Kazakhstan, similar to its Central Asian neighbors, supported the US-led response to the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington DC on September 11, 2001 (9/11). Moreover, similar to other countries in the region, it had already strengthened close security relations with Russia, and such cooperative arrangements widened and diversified internationally following 9/11. However, despite apparent threats to the country’s security from Al-Qaeda groups, regionally based terrorist and extremist groups, or the potential bleed out from Afghanistan, it was not until 2011-12 that Kazakhstan experienced its own domestic acts of political violence. Indeed, Astana does not ascribe a particularly high level of concern to a post-2014 security threat from Afghanistan, despite the ISAF drawdown.

Key points
Among many drivers in the development of Kazakhstan’s careful and multi-layered strategy is the need to preserve the country’s international reputation as a relatively low risk environment for long-term foreign investment.

Calls to participate in Jihad will draw disaffected youths to international centers of conflict, but while their numbers remain very small in Kazakhstan the authorities believe the security threat to be low and certainly manageable.

While the risk of terrorist incidents in the country remains relatively low, the authorities have been forced to develop a nascent independent and domestic counter-terrorist strategy, and this finds its roots in the 2011-12 acts of violence.
This paper assesses the impact of these events and the state security responses that ensued—rather than Astana’s international counter-terrorist cooperation—as the key factors involved in shaping an evolving capability to deal with potential terrorist threats to the country. The Kazakh government also appreciates that there is an equally important economic dimension in the struggle to undermine the extremist and terrorist recruitment base, though this also lies beyond the focus of this paper, which instead concentrates on the experience-based capability to detect and disrupt possible acts of orchestrated public violence.

The domestic dimension is also visible in terms of an additional potential “bleed out” or in the prospect of ethnic Kazakhs that have joined ISIS returning home in the future to present a genuinely domestic security threat. Consequently, although this paper criticizes the state’s response to the events of 2011-12, and the capabilities of the security forces to detect and disrupt acts of violence prior to their occurrence, it also argues that Astana has learned much from this experience, and has reshaped its counter-terrorist strategy as a result.

Among many drivers in the development of this careful and multi-layered strategy is the need to preserve the country’s international reputation as a relatively low risk environment for long-term foreign investment. Indeed, the contours of this strategy, with their multifarious influences and inspirations, appear to leave Kazakhstan well placed to deal with the risk of future radical returnees from Syria or Iraq, precisely because the state is shifting its focus toward monitoring and disruption, as well as co-opting the wider public into the process of counter-terrorism. The state has thus avoided engaging in what might be construed as a more random “crack down.”

**Banned extremist groups**

State-level efforts to counter religious extremism as a possible breeding ground for terrorism are by no means new in Kazakhstan. The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Countering Extremism” (February 18, 2005, No. 31) gives the Supreme Court the power to designate banned organizations as either terrorist or extremist groups. This is set out in Article 8, sections 1-4, and depends on state security bodies furnishing the court with sufficient evidence against any organization for inclusion on such a list. It also recognizes the right to include groups banned by foreign states. Since then the list of banned organizations has become a matter of public record. However, this has simply formalized an already established practice, which is to use the Supreme Court to ban such organizations.

On October 12, 2006, Kazakhstan’s Supreme Court approved a revised list of banned terrorist organizations in the country and the Prosecutor-General, Rashid Tusupbekov, released the list. Among them were the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Hizb-ut-Tahrir al-Islami (HT), Jamaat of Central Asian Mujahedins, the Islamic Party of Eastern Turkestan, the Kurdistan Workers Party, Boz Kurt, Lashkar-e-Toiba, the Social Reforms Society (Kuwait), Asbat-an-Asar (Israel), Al-Qaeda, Taliban, and the Muslim Brotherhood (Egypt).

Some of these groups were already banned in the country as of 2004, and indeed were recognized internationally as terrorist organizations. Critics of the list said that the Muslim Brotherhood and Lashkar-e-Toiba did not operate in Kazakhstan on a level sufficient to justify their inclusion on the list of banned organizations. Saulebek Zhamkenuly, the press secretary for the Prosecutor-General’s Office, stated “It does not mean that all these organizations are active in Kazakhstan. The decision to ban them is a preventive measure. These organizations are considered as terrorist in Russia, the US, Turkey, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan.” On November 17, 2006, the Supreme Court added an additional organization to this list: the East Turkestan Liberation Organization. Moreover, by February 16, 2009, President Nazarbayev had signed into law a ban on 206 items of religious literature.

