

# INTERFAITH COUNCIL KYRGYZSTAN

activities  
2023-2025



## Introduction

### History of Religion in Kyrgyzstan

- Rich cultural and spiritual heritage shaped by various religions: Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism.
- Post-Soviet independence (1991) sparked a renaissance in religious identity.
- Secular state with guaranteed religious freedom in the Constitution.

### Recent Interfaith Efforts

- Over 60 forums, seminars, and educational events held in the last two years.
- 30% increase in youth-led tolerance initiatives, supported by schools and religious institutions
- Development of ethical guidelines for interfaith collaboration.
- Active participation of Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Buddhist communities in joint projects.
- State Commission for Religious Affairs: Plays a vital role in maintaining religious freedom and dialogue.



## legal framework

In Kyrgyzstan, religious activities are regulated by the Law "On Freedom of Religion and Religious Organizations" (2008), which tightened registration requirements for religious groups. The law guarantees freedom of belief while establishing strict procedures for the registration and operation of religious organizations.

Freedom of religion is enshrined in the Constitution and international documents. Kyrgyzstan is a secular state, and respect for all religions is mandatory. All people have the right to freedom of religion without discrimination on religious or ideological grounds.







## Activity by chapter

1. International Conference on Interfaith Peace and Harmony (Nov 2023)
  - Religious leaders from Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism.
  - Focused on promoting peace and countering extremism.
  - Kyrgyzstan recognized as a regional leader in interfaith cooperation.
2. "Friendship and Unity" Iftar & Ramadan Charity Campaigns
  - Annual iftar event with participation from multiple faiths.
  - Charity initiatives supporting orphanages, low-income families, and children with disabilities.
  - Volunteers from various faiths working together to support the community.
3. Interfaith Roundtable in Response to the Burning of the Quran
  - Unity among religious leaders condemning religious hatred.
  - Emphasized mutual respect as the foundation of a peaceful society.
4. Ongoing Interfaith Efforts
  - Over 20 forums, seminars, and educational events in the last two years.
  - 30% increase in youth-led tolerance initiatives.
  - Ethical guidelines developed for interfaith collaboration.
  - Active participation of religious leaders from various faiths in joint projects.

## Religious Confessions of Kyrgyzstan

Islam is the dominant religion in Kyrgyzstan, with 3,914 registered organizations, accounting for 90.8% of the total

Christian organizations account for 9.2% of the total number of religious associations in the country

Judaism, Buddhism, and Baha'i movements account for less than 0.1% of the total number of religious organizations in Kyrgyzstan.



Islam

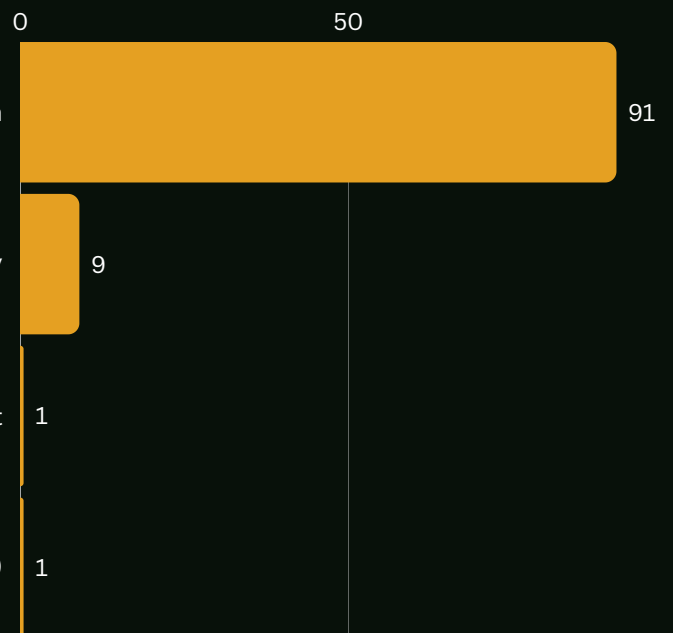


Christianity

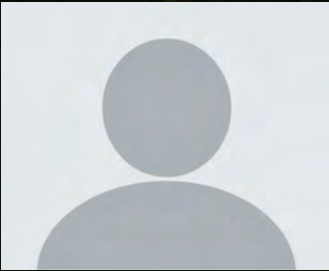


Buddhist

Other (вайшнавы, ахмадия, тенгрианцы, бахаи)



# New members of Interfaith Council



President of IFC (no longer active in the role)  
Vladislav Heo.



Zhamby Zhusubalyeva,  
Vice President of IFC.



Jamilya Zheenbaeva is a PhD holder and professor. She is also a consultant for the Interfaith Center of Kyrgyzstan



Kadyr Azhy Malikov is a public figure and the head of the Independent Analytical and Research Center "Religion, Law, and Politics." a member of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (DUMK).

