the calibre (OSCE, 2005, pp. 4–5). Following the March 2009 explosion at KazArsenal's Arys branch, the government announced the suspension of ammunition disposal activities in Kazakhstan until the causes of the incident were established and improved safety procedures introduced (Kazinform, 2009). On 3 September 2010, the government issued a decree that provided for the creation of a new entity that would be entrusted to process and destroy surplus ammunition (RoK, 2011a, p. 1).

Available information points to substantial progress in the destruction of surplus conventional ammunition by the MoD. In 2003, following an August 2001 ammunition depot explosion in Tokyrau, the Ministry of Defence adopted a 'Comprehensive Programme of Disposal of Conventional Ammunition that Are No Longer Used by the Kazakhstan Armed Forces', which envisioned the destruction of 2.5 million units of conventional ammunition in 2003–07, with 161,000 pieces of calibre 85–152 mm reportedly destroyed in 2003–04. Funding shortages led to an extension of the programme by 7½ years (OSCE, 2005, p. 3). In December 2009, the MoD announced that 1.5 million pieces of ammunition were to be disposed of (BBC Monitoring/Interfax, 2009). In early 2011, the Ministry informed the Small Arms Survey that it had destroyed 1,115,352 units of conventional ammunition between 2003 and 2009, 939,244 of which were destroyed by detonation (RoK, 2011a, p. 1; see Table 8). This suggests that some 1.4 million

**Table 8 Surplus conventional ammunition destroyed by the Ministry of Defence, 2003–09<sup>40</sup>**

| Type              | 2003          | 2004           | 2005          | 2006           | 2007           | 2008           | 2009          | Total            |
|-------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|
| 37 mm for AZP-39  | 0             | 0              | 0             | 33,943         | 9,138          | 68,823         | 64,262        | 176,166          |
| 57mm for ZiS-2    | 0             | 0              | 0             | 2,447          | 2              | 21,903         | 0             | 24,352           |
| 76 mm for ZiS-3   | 0             | 0              | 2,430         | 46,552         | 3,292          | 43,937         | 0             | 96,211           |
| 85 mm for D-44    | 8,061         | 84,126         | 25,935        | 52,411         | 67,679         | 67,292         | 0             | 305,504          |
| 85 mm for D-48    | 0             | 0              | 0             | 9,926          | 0              | 0              | 0             | 9,926            |
| 100 mm for KS-19  | 0             | 18,400         | 0             | 912            | 43,828         | 77,574         | 0             | 140,714          |
| 115 mm for U-5TS  | 0             | 0              | 0             | 0              | 0              | 4,957          | 0             | 4,957            |
| 122 mm for D-25TS | 0             | 970            | 0             | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0             | 970              |
| 122 mm for M-30   | 4,127         | 34,000         | 50,250        | 69,692         | 1,158          | 6,438          | 0             | 165,665          |
| 130 mm for M-46   | 0             | 0              | 1,628         | 0              | 0              | 9,553          | 0             | 11,181           |
| 152 mm for D-20   | 304           | 0              | 0             | 3,991          | 17,133         | 412            | 0             | 21,840           |
| 152 mm for D-1    | 3,200         | 0              | 0             | 0              | 0              | 0              | 0             | 3,200            |
| 203 mm for 2S7    | 0             | 0              | 0             | 0              | 326            | 4,761          | 0             | 5,087            |
| 82 mm mines       | 0             | 0              | 0             | 0              | 87,728         | 4,727          | 0             | 92,455           |
| 120 mm mines      | 0             | 0              | 0             | 0              | 50,777         | 0              | 0             | 50,777           |
| 160 mm mines      | 0             | 0              | 0             | 0              | 4,952          | 0              | 0             | 4,952            |
| 240 mm mines      | 0             | 0              | 0             | 0              | 0              | 1,395          | 0             | 1,395            |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>15,692</b> | <b>137,496</b> | <b>80,243</b> | <b>219,874</b> | <b>286,013</b> | <b>311,772</b> | <b>64,262</b> | <b>1,115,352</b> |

Source: RoK (2011a, p. 1)

**Table 9 Surplus small arms and light weapons destroyed by the Ministry of Defence, 2003–06**

| Type                                | 2002         | 2003          | 2004         | 2005          | 2006      | Total         |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| Grenade launchers                   | 0            | 43            | 436          | 566           | 0         | 1,045         |
| Rifles and carbines                 | 147          | 10,937        | 143          | 9,586         | 42        | 20,855        |
| Machine guns                        | 0            | 2,960         | 2,742        | 2,910         | 2         | 8,614         |
| Sub-machine guns/<br>assault rifles | 50           | 10            | 0            | 5,415         | 0         | 5,475         |
| Pistols                             | 1,090        | 573           | 0            | 140           | 0         | 1,803         |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>1,287</b> | <b>14,523</b> | <b>3,321</b> | <b>18,617</b> | <b>44</b> | <b>37,792</b> |

Source: RoK (2011a, p. 2)

rounds of ammunition out of the original 2.5 million remained in surplus as of 2010. These figures concern only the Ministry of Defence, however, and not the other institutions listed in Figure 9, for which no comparable data is available.

The Ministry of Defence also reported destroying 37,792 units of small arms and light weapons in 2002–06, but there is no information available on remaining levels of surplus arms, if any (RoK, 2011a, p. 2; see Table 9). Another report states that the MoD destroyed some 27,723 out of 45,000 weapons earmarked for destruction in 2007 (NAMSA, 2007, p. 2). Kazakhstan has undertaken the destruction of excess stockpiles unilaterally, despite some opportunities for international collaboration. A project designed in partnership with the NATO Ammunition Supply Agency envisioned the destruction of 16,653 small arms and 350 MANPADS missiles and launching tubes in 2007. Officially due to administrative reasons, the project was never implemented, however (NAMSA, 2007, pp. 2–3).

## Unplanned explosions at munitions sites

Since 2001, six large-scale explosions are known to have occurred at ammunition storage facilities in Kazakhstan. As of late 2011, these explosions made Kazakhstan the 13<sup>th</sup> most-affected country in the world by such incidents (Small Arms Survey, 2011). The Small Arms Survey, with logistical support from

CIOM, conducted focus group discussions in August and September 2010 with members of three affected communities—Ortaderesin (near the August 2001 explosion site of Tokyrau), Arys (the March 2009 incident), and Karaoy (the June 2009 incident) (see Box 2). Two focus group discussions with eight participants each were held in each location separately with men and women. Participants were required to have lived in the given location for at least two years prior and since the incident. Discussions focused on respondents' awareness of risks and knowledge of the explosion; impacts such as casualties, property damage, and longer-term consequences on local development and livelihoods; the level of government response; and issues of compensation and preventive measures (see Annexe 2).

