



# Kazakhstan News Bulletin

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### **Say it in Kazakh:**

*Where can we go fishing? --- Balyk aulauqa qaida baruga bolady?*

*Where can we go hunting? --- An aulauqa qaida baruga bolady?*

*Where can we go hiking? --- Tabigatka qai zhakka bargam durus?*

## **Presidential Campaigns Opens, Five in Running**

Five presidential candidates opened their campaigns in earnest on October 25, the official starting day of the election campaign for Kazakhstan's December 4<sup>th</sup> election.

With this number and quality of candidates, the election promises to be the most hotly contested in Kazakhstan's history. The list of candidates who fulfilled all the requirements and were registered by Kazakhstan's Central Election Commission includes: Yerasyil Abylkasymov, a leader of the Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan and a deputy in the Majilis (lower house) of Parliament, Alikhan Baimenov, Chairman of the Ak Zhol political party, Mels Eleusizov, leader of the Tabigat (Nature) environmental movement; Nursultan Nazarbayev, the incumbent President; and Zharmakhan Tuyakbai, the leader of *For a Fair Kazakhstan* public association.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has set up an office in Astana with a staff of 43 long term observers. Four hundred more observers from the OSCE will come to Kazakhstan for Election Day. Thousands of local observers fielded by nongovernmental organizations will also monitor the national vote.

## **CEC Accredits Almost 100 Foreign Observers**

The Central Election Commission (CEC) has so far accredited 92 foreign observers for the December 4<sup>th</sup> presidential election.

In particular, 43 observers have been accredited from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the OSCE mission, 12 from the Washington based International Foundation for Election Systems, and



**Ambassador Kanat Saudabayev (left), Mrs. Kullikahn Saudabayeva and Rep. Darrell Issa (R-CA) pose for pictures at the October 25 reception at the Embassy in Washington. See story page 2**

thirty-seven from the observation mission of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

In 1999, 201 international observers were accredited to monitor the presidential election. In 2004, during the election for the Majilis, this number grew to 1,031. Vladimir Foos, Secretary of the Central Election Commission, on a visit to Washington this week said the CEC expects the number of observers to “significantly” exceed all previous elections.

Accreditation of observers will close on November 28. At the CEC recommendations assistance centers were created in all regions, as well as Astana and Almaty, for foreign observers and journalists.

## **Economic Growth Underpins Democracy, Says Nazarbayev**

President Nursultan Nazarbayev, in his annual meeting on October 21 with the Diplomatic Corps based in Kazakhstan, said the historic mission to rebuild Kazakh statehood has been a success.

In his [speech](#), the President explained “since independence, we have been following the principle of ‘democracy through economic growth’. Judging from today’s positions, it is obvious such an approach has proven correct. We all are witnesses to upheavals and conflicts and protracted economic crises in those countries that introduced political reforms without a solid economic foundation.”

During the past seven years, Kazakhstan’s economy grew on average 9-10 percent annually. The GDP per capita has grown three times, from 1,130 in 1999 to 3,440 in 2005. Kazakhstan’s rapidly growing broad based economy has paved the way for continuing democratic reforms as outlined by the President in his annual state of the nation address last February.

The President stressed Kazakhstan’s commitment to holding fair and transparent election on December 4. “The CEC has called on all participants of the election campaign to do their work within Constitution and law. I hope everybody who treasures peace in the country will support that, remembering that democracy and lawfulness are inseparable.” He said Kazakhstan welcomes representatives of foreign organizations, NGOs, and other interested parties to participate in observing the election.

Kazakhstan currently has diplomatic relations with 118 countries. There are 69 foreign missions based in Kazakhstan, of which 16 have moved to the new capital of Astana from the old capital of Almaty.

## **Embassy Marks 14<sup>th</sup> National Day**

The Embassy of Kazakhstan in Washington celebrated its National Day with a reception on October 25. October 25, 1990 was the day that the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh SSR announced the republic’s sovereignty. This day has been celebrated as Republic Day ever since. Kazakhstan achieved full independence on December 16, 1991, and that date is the most important national holiday.