Kazakhstan’s Supreme Court decisions are worth tracing. By March 2005 that list had...
These events need to be outlined and understood in their context.

Kazakhstan’s Limited Experience of Political Violence: 2011-12

Regardless of its closer defense and security cooperation with the United States and NATO following 9/11, Kazakhstan had not been successfully targeted by international terrorist groups. The activities of the Kazakhstani security services in the 1990s and 2000s frequently referred to Hizb-ut-Tahrir, while other groups known to be involved in terrorism were less prominent in the reported disruption activities of the state security agencies. This could sometimes prove to be contradictory. In 2004, for instance, the National Security Committee (Komitet Natsional’noo Bezopasnosti, or KNB) claimed they had shut down the Jamaat of Central Asian Mujahedins. And yet, in 2006, the same institution declared precisely to have disrupted a terrorist plot orchestrated by the same organization.9

Detailed case studies of these incidents are necessary to further frame an understanding of the scale of this apparent outburst of violent activity in the country. This must also be analyzed in context: In twenty-two years of independence the country has experienced a series of violent incidents over only an eighteen-month period. As these events unfolded, the authorities were clearly taken by surprise, suggesting that the intelligence services and other security forces had little prior warning or detailed understanding as to the type of activists or perpetrators involved. This can been seen in the first responders at the scene—only later were KNB Special Forces deployed—as well as in some of the weaknesses of the state use of violence. In other words, the authorities may have rushed to label many of these incidents as “terrorist,” when in fact they could be symptoms of other, more credible explanations.

Kazakhstan’s first experience of anything remotely resembling a terrorist incident occurred in Aktobe on May 17, 2011. Twenty-five year old Rakhimzhan Makhatov det-
onated a device, killing himself and wounding three others at the entrance of the local KNB headquarters. The suicide bomber had alleged links with an Islamic terrorist group. The incident was described as “an act of revenge (or protest) against the treatment of Islamic extremists in prison.” Adherents of Wahhabism in Kazakhstan’s prisons were reportedly tortured.10

A few days later, on May 24, 2011, a car bombing occurred in the capital Astana, targeting a KNB detention facility; the only causalities were the two men inside the vehicle. Dmitry Kelpfer, the owner of the vehicle, and “Ivan Cheremukhin” were both from the Pavlodar Province. According to the Ministry of Interior, the latter’s passport was a stolen one and his real identity was confirmed as Sergei Podkosov, a 34-year-old from the city of Pavlodar.11 This individual had a criminal record and the authorities disclosed that he had converted to Islam a few years before the attack.12 No information was released on Kelpfer, but the reference to the religion and prior criminal record of the second individual suggested a potential link to radical Islam. The authorities offered no official reference to any known terrorist group. The two unrelated incidents in Aktobe and Astana were linked only by their having KNB targets.

As the authorities struggled to come to terms with the country’s first experience of suicide bombings a fresh incident took place in Aktobe province between police and six suspects. On June 30, 2011, assailants shot two unarmed police officers in the village of Shubarsky. Police named six suspects between the ages of 22 and 43 (Kuanysh Alimbetov, Akylbek Mambetov, Toktarbek Mambetov, Bektemir Urazov, Miras Karazhanov, and Aybek Dzhumaguzin), offering a reward of $100,000 for information resulting in their capture. On July 2-3, the Ministry of Interior launched a special operation to apprehend the suspects, deploying Sunkar and Berkut Special Forces. The operation failed to detain any suspect and left one officer dead and three soldiers wounded. Shortly afterwards, a KNB Arlan Special Forces unit arrived to join the search. A joint operation was conducted near the village of Kenkiyak close to Shubarsky on July 8, killing nine and capturing two suspects and seizing a number of weapons. A soldier from one of the Special Forces units died in the operation.13

The only linkage between these incidents and radical Islam apparently relates to the discovery of radical literature in the trunk of a vehicle belonging to 22-year old Talgat Shakanov, arrested on June 28 for possession of unregistered weapons. This arrest resulted in associates of Shakanov retaliating by shooting the two policemen on June 30. The incidents appear to have less to do with radical Islam than with criminality, and the motive for the murder of the policemen was clearly revenge. First Deputy Interior Minister, Marat Demeuov, dismissed the assertion that Islamic radicalism was the cause: “For several years this criminal group had been stealing oil from a pipeline using religious ideas as a cover.”14 Shakanov’s banned literature is the only possible link to radical Islamist ideology.