### **Box 2 Case study background: the Tokyrau, Arys, and Karaoy ammunition depot explosions**

The Tokyrau-10 ammunition depot at the Ministry of Defence's military unit 89533, about 50 km east of Balkhash, Karagandy Oblast, exploded on 8 August 2001 (*Kazakhstan Today*, 2001a). According to Sat Tokpakbayev, then minister of defence, the arsenal included 'several tens of thousands of tons' of artillery ammunition, small arms ammunition, and aircraft bombs. The entire stock, mainly left from the Soviet Union's Afghan campaign and partly transferred from Armenia after the 1988 earthquake, was reportedly slated for destruction (*Kazakhstan Today*, 2001b).

The second explosion took place on 20 March 2009 at the ammunition disposal facility of KazArsenal Research and Production Association Ltd., located at military unit 44859 of the Ministry of Defence, 2 km from the town of Arys, Southern Kazakhstan Oblast (about 100 km from Shymkent) (MoE, 2009a). Large ammunition depots were built near Arys before World War II, and ammunition explosions had taken place there before. The press reported that some ammunition and weapons had been transferred to the depots near Arys after the Soviet Army's withdrawal from Afghanistan (*Kazakhstan Today*, 2009b). The Ministry of Defence had subcontracted KazArsenal, a private entity, to dispose of and reprocess out-of-date ammunition for civilian use (Novitskaya, 2009).

The third explosion took place on 8 June 2009 at the ammunition depot of military unit 2466 of the KNB's Border Guard Service, 1 km from the village of Karaoy, Ile District, Almaty Oblast (40 km from Almaty). The unit serves as a field training centre for the KNB Military Institute that trains border guard officers (MoE, 2009b; *Kazakhstan Today*, 2009e; KazTAG, 2009).

## *Risk awareness*

In all three locations, the population was aware of the existence of the ammunition depots before the incidents, mainly due to their proximity and because some local residents were employed there as contract workers. In Ortaderesin and Arys, rumours circulated that the depots housed enormous stocks of ammunition and that, if an explosion occurred, it would affect large areas. In Karaoy, residents got used to military exercises that are organized regularly at the two nearby training ranges; some initially mistook the explosion for yet another exercise. In Arys, the explosion occurred on the eve of the Nauryz holiday, and some people first assumed that the military unit was preparing fireworks for celebrations.

Local residents' awareness of the causes of the incidents varies. In Ortaderesin, respondents were not aware of the real cause but put forward several assumptions that surfaced in the press. In fact, the government commission was at the time unable to come to a definitive conclusion as to what had caused the incident (*Kazakhstan Today*, 2002). Respondents in Arys were well aware of the cause of the explosion, partly from press reports, partly from the stories told by fellow residents who had worked at KazArsenal. The investigation, like the press reports that preceded it, concluded that negligence, violations of safety rules, and a heavy workload at KazArsenal were the main causes of the incident (Novitskaya, 2009). In Karaoy, most respondents said they had little knowledge about the cause, perhaps because of the sensitivity of the topic due to the affiliation of the ammunition depot with the KNB. Investigators concluded that the depot exploded after a contract sergeant accidentally dropped a Thunderflash into a box with explosives (KTK, 2009b; Severnyy, 2009); however, some local residents claim that he was used as a scapegoat. In none of the three cases did the authorities explain the causes of the explosions to the local population.

Respondents in one location implied that the explosions might have been related to illegal sales of weapons and ammunition to third parties. Men in Karaoy mentioned a rumour that an inspection of the ammunition depot inventory had been forthcoming and that the explosion had been set intentionally to conceal traces of theft. Participants in other locations were unwilling to discuss this sensitive topic. After the Tokyrau explosion, allegations surfaced in the press that it had been organized to provide a cover-up for theft (Dzhalilov, 2001).

## *Casualties and impact*

Community reaction was the most dramatic in Arys. The incident took place late in the evening and, according to the focus group participants, led to mass fear, shock, and panic rooted in previously existing fears; the situation reportedly resembled a disorganized war-time evacuation. Taking advantage of the situation, taxi drivers and petrol station owners inflated prices, as confirmed by press reports (Novitskaya, 2009). In Ortaderesin, locals were also frightened but did not panic, instead assisting the military personnel and their families and facilitating an organized evacuation. Yet compared to Arys, Ortaderesin is much farther from the explosion site (about 15 km). In Karaoy, some people panicked and left the village, but the majority remained in their houses. Some participants in all three communities initially had the impression that war had started; residents said the explosions resembled war-time artillery fire and bombardment.

While not leading to any immediate fatalities among the civilian population of the settlements, the three events differ in terms of the overall damage and casualties they ultimately caused. The Arys explosion resulted in the death of three KazArsenal workers on site and inflicted injuries on 17 others (two of whom later died at the hospital) (*Kazakhstan Today*, 2009c; KTK, 2009a; Novitskaya, 2009). The closeness and intensity of explosions in Arys also resulted in broken windows, knocked-out doors, and cracked roofs and walls. While there was no damage to the property of local residents in Ortaderesin, a teenage scrap metal hunter, a conscript soldier, and five workers were killed and three were wounded by unexploded ordnance in separate incidents between 2003 and 2009.<sup>41</sup> The explosions also destroyed infrastructure, including the military's housing facility, damaged the local railway and power transmission line, and prompted the authorities to limit the water supply for several days.<sup>42</sup> Local residents claimed that, although the clean-up activities were officially terminated, many pieces of ammunition remained scattered in the surrounding area and on the bottom of Lake Balkhash and continued to generate interest from scrap metal hunters. Residents of Karaoy reported no damage to property but also knew that a conscript soldier was killed when a concrete wall of the depot crushed him (MoE, 2009b; Konovalov, 2009; ERA-TV, 2009).

Focus group participants in Ortaderesin and Arys claimed that the explosions have had negative effects on the environment and human health, especially on pregnant women and children, and that they resulted in higher household animal mortality. Some Ortaderesin residents reported that the Tokyrau depot had housed uranium-tipped ammunition and that the incident had led to the radioactive contamination of the surrounding area, but that the authorities had told local residents that there was no radiation in the environment. It appears that the Tokyrau arsenal had indeed contained such ammunition, as reported by Kazakhstan's nuclear scientists, who helped remove highly radioactive ammunition and waste from the incident site and placed them for long-term storage at the former Semipalatinsk nuclear test site (Dmitropavlenko et al., 2010).

### *Government response*

According to respondents, firefighters in all three locations acted quickly to arrive at the site after receiving an emergency alert. During the Tokyrau incident, however, they did not intervene until the explosions subsided because of the risk of injury and death (*Kazakhstan Today*, 2001a; 2001c). Similarly, in Karaoy, emergency responders did not approach the site to contain the blaze because of continuous explosions of ammunition (MoE, 2009b; *Kazakhstan Today*, 2009e). In Arys, firefighters suppressed the fire, risking their lives despite a remaining explosion hazard (*Kazakhstan Today*, 2009d).