# New members of Interfaith Council



Nadezhda Khokhlova is a member of the Orthodox Church and a nun serving as a Sister of Mercy.



Maumetov Ruslan  
Consultant and Liaison  
Officer of the Orthodox  
Church.



Eliana Satarove  
Member of IFC  
Al-Umma Charity Foundation.



## Mufti of Kyrgyzstan – Abdulaziz qary Zakirov

Abdulaziz qary Zakirov, 45, is the Mufti of Kyrgyzstan with religious education from Turkey and Bishkek, and a law degree. He speaks Arabic and Turkish, and previously served as chief imam in Bazar-Korgon, Jalal-Abad region.



## Kadyr Malikov

Kadyr Malikov is a well-known Kyrgyz theologian and public figure specializing in Islamic jurisprudence and religious moderation. Born in 1972 in Bishkek, he studied in Jordan and Spain, later serving as Deputy Mufti of Kyrgyzstan. In 2015, he survived an attack by extremists but chose to forgive his assailants, continuing his work promoting tolerance, education, and resilience against radicalism.







## Patriarch of the Orthodox Church. Savvaty

Patriarch Savvaty (secular name Sergey Nikolaevich Zagrebelny; born August 5, 1967, in Sosnovskoye, Omsk Region) is a hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. He serves as Bishop of Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan within the Central Asian Metropolitan District and also holds the title of Bishop of Bronnitsy, vicar to the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. A former army officer, he embraced Orthodox Christianity in 1990, was ordained in 1995, and later tonsured a monk. He is known for his contributions to the development of monastic life, interfaith dialogue in Kyrgyzstan, and humanitarian initiatives.



## Jewish Community in Kyrgyzstan

- ~1,300–1,500 Jews, mostly in Bishkek
- Chief Rabbi: Arie Reichman
- Main body: Jewish Community of Kyrgyzstan (affiliated with WJC)
- Runs synagogue, library, cultural & welfare programs (with JDC support)
- Peaceful coexistence with other religions, despite occasional tensions during unrest





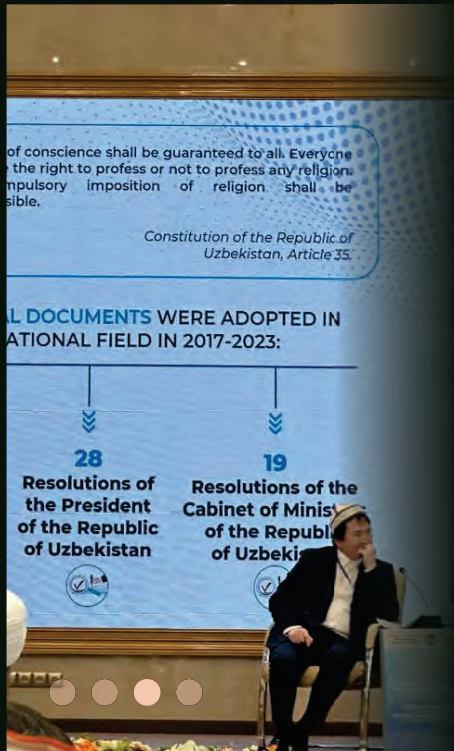
## Father Anthony Corcoran

Father Anthony Corcoran, SJ, is an American Jesuit priest and the Apostolic Administrator of the Catholic Church in Kyrgyzstan, appointed by Pope Francis in 2017. Born in Tucson, Arizona, he has served in the former Soviet Union since 1997, focusing on pastoral care, interfaith dialogue, and social outreach. He leads a small Catholic community in a predominantly Muslim country, emphasizing humility and service to the marginalized.

## Junsei Terasawa

Junsei Terasawa (born September 15, 1950, in Hakui, Japan) is a Buddhist monk of the Nipponzan Myōhōji order and a prominent peace activist across Eurasia. A disciple of Nichidatsu Fujii, he studied in India and has led peace marches, built Peace Pagodas, and promoted interfaith dialogue in conflict zones like Chechnya and Iraq. In 2017, he joined the International Advisory Board of the Twelve Gates Foundation, continuing his work for global peace.





## V International Conference:

**"KYRGYZSTAN — A COUNTRY OF INTERFAITH PEACE AND HARMONY"**

Organized by the State Commission for Religious Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic. The participants were representatives of relevant government agencies of Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and other countries, as well as spiritual leaders, including the Mufti of Kyrgyzstan Zamir Rakiev and Metropolitan Vikenty of Tashkent and Uzbekistan. The conference brought together experts from more than 20 countries to discuss topical issues of the religious sphere, strengthening stability and interfaith harmony.