Atyrau October 31, 2011: a turning point?

On October 31, 2011, two bombs exploded in Atyrau, resulting in the death of the bomber, and damage to a regional government office and an apartment building. The first of these devices was placed in a garbage can near the local government office and its explosion blew out some of the office’s windows. The second, an apparently bungled effort, was first reported as a “suicide bombing,” damaging the apartment building adjacent to the prosecutor’s office.15 A previously unknown terrorist group, Jund al-Khilafah (Soldiers of the Caliphate—JK) claimed responsibility for the attacks. The same “group” had earlier released a video to protest against a recently passed law on religion, which had banned prayer in state buildings or unregistered religious activity, and required previously registered religious groups to re-register. JK “members” thus claimed it was only a warning to the government and denied any suicide bombing was intended. Yet, the existence of the group has remained a mystery—it may simply be a disguise for a group of
disaffected youths, though some sources suggest the group has ties to the Afghanistan-Pakistan border areas.\textsuperscript{16}

To date, this is the only incident in Kazakhstan for which this alleged group has claimed responsibility, and its dead “members” may in fact be its only real participants. The linkage between the incident and claims about the group’s existence have never been established, though by late November 2011 this group had been added to an officially banned list.

In fact, some Western analysts appear to take seriously the existence of JK, as compared with the more sober assessments of Kazakhstani analysts.\textsuperscript{17} Their attitude toward its existence is largely rooted in the claims of videos posted online between August and December 2011. The narrative of these videos purports that the group “emerged with ties to Afghanistan and Pakistan.” The group thus apparently represents an attempt by Kazakh diaspora militants involved in fighting alongside the Taliban to unite under a Central Asian umbrella, but at best with unclear aspirations.\textsuperscript{18}

The video evidence used to support such claims is less than convincing, however. At most, the group may represent a number of ethnic Kazakhs who joined the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan, but it by no means offers a clear ideology or explains what the group may have against the authorities in Astana. Claims made in videos denounced the new law on religion as preventing Muslim worship in places of work and other public buildings; the wearing of headscarves; the government allegedly closing mosques; the alleged torturing of Muslim prisoners in state prisons. Lastly, videos make calls for the overthrow of President Nazarbayev following the violence at Zhanozen in which several civilians were killed; however, the latter had nothing to do with extremism or terrorism but resulted from a trade dispute and the overreaction of security forces to public disorder.\textsuperscript{19}

By late November 2011, while the court of Atyrau was rushing to add this group to the national list of banned extremist organizations, Kazakhstani analyses of this alleged group offered a more sober and questioning overview. Erlan Karin, the former Secretary of Nur Otan, also questioned the reality of JK: “I am skeptical about the existence of the so-called organization ‘Soldiers of the Caliphate’. This organization has claimed responsibility for a series of terrorist attacks in our country and in Afghanistan.” French intelligence agencies dismissed the possibility of the group as a real terrorist organization in one of its own investigations, and, as Karin adds, “this again suggests that the organization, even if it exists, is more involved in PR for their brand, in trying to create a specific request for information on their activities.”\textsuperscript{20} In Karin’s view, it remains too early to describe the events in Kazakhstan in 2011-12 as “terrorism.”\textsuperscript{21}

\textbf{Patterns of organized violence}

Despite the widespread publicity generated by the attacks and the release of propaganda videos by JK, it is worth noting that this is the only incident that has been clearly attributed to or claimed by this group. Moreover, the exact nature of the incident points more towards amateurism, toward inexperienced individuals, rather than toward individuals operating within a sub-state group, who are properly funded and trained for this type of activity. Indeed, damage to the target was low grade, suggesting a lack of expertise in the handling of explosives.

Another instance of an individual accidentally self-detoning during a bomb making effort occurred in Atyrau on September 5, 2012. Seven days later police and KNB members tried to arrest a number of suspects believed to be linked to the explosion. Four other suspects were arrested on September 7. In the clash with security forces that followed, five suspects were killed, one was wounded, and one member of the security forces was also wounded. Additional arrests followed this operation.\textsuperscript{22} On September 14-15 two men attacked a police post and wounding one officer in the Isataya-Mamambeta Square in Atyrau. Shortly after this incident a group of men attacked the local Ministry of Interior headquarters in Atyrau, throwing Molotov cocktails at the
guards. Police and Berkut Special Forces conducted an operation to detain the four suspects involved in these incidents on September 21. All four were killed in the operation.23