The evacuations in the three affected communities were organized in different ways. In Ortaderesin, the local authorities oversaw a relatively smooth evacuation, moving more than 400 civilians and military personnel to Balkhash. Some men remained in the village to take care of their property and cattle. Residents in Arys claim that the authorities did not arrange for any transportation to evacuate the civilian population, while the military unit provided two buses and a car to evacuate its personnel and their families. In Karaoy, residents living in the peripheral streets located close to the incident site were evacuated and accommodated in the local community centre, while others stayed at home or left the village independently. In all three cases, the authorities closed off the affected areas, putting in place police and military cordons and blocking the roads leading to the towns and villages. Engineer units were called in to search for unexploded ordnance.

## *Compensation and prevention*

Contrary to their expectations, Ortaderesin residents did not receive any government assistance—unlike the military personnel and their families, who were paid, according to respondents, compensation for their lost property. Residents of Arys claimed that they had been promised they would be compensated for all the damage inflicted by the incident but instead only received insignificant compensation for shattered windows. Focus group participants said that funds that had been allocated for assistance were embezzled by local officials. Respondents in Karaoy did not expect government compensation or assistance since the explosions, despite the damage they had inflicted on military property and housing, did not cause any damage to their property.<sup>43</sup>

The focus groups conducted by the Small Arms Survey also revealed that the authorities in Kazakhstan do not organize emergency response training for the civilian population living near ammunition depots, and that local residents do not know how to behave in emergency situations. Respondents pointed out that there are no designated collection points or evacuation centres such as the Soviet-era bomb shelters, where local residents could gather in the event of an emergency. Focus group participants in all three locations agreed that, ideally, military facilities, such as ammunition depots and military training ranges, should be located far from human settlements. On the other hand, the majority of participants said they did not strongly object to the location of military facilities near their settlements because they provide much-needed jobs. 🗨️



# Conclusion

As of late 2011, the information that the Small Arms Survey was able to gather indicated that security in Kazakhstan had improved since post-Soviet independence. Crime, including homicide, has decreased significantly since the mid-1990s, and criminals appear to use firearms relatively rarely when perpetrating homicides and armed robberies. Civilian respondents put employment, healthcare, and access to water ahead of security when asked about the most serious problems affecting them. Further, the government has a relatively comprehensive set of measures in place to regulate civilian acquisition and possession of small arms.

There are, however, some important caveats to the assumption that Kazakhstan is a secure country in an otherwise unstable region. Threats to Kazakhstan's stability are not limited to events in neighbouring countries; rather, they include a domestic homicide rate that exceeds global and Central Asia averages and a recent increase in the use of firearms in violent crime. Perceptions of insecurity appear to be higher in urban areas, fuelling civilian demand for firearms as a means of self-defence in cities and among young men. Additional negative trends include apparent increases in the illicit manufacture of small arms, and reports of the use of firearms by prisoners and teenagers. The recent surge in terrorist violence on Kazakh territory, combined with prominent cases of ethnic and political violence over the past five years, is especially worrying. While it would be alarmist to speak of an approaching storm, Kazakh skies are not entirely clear.

The six large-scale, unplanned explosions at munitions sites that have occurred in the country since 2001 highlight problems in the management of state stockpiles. The explosions have caused death, injury, and the destruction of private property and public infrastructure. Over the longer term, they have also harmed local environments, livelihoods, and employment. The lack of emergency response training for communities living near depots points to a shortfall of government capacity and will to respond effectively to such accidents. Ensuring the safety

and security of state stockpiles, including stores of surplus ammunition, would not only help prevent further accidents, but would also decrease the risk of arms being diverted to unauthorized entities and individuals. While Kazakhstan has taken some unilateral steps in this direction, increased transparency and international cooperation, as is occurring elsewhere, would help the country benefit from the expanding international knowledge base in this area. 🇰🇿

# Annexe 1. Survey questionnaire

## Kazakhstan

### *Perceptions & attitudes of security and small arms*

### Extracts from the household survey questionnaire

#### Safety & security

| N°  | Questions   | Responses  | Skip to  |
|-----|---|--|--|
| SS1 | <p>What are the <b>3 MOST</b> serious issues or concerns in this city/ town/village?<br/>Please rank 1, 2, 3</p> <p>SHOW CARD – THREE RESPONSES ONLY</p> <p>(Write responses in SKIP SECTION)</p> | <p>THERE ARE NO ISSUES OR CONCERNS 1</p> <p>EDUCATION (LACK OF OR INADEQUATE) 2</p> <p>HEALTHCARE (LACK OF OR INADEQUATE) 3</p> <p>TRANSPORT WITHIN THE VICINITY OF THE CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE (LACK OF OR INADEQUATE) 4</p> <p>TRANSPORT TO AREAS AWAY FROM THE CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE (LACK OF OR INADEQUATE) 5</p> <p>EMPLOYMENT (LACK OF OR INADEQUATE) 6</p> <p>CLEAN WATER (LACK OF OR INADEQUATE) 7</p> <p>FOOD FOR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS/ HUMANS (LACK OF OR INADEQUATE) 8</p> <p>FOOD FOR HOUSEHOLD ANIMALS (LACK OF OR INADEQUATE) 9</p> <p>SECURITY OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS/HUMANS (LACK OF OR INADEQUATE) 10</p> <p>SECURITY OF HOUSEHOLD ANIMALS (LACK OF OR INADEQUATE) 11</p> <p>DISPUTES OVER LAND AND/OR OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES 12</p> <p>OTHER (SPECIFY)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>DO NOT KNOW 88</p> <p>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99</p> | <p>RESPONSE</p> <p>1.  __ </p> <p>2.  __ </p> <p>3.  __ </p> |

