

# THE PBF IN KYRGYZSTAN



Photo: UNICEF Kyrgyzstan

## Peacebuilding Challenges

In Kyrgyzstan, the lack of an overarching civic identity left the population divided along ethnic lines and contributed to the marginalization of certain groups. In June 2010, inter-ethnic violence erupted in the southern cities of Osh and Jalal-Abad and surrounding areas, with 470 deaths and 400,000 people displaced.

While the country has made significant progress since then, Central Asia is seeing a growing problem of radicalization. Approximately 20% of foreign terrorist fighters (FTF) in Syria and Iraq are Central Asian, with nearly 900 originating from Kyrgyzstan, and a quarter of those are women. PBF's most recent funding responds to these challenges, while recognizing that many of the factors that fuel

recruitment into violent groups are the same as those that contribute to ethnic separation and marginalization.

## PBF Intervention

In response to the 2010 events, the PBF approved an initial USD \$10 million package of projects aimed at addressing the immediate needs of those affected by the conflict. The PBF was one of the first donors to step in, enabling the Government's immediate response to the violence. Responding to a request from then-President Almazbek Atambayev in 2013, the PBF extended its investment with a USD \$15.1 million package for the implementation of a Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP) to address longer-term drivers of instability. The Plan focused on the role of governmental policies and laws, and the capacity of local

## PBF INVESTMENTS IN KYRGYZSTAN:



### TOTAL ALLOCATION:

**\$ 41.9** MILLION  
invested since 2011

### CURRENT PORTFOLIO:

**\$ 13.9** MILLION

### FOCUSING ON:

-  Rule of Law
-  Dialogue

### PARTNERS:

UNICEF, UNODC, UNFPA, UNDP, OHCHR, UN Women, WFP, FAO, Search for Common Ground, GPPAC

## Women and Youth Empowerment

In addition to the USD \$15.1 million package, the PBF invested an additional USD \$1.5 million through two projects supporting women's empowerment and political engagement in 2014 and in 2016, and approved approximately USD \$1.9 million more for projects focusing on youth and women's empowerment.

In 2017, PBF approved two Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative (GYPI) projects.

self-government units to bridge divides between local ethnic groups. Gender was mainstreamed throughout the PPP, through a commitment of between 15-30% of the total PBF allocation dedicated to women's empowerment. A new PPP, approved by the PBF in December 2017, seeks to curb radicalization and violent extremism, including improving the State's relationship with communities vulnerable to radicalization, improve the penitentiary system to stem the spread of radicalization, and address marginalization of women and youth.

## PBF Impact

Thanks in part to PBF support to the PPP, perception surveys in Kyrgyzstan show an increase in citizens' confidence in local self-governing bodies' capacity to resolve conflicts, from 30% in 2014 to 82% in late 2016. Citizens' perceptions reflect a decline in actual conflict in districts targeted by the PBF's investment, from 82 instances of violence in 2014 to only 10 in 2016.

Local self-governing authorities and citizens jointly identified and implemented more than 120 local infrastructure projects aimed at smoothing tensions over scarce natural resources, and multi-lingual education has reached more than 9000 students, helping to increase inter-ethnic understanding and improve life chances for marginalized groups.

These positive trends stem from concrete improvements in areas targeted by the Peacebuilding Priority Plan, including an increase in female police officers from 0% to 7% in PBF targeted areas from 2014 to 2016, despite an overall decline nationwide.

In the Fergana valley, access to natural resources is a key driver of conflicts between communities. Since the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which lies in this region, hasn't been properly demarcated, communities from both sides have engaged in recurrent outbreaks of violence over access to land and natural resources along the border area. Jointly managed water channels built with PBF cross-border project funding drive water from its source to the side-by-side communities, defusing water-related tension.

## Promoting Cohesion

The PBF provided direct assistance to CSO Search for Common Ground (SFCG) through the GYPI in 2016, demonstrating that opening up the PBF portfolio to CSOs can be mutually beneficial for both the CSOs and the UN. Prior to PBF funding, SFCG had never worked with the UN, and it was PBF funding brought them together, helping the UN gain a broader network of colleagues with closer ties to local communities and youth throughout the country.

Given the relative newness of work related to preventing violent extremism (PVE), the PBF Secretariat and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) seek to organize a global symposium on PVE programming lessons-learned in 2019. The symposium would be hosted by the Kyrgyz Government and bring together global experts on PVE, as well as national and civil society leaders in other PBF-recipient countries currently implementing PVE initiatives.

## About the PBF

The UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is the organization's financial instrument of first resort to sustain peace in countries or situations at risk or affected by violent conflict. The PBF may invest with UN entities, governments, regional organizations, multilateral banks, national multi-donor trust funds or civil society organizations. From 2006 to 2017, the PBF has allocated \$772 million to 41 recipient countries. Since inception, 58 member states contributed to the Fund, 33 in the present 2017-2019 Business Plan. The PBF works across pillars and supports integrated UN responses to fill critical gaps; respond quickly and with flexibility to political opportunities; and catalyze processes and resources in a risk-tolerant fashion.