The above-mentioned amateurism is demonstrated in the authorities’ reaction to further incidents. For example, on November 8, 2011, an unidentified assailant shot and killed two policemen as they stopped vehicles during a patrol of the Auezov district of Almaty. Police witnessed the suspect and an accomplice loading suspiciously large items into the trunk of a car. By November 12, police has arrested the driver and three others, discovering small arms, automatic weapons, and ammunition at the residence involved; there was no reported discovery of Islamic extremist literature.24 In early December 2011, in the village of Boralday, situated on the northwest outskirts of Almaty, KNB Arystan Special Forces conducted an operation to apprehend several suspects allegedly involved in the shooting. A weapons cache was discovered, but no religious literature was found.25

In July 2012 some incidents in Almaty appeared to follow this same pattern. On July 11 an explosion occurred at a house in the village of Tausamaly (Almaty outskirts); the bodies of several people (including children) were found inside. A police search of the property reported finding weapons (AKS-74U and a few pistols), bomb-making materials, police equipment (radios, traffic batons), as well as police and security services uniforms, and, on this occasion, some religious literature. The explosion was thought to have been a bungled attempt at bomb making.26 On July 30, 2012, Sunkar Special Forces and police conducted an operation in the western part of Almaty to detain several suspects involved in killing two police officers two days before. The operation led to an apartment building being evacuated and the area sealed off. After several hours the Sunkar unit stormed the building killing six suspects, but no other casualties were reported. Small arms, automatic weapons, and a “large amount” of ammunition were discovered, but no extremist publications were to be found. The dead suspects were not believed by the authorities to belong to any extremist group, but all had served time in prison for various offences.27

On August 17, 2012 a police rapid-response unit carried out an operation in the Karasai District, southwest of Almaty, to arrest a group of criminals reportedly linked to an explosion in Tausamaly on July 11. The building was stormed and nine people inside the house were killed, one of whom was reportedly a child.28

The KNB came under high-level criticism following such incidents. In July 2012, President Nursultan Nazarbayev called for “concrete measures” to counter extremists and terrorists operating in the country. Nazarbayev castigated the security forces for their “unprofessionalism” and for failing to prevent the explosion in the first place: "Work is not being done properly.” Nazarbayev stated that, “As president and guarantor of our constitution, I am not satisfied with the work of law enforcement agencies, particularly that of the KNB. The efforts we are making are not efficient enough.” This criticism of the intelligence and security failure to detect and disrupt the initial incident in the Karasai district on the previous day led Nazarbayev to castigate the KNB and draw a more general conclusion: “We are acting post factum all the time.”29

While many of these incidents may in fact be linked to criminal activity and bear no correlation to religious extremism or terrorism, there is also another category, namely that of the lone, crazed gunman. On November 12, 2011, Maksat Kariev killed seven people in a series of attacks across the Taraz in Zhambyl Province (southern Kazakhstan). No connection was discovered between Kariev and extremist literature, though he had reportedly had military experience.30

According to the KNB, law enforcement agencies “failed to prevent 18 out of 53 extremist actions in 2011–2012.” The KNB claims that in this period “35 violent actions were averted,” and the activities of “42 extremist groups were neutralized.” Among
the “18 violent extremist actions,” seven involved the use of explosives. Reflecting on and assessing the patterns and differences in these incidents of possible “terrorist” acts in Kazakhstan during 2011-12, it is possible to draw the following observations:

- These acts of violence were unconnected to each other and demonstrate no evidence of what might be construed as a coordinated campaign;
- It is unclear whether all of these events constitute terrorism, or stem from criminal activity;
- The targets of these attacks were KNB or government buildings, and policemen;
- Only one incident resulted in a “group” claiming responsibility;
- The premature detonation of explosives does not imply a high level of training on the part of the handlers;
- Many of the suspects in these incidents were later killed by security forces, though police had tried to talk to suspects before the storming of premises was authorized;  
- Although security operations frequently uncovered arms caches, not all cases resulted in finding banned religious publications;
- Motives for these crimes appear varied, but are inconsistent with known terrorist models, or targeting of the wider public;
- Though the security forces frequently suffered casualties during operations, the follow-up presence of Special Forces units minimized loss of life on the part of security personnel;
- There is no direct link between Islamic militants operating in the North Caucasus, Afghanistan, or elsewhere, and these violent incidents in Kazakhstan.