| N°  | Questions  | Responses   | Skip to  |
|-----|--|---|--|
| SS2 | <p>What are the <b>3 MAIN</b> safety and security concerns in this city/town/village?<br/>Please rank 1, 2, 3</p> <p>SHOW CARD –<br/>THREE RESPONSES ONLY</p> <p>(Write responses in SKIP SECTION)</p> | <p>NO SAFETY OR SECURITY CONCERNS 1</p> <p>HIGH CRIME RATES 2</p> <p>RADICAL RELIGIOUS GROUPS 3</p> <p>SOCIAL UNREST 4</p> <p>ETHNIC UNREST 5</p> <p>THREATS AGAINST WOMEN (INCL. RAPE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE) 6</p> <p>THREATS AGAINST CHILDREN (INCL. CHILD ABUSE) 7</p> <p>ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION 8</p> <p>THREATS TO SELF (SUICIDE, SELF-HARM, ETC.) 9</p> <p>THREATS FROM NATURE 10</p> <p>CATTLE RUSTLING 11</p> <p>ABUSE OF POWER BY THE AUTHORITIES (INCL. POLICE) 12</p> <p>OTHER (SPECIFY)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>DO NOT KNOW 88</p> <p>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99</p> | <p>RESPONSE</p> <p>1.  __ </p> <p>2.  __ </p> <p>3.  __ </p> |
| SS3 | <p>Compared to 1 year ago, how is the security in your city/town/village?</p>  | <p>WORSENERD 1</p> <p>THE SAME 2</p> <p>IMPROVED 3</p> <p>DO NOT KNOW 88</p> <p>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99</p>   |  |
| SS4 | <p>Are you concerned that you or a member of your household may become the victim of a crime or violent encounter?</p>   | <p>YES 1</p> <p>NO 2</p> <p>DO NOT KNOW 88</p> <p>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99</p>   |  |
| SS5 | <p>Do you consider your city/town/village to be:<br/>(NB: Read out answers)</p>  | <p>SAFE 1</p> <p>UNSAFE 2</p> <p>NEITHER SAFE NOR UNSAFE 3</p> <p>DO NOT KNOW 88</p> <p>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99</p>   |  |

| N°  | Questions   | Responses          | Skip to                |                 |                      |                  |
|-----|---|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
|     | <p>Please respond to the following conditions by telling me if you would feel very safe, somewhat safe, are unsure, somewhat unsafe, or very unsafe.</p> <p>SHOW THE CARD. ONE ANSWER IN EACH LINE</p> <p>How do you feel . . .</p> |                    |                        |                 |                      |                  |
|     | <b>Please mark respective cell for each statement:</b>  | <b>Very unsafe</b> | <b>Somewhat unsafe</b> | <b>Not sure</b> | <b>Somewhat safe</b> | <b>Very safe</b> |
| SS6 | . . . when at home during the day?  | 1                  | 2                      | 3               | 4                    | 5                |
| SS7 | . . . when at home during the night?  | 1                  | 2                      | 3               | 4                    | 5                |
| SS8 | . . . when outside during the day?  | 1                  | 2                      | 3               | 4                    | 5                |
| SS9 | . . . when outside during the night?  | 1                  | 2                      | 3               | 4                    | 5                |

## Crime

| N° | Questions  | Responses   | Skip to  |
|----|--|---|--|
| C1 | <p>Has a member of your household been a victim of a crime or violent encounter in the past 12 months?</p> <p>ASK ABOUT THE LATEST CRIME IF THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL CRIMES</p> | <p>YES 1</p> <p>-----</p> <p>NO 2</p> <p>DO NOT KNOW 88</p> <p>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99</p>  | <p>CONTINUE to C2</p> <p>-----</p> <p>SKIP to S1</p> |
| C2 | <p>How many members of your household were victims of this crime?</p>  | <p>NUMBER (SPECIFY)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99</p>   |  |
| C3 | <p>Identify the sex and age of the victim(s).</p> <p>IF THERE WERE SEVERAL VICTIMS RESPONDING TO THE SAME PROFILE,</p>   | <p>MAN, AGE 0–14 1 .....</p> <p>MAN, AGE 15–29 2 .....</p> <p>MAN, AGE 30–45 3 .....</p> <p>MAN, AGE 46+ 4 .....</p> <p>WOMAN, AGE 0–15 5 .....</p> |  |

| N° | Questions  | Responses   | Skip to |
|----|--|---|---------|
|    | INDICATE THE NUMBER AFTER THE RESPONSE CODE                                  | WOMAN, AGE 15–29 6 .....<br>WOMAN, AGE 30–45 7 .....<br>WOMAN, AGE 46+ 8 .....<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99   |         |
| C4 | What type of crime was committed?<br>ONE RESPONSE ONLY                       | THREAT/INTIMIDATION 1<br>SPONTANEOUS KILLING 2<br>INTENTIONAL KILLING 3<br>REVENGE KILLING 4<br>ASSAULT/BEATING/SHOOTING/<br>FIGHTING 5<br>RAPE/SEXUAL ASSAULT 6<br>DOMESTIC VIOLENCE 7<br>ROBBERY 8<br>VICTIM OF ETHNIC FIGHTING 9<br>VICTIM OF GANG VIOLENCE 10<br>DRUG DEALING 11<br>KIDNAPPING 12<br>CHILD ABUSE 13<br>CHILD NEGLECT 14<br>BURGLARY 15<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 |         |
| C5 | What type of weapon was used to help commit this crime?<br>ONE RESPONSE ONLY | NO WEAPON WAS USED 1<br>STONES 2<br>FIRE 3<br>STICK 4<br>AXE 5<br>KNIFE, OTHER BLADED WEAPON 6<br>REGULAR PISTOL/REVOLVER 7<br>AK-47/OTHER AUTOMATIC RIFLE 8<br>HUNTING RIFLE 9<br>SAWN-OFF SHOTGUN 10<br>GAS PISTOL 11<br>AIR PISTOL 12<br>RUBBER-BULLET PISTOL 13   |         |

| N°  | Questions  | Responses   | Skip to |
|-----|--|---|---------|
|     |  | OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99   |         |
| C6  | Where did this crime mainly take place?<br>ONE RESPONSE ONLY | IN OWN HOME/YARD 1<br>IN SOMEONE'S HOUSE/YARD 2<br>ON THE STREET 3<br>AT A PUBLIC GATHERING PLACE 4<br>AT A MARKET 5<br>IN THE WORKPLACE 6<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 |         |
| C7  | Time of day of incident:                                     | MORNING 1<br>DAY 2<br>EVENING 3<br>NIGHT 4<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99   |         |
| C8  | Did the victim know the perpetrator?                         | YES 1<br>NO 2<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99  |         |
| C9  | Was the victim injured or killed?<br>ONE RESPONSE ONLY       | NO 1<br>INJURED 2<br>KILLED 3<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99  |         |
| C10 | Did you report the crime to the law enforcement agencies?    | YES 1<br>NO 2<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99  |         |