## INTERFAITH ROUNDTABLE IN RESPONSE TO THE BURNING OF THE QURAN

In 2023, when a copy of the Quran was burned abroad in a shocking act of provocation, religious leaders in Kyrgyzstan responded not with division — but with unity. An interfaith roundtable was immediately convened, bringing together representatives of Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism. All participants strongly condemned the act, but more importantly, they stood in solidarity with the Muslim community and spoke out against religious hatred in all its forms. This wasn't just a political statement — it was a moment of shared moral clarity. Leaders emphasized that an attack on one religion is an attack on all, and that mutual respect is the foundation of a peaceful society. The event reinforced a simple but vital truth: in Kyrgyzstan, religious communities will always support each other when it matters most.





## Humanitarian Support from Kyrgyzstan to Gaza

HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT FROM KYRGYZSTAN TO GAZA WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE INTERFAITH COUNCIL (IFC), THE ISLAMIC FOUNDATION UMMA, LED BY ELIANA-MARYAM SATAROVA, ORGANIZED HUMANITARIAN AID FOR GAZA ON BEHALF OF THE KYRGYZ PEOPLE. AID WAS DELIVERED VIA EGYPT TO NEARLY 2 MILLION DISPLACED CIVILIANS IN SOUTHERN GAZA. THE FOUNDATION ALSO HELD PEACEFUL SOLIDARITY EVENTS AND FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGNS.

IFC CONTINUES OUTREACH EFFORTS, EMPHASIZING THAT THIS IS A POLITICAL CRISIS WITH COMPLEX ROOTS. MANY MEMBERS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY AND OTHERS HAVE SPOKEN OUT AGAINST THE VIOLENCE AND EXPRESSED SOLIDARITY WITH PALESTINIAN CIVILIANS.



## Dialogue Within the Jewish Community on Palestine

*The Interfaith Council (IFC) organized two closed-door conferences with members of the Jewish community in Kyrgyzstan, bringing together experts and representatives from other faith communities. These events created a safe space for open and respectful dialogue on the Gaza-Palestine conflict.*

*Participants discussed the humanitarian crisis, political dimensions, and moral concerns shared across faiths. The IFC emphasized that many members of the Jewish community—locally and globally—oppose the violence and advocate for peace and justice for all civilians.*





## International Expert Conference:

**OUTLINES OF NEW  
POLITICAL ALLIANCES AND  
CONFRONTATIONS IN THE  
MIDDLE AND NEAR EAST IN  
LIGHT OF THE U.S.  
ELECTIONS**

The International Expert Conference was organized by the National Analytical and Information Center "Religion, Law, and Politics." The event gathered leading experts, including Kadyr Malikov, to discuss emerging geopolitical trends, regional security challenges, and the shifting dynamics of alliances following the U.S. elections.



## Social Department

The Social Department "Miloserdiye" of the Bishkek and Kyrgyzstan Diocese provides humanitarian aid, supports crisis pregnant women and mothers, organizes meals for the homeless and elderly, offers medical and legal assistance, and coordinates volunteer and emergency relief efforts.









## "Friendship and Unity" iftar.

On March 28, 2025, the Independent Analytical and research Center "Religion, Law and Politics", under the leadership of Kadyr aji Malik, organized a round table on the topic "Palestine is the pain of all mankind." The meeting was held in partnership with the Islamic magazine Umma in the INNOVA celebration hall (12 Madiyeva Street, Kok Zhar village). The participants discussed the situation in Palestine, the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, the importance of the Al-Aqsa Mosque for Muslims, as well as the impact of events on world politics. The purpose of the round table is to provide a humanitarian, legal and moral assessment of what is happening and to develop proposals for the support of the victims. After the discussion, the guests also took part in the "Friendship and Unity" iftar.



## National Agency for Religious and Interethnic Affairs under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic.



Azamat Yusupov

NARIA IS A GOVERNMENT AGENCY UNDER THE PRESIDENT OF KYRGYZSTAN THAT DEALS WITH RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN THE COUNTRY. IT REGISTERS ALL RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES (CHURCHES, MOSQUES, TEMPLES, ETC.) SO THAT THEY CAN OFFICIALLY OPERATE. THE COMMISSION ENSURES THAT RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS COMPLY WITH THE LAWS AND DO NOT VIOLATE PUBLIC ORDER. IF NECESSARY, IT CAN REFUSE TO REGISTER OR CLOSE A GROUP THAT CALLS FOR VIOLENCE OR INCITES CONFLICT. SHE ALSO CHECKS RELIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND LITERATURE TO ENSURE THAT THEY DO NOT PROMOTE EXTREMISM OR HATRED. SINCE APRIL 2025, THIS COMMISSION HAS BECOME THE NATIONAL AGENCY FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AND INTERETHNIC HARMONY UNDER THE PRESIDENT, WHOSE TASK REMAINS TO ENSURE THE SECULARISM OF THE STATE, FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND INTERFAITH HARMONY.



A scenic landscape of a mountain valley. In the foreground, a calm lake reflects the surrounding green hills and distant snow-capped mountains. Several horses are grazing on the grassy shore of the lake. The background features steep, forested slopes and majestic mountains under a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds.

# Thank you for your attention.

