



Kazakhstan



- Central Asia, northwest of China
- Area: Total - 2,717,300 sq km; Land - 2,669,800sq km; Water - 47,500 sq km
- Natural Resources: petroleum, natural gas, coal, iron ore, etc
- Population: 15,284,929 (July 2007)
- Languages: Kazakh 64.4% (state language), Russian (official used in everyday business) 95% (2001)
- Government Type: republic, authoritarian presidential rule with limited power outside the executive branch
- Legal System: based on Islamic law and Roman law
- Executive Branch: Chief of State President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Head of Government: Prime Minister Karim Masimov, Deputy Prime Minister: Umirzak Shukeyev and Yerbol Orynbayev (2007)
- Political parties: Nur OTAN (Fatherland) Party, United Social Democratic Party, Ak Zhol, True Ak Zhol
- National Election: Presidential Election 2012, early elections 2009

Challenges:

- The OSCE members have agreed to let Kazakhstan take on the OSCE chairmanship in 2010. However, some OSCE member states have expressed serious concern and doubts over Kazakhstan being the chair due to its democratic deficit. On the other hand, the OSCE chairmanship can be seen as a window of opportunity to launch democratic reforms. The announcement by Kazakh government officials of early election in 2009 suggests a step in that direction.
- However, there is a possibility that the early elections and the OSCE chairmanship will be overshadowed by the ongoing family feud between President Nazarbayev and his former son in law and former Ambassador to Austria, Rakhat Aliev. In the past year, both President Nazarbayev and the Kazakh political elite and Rakhat Aliev himself have been involved in smearing campaigns against one another. These campaigns could increase as the elections draws closer and in combination with international pressure and possible investigations into allegations of corruption, it could undermine the authority of President Nazarbayev.
- Corruption is persistent and widespread, particularly in the energy sector. It has been estimated by a government working group that the black economy accounts for 50 percent of the total while Transparency International in Kazakhstan has estimated that number to be 80 percent.
- Kazakhstan is vulnerable to money laundering due to its status as a transit hub for narcotics trafficking from Afghanistan as well as its developed modern banking system. Widespread corruption and a lack of transparent institutions also make the country more prone to money laundering and financial crime.

HIGH

MEDIUM

LOW

Challenges: Medium