## Security providers

| N° | Questions  | Responses   | Skip to                                  |
|----|--|---|--|
| S1 | Are there institutions/<br>groups that provide<br>security to your city/<br>town/village?  | YES 1<br>-----<br>NO 2<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99  | CONTINUE<br>to S2<br>-----<br>SKIP to S3 |
| S2 | If YES to S1, who are<br>these institutions/<br>groups?<br>MULTIPLE<br>RESPONSES<br>PERMITTED  | POLICE AND OTHER LAW<br>ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES 1<br>ARMED FORCES, ARMY 2<br>LOCAL AUTHORITIES 3<br>PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES 4<br>MULLAHS, PRIESTS, OTHER<br>RELIGIOUS LEADERS 5<br>TRADITIONAL LEADERS (AKSAKALS/<br>WHITE BEARDS) 6<br>RELATIVES 7<br>NEIGHBOURS 8<br>FRIENDS 9<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 |  |
| S3 | Would you inform<br>anyone if you saw or<br>experienced a crime?   | YES 1<br>-----<br>NO 2<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99   | CONTINUE<br>to S4<br>-----<br>SKIP to S5 |
| S4 | If YES to S3, whom<br>would you inform?<br>Please rank 1, 2, 3<br>SHOW CARD –<br>THREE RESPONSES<br>ONLY<br>(Write responses in<br>SKIP SECTION) | POLICE AND OTHER LAW<br>ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES 1<br>ARMED FORCES, ARMY 2<br>LOCAL AUTHORITIES 3<br>PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES 4<br>MULLAHS, PRIESTS, OTHER<br>RELIGIOUS LEADERS 5   |  |



| N° | Questions  | Responses  | Skip to                   |                          |
|----|--|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
|    |  | TRADITIONAL LEADERS (AKSAKALS/WHITE BEARDS) 6<br>RELATIVES 7<br>NEIGHBOURS 8<br>FRIENDS 9<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 |                           |                          |
| 55 | INTERVIEWER: SHOW THE CARD WITH THE SCALE.<br>MARK RESPECTIVE CELL FOR EACH STATEMENT.<br><br>On a scale from 1 to 5 please rank the following actors:<br>1) How much do you trust . . . when it comes to dealing with crimes?<br>(if 1 is considered “don’t trust at all” and 5 is considered “trust fully”)<br>2) How efficient is (are) . . . when it comes to dealing with crimes?<br>(if 1 is considered “completely inefficient” and 5 is considered “very efficient”)<br>3) How accessible is (are) . . . when it comes to dealing with crimes?<br>(if 1 is considered “impossible to get access” and 5 is considered “very easy to get access”)<br><br>DO NOT KNOW 88    REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 |  |                           |                          |
|    |  | <b>Police and other law enforcement agencies</b>   | <b>Armed forces, army</b> | <b>Local authorities</b> |
| 1  | Trust  | 1  | 2                         | 3                        |
| 2  | Efficiency   | 1  | 2                         | 3                        |
| 3  | Accessibility  | 1  | 2                         | 3                        |

### Perceptions of firearms

| N° | Questions  | Responses   | Skip to |
|----|--|---|---------|
| F1 | How do you mainly perceive firearms?<br>(NB: Read out answers) | THREAT TO SAFETY 1<br>DESIRABLE FOR PROTECTION 2<br>MAKES NO DIFFERENCE (NEITHER THREAT NOR DESIRABLE) 3<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 |         |

| N° | Questions  | Responses  | Skip to                                  |
|----|--|--|--|
| F2 | How easy or difficult do you think it is to acquire a firearm in your city/town/village?<br>ONE RESPONSE ONLY  | EASY 1<br>DIFFICULT 2<br>POSSIBLE<br>(NEITHER EASY NOR DIFFICULT) 2<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99   |  |
| F3 | In your opinion, are there too many firearms in your city/town/village?  | YES 1<br>NO 2<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99   |  |
| F4 | In general, who are the main owners of firearms according to sex and age among the general population?<br>Please rank 1, 2, 3<br>SHOW CARD – THREE RESPONSES ONLY<br>(Write responses in SKIP SECTION) | YOUNG MAN, AGE 15–18 1<br>MAN, AGE 19–25 2<br>MAN, AGE 26–35 3<br>MAN, AGE 36–45 4<br>MAN, AGE 46+ 5<br>YOUNG WOMAN, AGE 15–18 6<br>WOMAN, AGE 19–25 7<br>WOMAN, AGE 26–35 8<br>WOMAN, AGE 36–45 9<br>WOMAN, AGE 46+ 10<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 | RESPONSE<br>1.  __ <br>2.  __ <br>3.  __ |
| F5 | In your opinion, how is the general availability of firearms in your city/town/village now compared to one year ago?   | DECREASED 1<br>INCREASED 2<br>THE SAME 3<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99  |  |
| F6 | What are the <b>3 MAIN</b> reasons why people in your city/town/village own firearm(s)?<br>Please rank 1, 2, 3<br>SHOW CARD – THREE RESPONSES ONLY<br>(Write responses in SKIP TO SECTION)             | PERSONAL PROTECTION FROM GANGS, CRIMINALS 1<br>PERSONAL PROTECTION FROM WILDLIFE 2<br>PROTECTION OF PROPERTY (INCL. LIVESTOCK) 3<br>GENERAL FEAR 4<br>FEAR OF CONFLICT/INSTABILITY/WAR 5   | RESPONSE<br>1.  __ <br>2.  __ <br>3.  __ |

| N° | Questions  | Responses   | Skip to                                  |
|----|--|---|--|
|    |  | WORK (POLICE/SOLDIER/<br>WATCHMAN) 6<br>WORK (BUSINESSMAN) 7<br>HUNTING 8<br>LEFT OVER FROM THE WAR 9<br>VALUED FAMILY POSSESSION 10<br>PART OF TRADITION 11<br>HOBBY 12<br>CRIMINAL INTENT 13<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 |  |
| F7 | In your opinion,<br>what are the three<br>types of firearms that<br>pose the most threat<br>to people in your<br>city/town/village?<br>Please rank 1, 2, 3<br>SHOW CARD –<br>THREE RESPONSES<br>ONLY<br>(Write responses in<br>SKIP SECTION) | REGULAR PISTOL/REVOLVER 1<br>AK-47/OTHER AUTOMATIC RIFLE 2<br>HUNTING RIFLE 3<br>SAWN-OFF SHOTGUN 4<br>GAS PISTOL 5<br>AIR PISTOL 6<br>RUBBER-BULLET PISTOL 7<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99                                  | RESPONSE<br>1.  __ <br>2.  __ <br>3.  __ |
| F8 | How often do you<br>hear firearms in your<br>neighbourhood?  | DAILY 1<br>SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK 2<br>ONCE A WEEK 3<br>ONCE A MONTH 4<br>INFREQUENTLY 5<br>NEVER 6<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99  |  |
| F9 | How often do you<br>see firearms in your<br>neighbourhood?   | DAILY 1<br>SEVERAL TIMES A WEEK 2<br>ONCE A WEEK 3<br>ONCE A MONTH 4  |  |