Thus, although Kazakhstan experienced an upsurge in political violence in 2011-12, there appears to be no evidence either to support the idea that a professional and coordinated terrorist problem had emerged within the country, or that this was directly linked to the insurgency in the North Caucasus. However, in terms of the security response to this new threat, it was clear afterward that the authorities had been taken by surprise. Early operations were reactive and resulted in high rates of fatalities both among suspects and the security forces. Following this experience a gradual transition occurred toward a softer interdiction-based security approach.

In this context, it is also clear that the North Caucasus link to these fledgling groups or individuals was taken less seriously than were issues pertaining to Syria or Iraq. For example, on July 21, 2014, the district court in Shymkent, southern Kazakhstan, sentenced four members of an alleged terrorist group with Syrian links. Three of them, A. Abdubaytov, S. Abdubaytov, and B. Bayzharkynov, were convicted of participating in the terrorist group’s activities or in preparing acts of terrorism, as well as in financing terrorist activities. All were sentenced to between eight and nine years in prison. The group’s fourth member, M. Bekmurzayev, received a five-year prison sentence for “illegally acquiring, carrying, and storing firearms as a member of the group.” The four men were prosecuted for their activities from October 2011 to November 2013, and had also allegedly taken part in the group’s activities in Syria.

Indeed, despite the high-profile emergence of ISIS in Syria and Iraq, experts in Kazakhstan see no direct threat posed by the very small numbers of the country’s citizens allegedly involved in these groups. Almaty-based political scientist, Rustam Burnashev, believes the group only presents a threat in the Middle East, and sees this as mainly related to Syria and Iraq for the foreseeable future. Calls to participate in Jihad, therefore, will draw disaffected youths to centers of conflict internationally, but while their numbers remain very small in Kazakhstan the authorities believe the security threat to be low and certainly manageable.
State responses to terrorism and extremism, 2011-13

One clear pattern that emerged in the wake of these violent incidents in Kazakhstan in 2011-12 was the avoidance of an overreaction on the part of the authorities. In other words, the authorities clearly avoided passing draconian legislation or turning the violence into an excuse for an indiscriminate crackdown. In this sense, legislation passed in the country concerning religion, religious extremism, and terrorism must be viewed in the much wider evolutionary context of post-1991 independence.

Equally, the adjustments to national legislation in response to these events seem rooted in longer-term strategy, and aim to deprive radicals of further easy inroads into radicalizing Kazakhstani youth. The legislative and security response to the violent acts in this period are therefore low key, and by no means represent a knee-jerk response or an attempt by the authorities to wrongly apportion blame.35

First, in drafting a revised bill on terrorism, which was signed into law in January 2013, international experience of combating terrorism was taken into consideration. The law thus enshrines respect and protection of human rights in the state’s efforts to counter terrorism. The law, titled “On amendments and additions to legislative acts on combating terrorism,” marks a departure from traditional regional approaches to counter terrorism. Instead of placing the burden on the intelligence services and security forces alone, it expands its basis to connect with civil society. It enshrines in law a large-scale outreach or information campaign to explain to the Kazakhstani public the following key points: the dangers of terrorism by exposing its various forms and mechanisms; the methods used by terrorists to recruit and to disseminate their ideology of political violence; and consequently it offers the development of a “civic consciousness” to facilitate cooperation between the security forces and citizens in order to reduce the social basis of support for terrorism. It is this appeal to civil society to help combat terrorism that makes this law unique in Central Asia.36

As part of such an appeal an information campaign was envisaged to reach out to the public about the dangers of terrorism. This has involved the relevant contact with schools, colleges, and universities, and resulted in the launching of a website in December 2012 dedicated to promoting awareness of the terrorist threat: www.counter-terror.kz. The 2013 Law on Terrorism, therefore, marks an important milestone in the country’s development by linking counter-terrorism to respect for human rights. Moreover, the law allows the government to reach out to and co-opt civil society in an effort to reduce the scope of terrorist organizations seeking to radicalize Kazakhstani society.37

By the fall of 2013 this campaign emerged more clearly as part of a far-reaching effort to stem the potential rise of domestic radicalism. On October 2, 2013, President Nazarbayev approved a state program to fight religious extremism and terrorism for the period of 2013–2017. Central and local government bodies are to implement the program, while the then head of the presidential administration, Karim Masimov, was to have supervised its progress.