Several hundred guests came to the Embassy to mark the date, including members of Congress Darrell Issa (R-CA), Charlie Melancon (D-LA), Eni Faleomavaega (D-AS) and others. Ambassadors and diplomats from many countries also attended.

Rep. Issa, who visited Kazakhstan earlier in October, spoke to Kazakh reporters at the reception, saying: “We are very glad that Kazakhstan is moving toward democracy. The relationship between Kazakhstan and the United States is strong thanks to mutual interests of ensuring stability and security in the world, and also because both these countries know what can happen when there is no democracy. Kazakhstan shed the old Soviet system and embraced a Western model which makes us friends and allies.”

A highlight of the evening was an opportunity for the guests to enjoy traditional Kazakh cuisine such as manty (steamed dumplings with meat, onions and pumpkin, just in time for Halloween), samsa (baked meat pastry), boursak (fried pastry), plov (rice based meat stew with carrots and onions), and chak-chak (sweet fried pastry with honey, nuts and dried berries).

## **Measure Calling for Jury Trials Moving Through Parliament**

The Majilis, the Parliament’s lower house, voted to approve a bill introducing jury trials in its first

reading this week. Its appearance marked the first step in a legislative process aiming to introduce one of the most important judicial reforms in Kazakhstan since independence.

Sabyrzhan Bekbosynov, Deputy Minister of Justice, presented the bill to the deputies on behalf of the Government saying it would introduce a continental model of jury trials in Kazakhstan.

The continental model, which is also called Franco-German, is different from the classic or Anglo-Saxon model. It provides a presiding judge the opportunity to review the case along with the jurors and to join them in the final decision making process. Another difference is that under the continental model jurors may acquaint themselves with the materials of the case before the trial. Under the Anglo-Saxon model, also used in the U.S., the jurors learn of case details during the trial and only the jurors take part in the verdict.

The decision on the part of the Government to go along with the continental model was made after long public debates lasting more than a year. Igor Rogov, Chairman of Kazakhstan's Constitutional Council, spoke at one such discussion explaining the reasoning behind the thinking: "The participation of jurors in criminal trials does not mean unconditional surrender of functions of justice to the public. This is only needed on the level to ensure objectivity and fairness of the verdict."

The bill now under discussion sets a legal framework for jury trials and outlines responsibilities of local authorities in creating lists of jury candidates. The bill outlines a procedure for creating such lists which will create opportunities for all citizens while providing openness and transparency in the compiling of such lists. One of the bill's most important provisions relates to ensuring the independence of jurors.

The bill was sent to a Majilis committee in preparation for its second reading.

## **Energy Minister Calls for NGOs to Actively Participate in EITI**

Vladimir Shkolnik, Kazakhstan's Energy and Natural Resources Minister has called for greater engagement by nongovernmental organizations in ensuring Kazakhstan's active participation in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Minister Shkolnik spoke to reporters while in Moscow on October 26.

Kazakhstan joined EITI earlier in October when Minister Shkolnik, several members of Parliament, representatives of 24 oil and gas companies and a number of NGOs signed a memorandum of understanding.

One of the memorandum's provisions requires the establishment of a National Council including interested parties such as Majilis deputies, representatives of oil and gas companies, the Ministry of Finance and nongovernmental organizations. Minister Shkolnik heads the Council, and he called on NGOs to actively participate in its next session scheduled for December 9, 2005 in Atyrau in the Caspian region.

The EITI was first introduced by British Prime Minister Tony Blair in September 2002 at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in Johannesburg. Its aim is to increase transparency over payments by companies to governments and government-linked entities, as well as transparency over revenues by those host country governments.

## **Things to Watch:**

- Muslims in Kazakhstan are getting ready to celebrate Oaza Ait (Eid-al-Fitr) holiday at sundown on November 2. This marks the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.
- The World Championship of Unarmed Self-Defense which combines techniques of judo and jujitsu will take place in Astana on November 11-14, 2005.

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