| N°  | Questions   | Responses  | Skip to                                  |
|-----|---|--|--|
|     |   | INFREQUENTLY 5<br>NEVER 6<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99   |  |
| F10 | If a person from your neighbourhood, for whatever reason, needed a weapon, where do you think he or she could get one?<br>SHOW CARD – MULTIPLE RESPONSES PERMITTED, BUT NOT MORE THAN 3 | ASK AROUND 1<br>BORROW FROM A RELATIVE 2<br>BUY IN THE CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE 3<br>BUY ON THE BLACK MARKET 4<br>TAKE FROM A HIDDEN CACHE 5<br>BUY FROM SOMEONE IN THE MILITARY 6<br>BUY FROM SOMEONE IN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES 7<br>GET A LICENCE AND BUY 8<br>NOWHERE 9<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 |  |
| F11 | In your view, is purchasing a firearm and ammunition a legitimate use of household resources?   | YES 1<br>NO 2<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99   |  |
| F12 | In what groups of society are most firearms to be found?<br>Please rank 1, 2, 3<br>SHOW CARD – THREE RESPONSES ONLY<br>(Write responses in SKIP SECTION)                                | GENERAL POPULATION 1<br>HUNTERS 2<br>SECURITY GUARDS, WATCHMEN 3<br>POLICE/MILITARY 4<br>EX-POLICE/EX-MILITARY 5<br>BUSINESSPEOPLE 6<br>POLITICIANS 7<br>CRIMINAL GANGS 8<br>DRUG TRAFFICKERS 9<br>NO SUCH GROUPS 10<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99  | RESPONSE<br>1.  __ <br>2.  __ <br>3.  __ |

## Section 7: Firearm accident

| N° | Questions   | Responses  | Skip to                                      |
|----|---|--|--|
| A1 | Have you or a member of your household experienced an accident involving a firearm in the past 12 months? | YES 1<br>-----<br>NO 2<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99  | CONTINUE to A2<br>-----<br>SKIP to SECTION 8 |
| A2 | For the latest incident, could you provide the age of the victim:   | AGE (IN YEARS) 1<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99   |  |
| A3 | Sex of victim:  | FEMALE 1<br>MALE 2<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99  |  |
| A4 | Type of small arms that caused the accident:<br>ONE RESPONSE ONLY   | REGULAR PISTOL/REVOLVER 1<br>AK-47/OTHER AUTOMATIC RIFLE 2<br>HUNTING RIFLE 3<br>SAWN-OFF SHOTGUN 4<br>GAS PISTOL 5<br>AIR PISTOL 6<br>RUBBER-BULLET PISTOL 7<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 |  |
| A5 | Area of incident:<br><br>ONE RESPONSE ONLY  | IN OWN HOME/YARD 1<br>IN SOMEONE'S HOUSE/YARD 2<br>ON THE STREET 3<br>AT A PUBLIC GATHERING PLACE 4<br>AT A MARKET 5<br>IN THE WORKPLACE 6<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99                    |  |

|    |   |   |  |
|----|---|---|--|
| A6 | Time of day of incident:  | MORNING 1<br>DAY 2<br>EVENING 3<br>NIGHT 4<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99   |  |
| A7 | Was the victim injured or killed?   | NO 1<br>INJURED 2<br>KILLED 3<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99  |  |
| A8 | What was the reason the firearm accidentally discharged?<br>ONE RESPONSE ONLY | FAULT OF THE ADULT CARRIER (INCLUDES CLEANING) 1<br>FAULTY FIREARM (INCLUDES DROPPING) 2<br>CHILDREN WERE PLAYING WITH THE FIREARM 3<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 |  |

## Ownership of firearms

| N°  | Questions  | Responses   | Skip to   |
|-----|--|---|---|
| FO1 | Do you or anyone in your household own any firearms? | YES 1<br>-----<br>NO 2<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99  | SKIP to FO3<br>-----<br>CONTINUE to FO2<br>-----<br>SKIP to SECTION 9 |
| FO2 | If NO to FO1, why not?<br><br>ONE RESPONSE ONLY      | NO SECURITY PROBLEMS 1<br>ADEQUATE PROTECTION 2<br>DON'T LIKE GUNS 3<br>DANGEROUS FOR FAMILY IN THE HOUSE (E.G. CHILDREN) 4 |   |

|     |  |  |  |
|-----|--|--|--|
|     |  | DANGEROUS FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC 5<br>DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE ONE 6<br>CAN'T AFFORD ONE 7<br>HAD ONE, BUT IT WAS STOLEN 8<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99                                       |  |
| FO3 | If YES to FO1, how many firearms does the household own? | NUMBER (SPECIFY) 1<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99   |  |
| FO4 | Which kind(s) of firearm do you own in your household?   | REGULAR PISTOL/REVOLVER 1<br>AK-47/OTHER AUTOMATIC RIFLE 2<br>HUNTING RIFLE 3<br>SAWN-OFF SHOTGUN 4<br>GAS PISTOL 5<br>AIR PISTOL 6<br>RUBBER-BULLET PISTOL 7<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 |  |

## Weapons collection

| N° | Questions   | Responses  | Skip to                               |
|----|---|--|---------------------------------------|
| D1 | In the <b>last two</b> years, have the authorities collected weapons from the population in your city/town/village? | YES 1<br>-----<br>NO 2<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99                                  | CONTINUE to D2<br>-----<br>SKIP to D3 |
| D2 | If YES to D1, how do you think that the disarmament has changed the security  | VERY MUCH WORSENEDED SECURITY 1<br>SOMEWHAT WORSENEDED SECURITY 2<br>DID NOT MAKE A DIFFERENCE 3 |                                       |

|    |  |   |  |
|----|--|---|--|
|    | of the population living in your city/village/town?<br>SHOW CARD.<br>ONE RESPONSE ONLY   | SOMEWHAT IMPROVED SECURITY 4<br>VERY MUCH IMPROVED SECURITY 5<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99  |  |
| D3 | If the authorities try to collect weapons from your city/town/village, how would local residents react?<br>ONE RESPONSE ONLY                           | HIDE FIREARM(S) 1<br>SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE UP FIREARM(S) 2<br>GIVE UP ONE FIREARM AND HIDE REST 3<br>FIGHT TO DEFEND RIGHT TO KEEP FIREARM(S) 4<br>DOES NOT CONCERN MY CITY/TOWN/VILLAGE BECAUSE THERE ARE NO FIREARMS 5<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99 |  |
| D4 | Do you think anyone should be disarmed in Kazakhstan?  | YES 1<br>-----<br>NO 2<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99   | CONTINUE to D5<br>-----<br>SKIP to D7    |
| D5 | If YES to D4, who should be disarmed, in your opinion?<br>Please rank 1, 2, 3<br>SHOW CARD – THREE RESPONSES ONLY<br>(Write responses in SKIP SECTION) | GENERAL POPULATION 1<br>HUNTERS 2<br>SECURITY GUARDS, WATCHMEN 3<br>POLICE/MILITARY 4<br>EX-POLICE/EX-MILITARY 5<br>BUSINESSPEOPLE 6<br>POLITICIANS 7<br>CRIMINAL GANGS 8<br>DRUG TRAFFICKERS 9<br>NO ONE 10<br>OTHER (SPECIFY)<br>-----<br>DO NOT KNOW 88<br>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99                     | RESPONSE<br>1.  __ <br>2.  __ <br>3.  __ |