The program involves the public in such preventive measures and in modernizing the informational work among “target groups.” Its key is raising awareness of the dangers of radical ideology, and promoting education, and informed discussion. One comment on the decree states that, “The program pays special attention to the attraction of the community to participate in the preventive work and modernization of communications and an awareness-raising campaign focused on target groups. Most of the preventive measures set forth in the program will be implemented for the first time in Kazakhstan.”38

These developments are also linked to the growing role of the Spiritual Directorate of Kazakhstan Muslims (SDKM), the main religious body in the country. Reportedly, the SDKM has launched a national program to
promote traditional Islam and fight religious radicalization, even if the latter did not inspire the 2011-12 terrorist attacks. According to the country’s chief mufti, Yerzhan kazhy Malgazhyuly, the SDKM has formed six special groups to monitor the “religious situation” in the regions. Each group consists of five people, all of them “skilled theologians and imams who are well aware of the situation in the localities,” the mufti said. Malgazhyuly explains that these groups have worked over the past six months among “people who need religious enlightenment,” including convicts. He adds that, “Work is also under way among the youth to prevent the spread of destructive movements and to explain the traditional religious values.” Indeed, the cleric claims that the campaign to date has persuaded “92 people” to quit the Salafi movement and return to traditional Islam. The groups visited 62 towns, 122 districts, 33 settlements, 200 higher and secondary educational establishments, and 1,500 schools, most of which are located in the Western region of Kazakhstan—the area most prone to religious extremism.39

Conclusion

International or domestically inspired terrorism in Kazakhstan does not top the national threat assessment, and despite both the ISAF drawdown and the emergence of ISIS, it is highly unlikely that this will change.40 Astana’s intelligence cooperation with Russia protects the state from spillover from the North Caucasus and its cooperation with China equally mitigates the risk of Uyghur inspired acts of political violence.41

While the risk of terrorist incidents in the country remains relatively low, the authorities have been forced to develop a nascent independent and domestic counter-terrorist strategy, and this finds its roots in the acts of violence in the country in 2011-12. A number of points are important to note. The Kazakhstani authorities were initially caught by surprise after the first act of terrorist violence in 2011. They reacted without using overwhelming force in response to later incidents; the security forces first deployed were not necessarily best equipped or trained to deal with the situation, and the subsequent investigations were either absent or questionable in their conclusions.42 However, as a result, Astana instigated an overhaul of its approach toward terrorism, widened the network of the KNB to form regional anti-terrorist centers, called on greater input and vigilance from the public, and transformed its emphasis toward monitoring and disruption.

In so doing, Astana’s greatest success to date is to persuade foreign investors, especially in the energy sector, that the risk is both low and manageable.43 In the years ahead Astana will continue to seek to draw upon foreign cooperation and international expertise in order to further ensure that it can build its intelligence capabilities to deal with unexpected terrorist threats.

5 Author’s emphasis. The decision to include a certain group or groups on the list can be merely preventive. See, for example: http://stop-sekta.kz/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=72:2010-05-31-09-23-03&catid=52:2010-05-31-09-11-57&Itemid=76.
7 Source: http://www.din.gov.kz/eng/religioznye_obedineniya/?cid=0&rid=691.


18bid.


26 The unit used grenades and sniper fire to eliminate all five men inside the house. Two members of the Arystan unit were killed during the operation. See, Ruslan Bakhtigareev, “Boraldayskaya zachistka,” Vremya, December 3, 2011,
In November 2012, Amanbek Mukashev, Senior Fellow of the National Center for Culture and Religions with the Religious Affairs Agency publically opposed banning the radical Islamist Salafiyya movement in Kazakhstan, saying there was no need for an official ban since its members would most likely avoid seeking registration. “There are only about 20 Salafi mosques left in Kazakhstan, but the followers of the teaching also attend other mosques.” In his view the best way to combat this and other manifestations of radical Islam is to raise awareness of traditional Islam. See his “Ban on Salafiyya Movement in Kazakhstan Unreasonable: Expert,” Interfax-Kazakhstan, November 8, 2012.


See: www.counter-terror.kz


See: Interfax, October 2, 2013.


Author interviews with Western counter-terrorist experts, September 2014.


This began at a hunting store, with an employee and a bystander shot and killed, later Kariev shot two members of the Zhambyl KNB who were pursuing him. Shortly afterwards, he shot and killed two policemen. Kariev then fired a shot from a rocket-propelled grenade launcher through the window of a KNB building. Finally he shot and wounded two more policemen, before being wrestled to the ground as he tried to throw a grenade and the ensuing explosion killed both men. See “Terrorist is Taranza byl khoroshim strelkom v armii,” Tengri News, November 13, 2011, http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/201415/.

See: Interfax, February 6, 2013.


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