|    |  |   |  |
|----|--|---|--|
| D6 | <p>Who should be in charge of disarming them, in your opinion?</p> <p>SHOW CARD – ONE RESPONSE ONLY</p>  | <p>POLICE AND OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES 1</p> <p>ARMED FORCES, ARMY 2</p> <p>LOCAL AUTHORITIES 3</p> <p>PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANIES 4</p> <p>MULLAHS, PRIESTS, OTHER RELIGIOUS LEADERS 5</p> <p>TRADITIONAL LEADERS (AKSAKALS/ WHITE BEARDS) 6</p> <p>OTHER (SPECIFY)</p> <p>-----</p> <p>DO NOT KNOW 88</p> <p>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99</p> |  |
| D7 | <p>If there were more weapons collections in your city/town/ village, how would this affect your household's level of security?</p> <p>SHOW CARD – ONE RESPONSE ONLY</p> | <p>WOULD VERY MUCH WORSEN SECURITY 1</p> <p>WOULD SOMEWHAT WORSEN SECURITY 2</p> <p>WOULD NOT MAKE A DIFFERENCE 3</p> <p>WOULD SOMEWHAT IMPROVE SECURITY 4</p> <p>WOULD VERY MUCH IMPROVE SECURITY 5</p> <p>DO NOT KNOW 88</p> <p>REFUSE TO ANSWER 99</p>   |  |

# Annexe 2. Focus group guide

## Focus group discussion: ammunition depot explosions in Kazakhstan

### *Moderator's guide*

**Dates:** August–September 2010

**Target audience:** Population of the communities affected by the ammunition depot explosions

**Approximate focus group time:** 1 hour 10 minutes

### **I. Introduction (10 minutes)**

- Welcome participants and introduce yourself.
- Explain the general purpose of the study and focus group discussion.
- Explain the presence and purpose of the recording equipment, and address the issue of confidentiality.
- Outline general discussion guidelines and rules such as the importance of everyone speaking up, talking one at a time, etc.
- Ask participants to introduce themselves (first name, age, occupation, time lived in this community).

### **II. Main discussion: awareness, reaction (10 minutes)**

- What do you know about the ammunition depot explosion that occurred in . . . ? Causes, other details?
- Before the explosion, did you know that there was an ammunition depot nearby?
- What were you doing when the explosion occurred? What was your reaction?

### **III. Main discussion: casualties, damage (15 minutes)**

- Are you aware of any casualties among the local population/military personnel?
- Did the explosion cause physical harm to you, your family, friends, or neighbours?

- Was your property (house, barn, etc.) affected? Were your household animals affected? Other property?
- Were the agricultural fields/pastures owned by local residents contaminated as the result of the explosion? For how long?
- Who has been most affected (by demographic profile, and by socio-economic status/profession)? How?
- Could children keep going to school after the explosion?
- What other impacts and costs has the explosion had on you?

#### **IV. Main discussion: government response measures, responsibility, consequences (20 minutes)**

- Were local officials available after the explosion?
- What response measures did the authorities take? Were those measures sufficient?
- Were roads/railways/bridges, etc., closed?
- Was medical assistance quickly made available for those injured?
- (if applicable) Were you and your family among those residents who were evacuated?
- (if applicable) How was the evacuation organized? Transportation, etc.?
- (if applicable) When were you allowed to return home?
- Who, if anyone, was found responsible for the explosion? In your opinion, who should be held responsible?
- What was the effect of the explosion on your everyday life?
- Did the explosion change the quality of your life in terms of security?
- Were casualties reported long after the explosion due to scattered unexploded ordnance?

#### **V. Main discussion: government assistance, preventive measures (10 minutes)**

- Did you receive any assistance/compensation from the authorities?
- If yes, for what? Compensation for lost life? Compensation for injuries/medical costs? Compensation for lost property/household animals/contaminated agricultural fields/pastures? Are there security measures?

- What help does the local population (victims of ammunition depot explosions) still need?
- After the explosion, did the authorities introduce an emergency/evacuation plan in case of a new explosion? Do local residents know what to do/how to behave in case of an explosion? Have there been any emergency response training exercises?
- Have affected areas been cleaned up from debris and unexploded ordnance? By whom? How long did this take? Are there still areas that necessitate cleaning up? Are they marked with signs to prevent people from approaching?

## **VI. Conclusion (5 minutes)**

- Closing remarks.
- Thank participants and close the discussion.

# Endnotes

- 1 Kazakhstan is divided into 14 *oblasts*, or administrative units or regions.
- 2 The main studies include Ashkenazi (2010) and IA (2004).
- 3 The Small Arms Survey is no exception, having published studies on Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (MacFarlane and Torjesen, 2004; Torjesen, Wille, and MacFarlane, 2005).
- 4 The Survey also submitted a number of official requests for information to the relevant ministries and discussed its draft report with government representatives during a workshop co-hosted by the Military Strategic Studies Center in Astana in July 2011.
- 5 See, for instance, Wołowska (2004).
- 6 AS (2011); Geneva Declaration Secretariat (2011, pp. 51, 119); PGO (2011a); author correspondence with Elisabeth Gilgen, researcher, Small Arms Survey, 6 October 2011.
- 7 Quotas were based on the sex and age distribution of the relevant region.
- 8 The 2010 turmoil in Kyrgyzstan is the latest example of such violence. See ICG (2010).
- 9 See, for example, Brill Olcott (2010); IWPR (2007); von Gumpenberg (2007, pp. 23–25).
- 10 For additional background on extremist groups in Kazakhstan, see von Gumpenberg (2007, pp. 28–32) and Omelicheva (2011, pp. 82–132).
- 11 The confidence interval is increased from 2.5 to 3 to take into account the low response rate to this question.
- 12 In spite of several official requests to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, it was not possible to obtain updated official statistics on registered privately held firearms, which the Ministry considers a confidential matter. Author correspondence with Kazakh Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2 August 2011.
- 13 According to the Committee for Forestry and Hunting of the Ministry of Agriculture, there were about 85,000 officially registered hunters in Kazakhstan in 2010 (Koemets, Kolokolova, and Kenzhegaliyeva, 2010).
- 14 See the list of companies at Koramsak (n.d.).
- 15 The authors extend thanks to Paul Holtom for drawing their attention to these reports.
- 16 This comparison and the discussion and tables below rest on UN Comtrade data as downloaded by the Norwegian Initiative on Small Arms Transfers (NISAT). The Small Arms Survey sent its analysis of UN Comtrade data to Kazakhstan’s Committee for Customs Control on 28 July 2011 with a request for any comments or clarification. The Committee responded that information related to arms transfers was considered a ‘state secret’ and was therefore confidential (author correspondence with the Committee for Customs Control, 28 August 2011). Note also that Kazakhstan appears to have withdrawn its submissions from the UN Comtrade database in late 2010; this data is still accessible via the NISAT project, which regularly downloads and saves information (see NISAT, n.d.).
- 17 While this section focuses on civilian-held weapons, data on military weapons is reflected in the tables for informative purposes and to provide a comprehensive overview of available information.

- 18 On the other hand, Kazakhstan has reported a larger volume of imports of military rifles than have exporters (see Table 1). The fact that some countries do not report exports of military equipment to Comtrade may explain these discrepancies.
- 19 See, for example, *Kazakhstan Today* (2003; 2010b); Kazinform (2010); and MIA (2010d).
- 20 Author correspondence with CSTO, 22 February 2011.
- 21 Author correspondence with CSTO, 11 February 2010.
- 22 Author correspondence with CSTO, 22 February 2011.
- 23 Another source reports that in early February 2011 the President of Kyrgyzstan, Roza Otunbayeva, announced that 356 firearms and 63,780 units of ammunition were lost during the June 2010 ethnic violence (P-KR, 2011).
- 24 Statement by a Kazakh government representative at a workshop held by the Small Arms Survey, Astana, 20 July 2011.
- 25 On 24 June 2010, for instance, the Zhambyl Oblast police—in cooperation with border guards—detained a Kyrgyz national for attempting to smuggle a bag with a Kalashnikov automatic rifle, a Makarov pistol, a PSN pistol with silencer, and cartridges of 55 different calibres (MIA, 2010e; *Kazakhstan Today*, 2010c).
- 26 Most of the provisions regulating civilian firearm ownership are laid out in the Criminal Code, in Law No. 339 and Law No. 214-III (RoK, 1997; 1998; 2007a). The government also adopted a number of regulations to implement and enforce this legislation (RoK, 2000a; 2004). The following review is based on these publicly available legal sources.
- 27 Secondary legislation stipulates that applicants must indicate the relevant reason when applying for a purchasing licence, but that they are not required to provide any evidence of a corresponding need for the weapon (RoK, 2000a, rules 78, 79). Individuals wishing to obtain a licence for the purchase, possession, or carrying of hunting rifles must hold a hunter's certificate (RoK, 1998, art. 15.1; 2000a, r. 78).
- 28 MRP (monthly calculation index; in Russian, *mesyachniy raschetniy pokazatel*) is a unit used in Kazakhstan to calculate payments such as wages and compensation made under labour legislation as well as taxes, levies, duties, fines, and other fees. As of 1 January 2011, one MRP equalled KZT 1,512 (USD 10).
- 29 Permits for the possession, storage, and carrying of firearms are valid for five years, after which they can be renewed every five years (RoK, 2000a, rules 87, 90). Licences for purchasing firearms are valid for three months (RoK, 2000a, r. 85).
- 30 The law defines short-barrelled shotguns as long-bore firearms of barrel length inferior to 500 mm and with a total length inferior to 800 mm, as well as long-bore firearms that can be modified to a length inferior to 800 mm.
- 31 The law defines hollow-point ammunition as bullets with a displaced centre of gravity.
- 32 The law also prohibits 'weapons and ammunition that are incompatible with the requirements of forensics', although it does not specify what this means in practice (RoK, 1998, art. 7).
- 33 Authors' observation, Almaty, September 2010.
- 34 These rates are based on a selection of countries in each region for which reasonable data was available (Geneva Declaration Secretariat, 2011, p. 100).
- 35 BNews (2011); Interfax-Kazakhstan (2011); *Kazakhstan Today* (2009a); Kutsay (2010); Shemratov (2010).

- 36 Interviewed representatives of companies that sell firearms to the civilian market stated that men are their main customers, suggesting that Kazakh men are more attached to firearms than are women (Chebotarev, 2010, p. 15).
- 37 Law prohibits the sharing of such information (RoK, 1999, arts. 11, 14). Anonymous sources indicate that Kazakhstan reports such data as well as arms transfers information within the framework of OSCE information exchange mechanisms. It is not possible to verify this data, however, since national reports to the OSCE are confidential.
- 38 Author correspondence with an informed source, 3 June 2010.
- 39 Author correspondence with Aaron Karp, senior consultant, Small Arms Survey, 22 April 2010.
- 40 Although many types of conventional ammunition are beyond the scope of the Survey's research, this table is included for informative purposes given that it represents unpublished official information of potential interest to other stakeholders.
- 41 Fomina (2006); ITAR-TASS (2003); *Kazakhstan Today* (2009f); Kazinform (2006).
- 42 Channel One (2001); Gabchenko (2001); *Kazakhstan Today* (2001a; 2001b; 2001d); ITAR-TASS (2001).
- 43 Karaoy lies only 1 km from the incident site, suggesting the explosion must have been less severe than in other cases, since the village did not sustain damage.

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- 3 *Legal Controls on Small Arms and Light Weapons in Southeast Asia*, by Katherine Kramer (with Nonviolence International Southeast Asia), July 2001
- 4 *Shining a Light on Small Arms Exports: The Record of State Transparency*, by Maria Haug, Martin Langvandslien, Lora Lumpe, and Nic Marsh (with NISAT), January 2002
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- 11 *In the Shadow of a Cease-fire: The Impacts of Small Arms Availability and Misuse in Sri Lanka*, by Chris Smith, October 2003
- 12 *Small Arms in Kyrgyzstan: Post-revolutionary Proliferation*, by S. Neil MacFarlane and Stina Torjesen, March 2007, ISBN 2-8288-0076-8, also in Kyrgyz and Russian (first printed as *Kyrgyzstan: A Small Arms Anomaly in Central Asia?*, by S. Neil MacFarlane and Stina Torjesen, February 2004)
- 13 *Small Arms and Light Weapons Production in Eastern, Central, and Southeast Europe*, by Yudit Kiss, October 2004, ISBN 2-8288-0057-1
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- 15 *Silencing Guns: Local Perspectives on Small Arms and Armed Violence in Rural South Pacific Islands Communities*, edited by Emile LeBrun and Robert Muggah, June 2005, ISBN 2-8288-0064-4
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- 24 *Arms in and around Mauritania: National and Regional Security Implications*, by Stéphanie Pézard with Anne-Kathrin Glatz, June 2010, ISBN 978-2-940415-35-9 (also available in French)
- 25 *Transparency Counts: Assessing State Reporting on Small Arms Transfers, 2001–08*, by Jasna Lazarevic, June 2010, ISBN 978-2-940415-34-2
- 26 *Confronting the Don: The Political Economy of Gang Violence in Jamaica*, by Glaister Leslie, November 2010, ISBN 978-2-940415-38-0
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## Special Reports

- 1 *Humanitarianism Under Threat: The Humanitarian Impact of Small Arms and Light Weapons*, by Robert Muggah and Eric Berman, commissioned by the Reference Group on Small Arms of the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee, July 2001
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