



PRESS RELEASE

AUCA's TSPC and IBL Department present

“Torture and Abuse in the Kyrgyz Republic: The Practical Implications of Law Reform”

On November 5, 2013, TSPC organized a presentation on the above subject under the framework of the International and Business Law Department's Law week at AUCA. Presenters included Sarah King from *TSPC Human Rights*, Nadejda Kolbina and Aidar Sydykov from *Golos Svobody* and Rysbek Adamaliev from *Kylym Shamy*. The presentation was held in the form of an interactive discussion and dwelt on the current state of affairs on Torture in the Kyrgyz Republic as well as the work being done by the Tian Shan Policy Center as part of its EU-funded “Program to Enhance the Capacity of NGO's and Institutions to Advocate for Implementation of Human Rights Decisions and Standards to Prevent Torture,” and its partners to make changes in that sphere.

The Social Fund *Golos Svobody* made presentation on “Rehabilitation Program for Victims of Torture in Kyrgyzstan.” This program was started in 2007 with support of the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture (UNVFVT) and the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT). The main goal of the program is to give victims of torture medical, psychological, social and legal assistant. Presenters explained to students the work being done both at the Rehabilitation Center and by *Golos Svobody's* entire organization to assist victims of torture. The defenders reported that, through 2007 – 2013, the program helped more than 400 victims.

Mr. Adamaliev of *Kylym Shymy* discussed many of the trends being observed in violations of rights related to torture. He also discussed with students the recent NGO Shadow Report prepared for the United Nations Committee Against Torture.

Finally, Ms. King discussed TSPC's work in relation to the current situation described by the members of Civil Society. TSPC has been working with its partners in both civil society and government to study the situation in Kyrgyzstan and share research about international models for the prevention of torture and abuse. The goal of the project is to understand what other countries have done to address similar issues and determine if there are lessons to be learned that could assist Kyrgyzstan confront its own challenges.

Over the past several years much attention, both nationally and internationally, has been paid to addressing systemic issues with torture and abuse inside of the Kyrgyz Criminal Justice System. Torture is explicitly prohibited in the Kyrgyz Constitution, and the Criminal Procedural Code now imposes much stricter penalties than in previous years for instances of torture. The General Prosecutor for the Kyrgyz Republic has issued guidance regarding prevention and oversight, and a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed in order to allow NGO's and international organizations to monitor places of detention.

However, despite these advances, many issues remain. While every year there are numerous claims of abuse, the article that criminalizes torture is not being routinely used to prosecute the perpetrators. Those persons who are brought under state control lack many of their procedural rights as detainees until they are officially registered in detention centers, and the system for investigating allegations of abuse remains compromised by conflicts of interest. During the first six months of 2013 the General Prosecutor for the Kyrgyz Republic registered 146 torture claims.

For more information about presentation, please contact *Sarah King Associate Professor of Law in the International and Business Law Department as well as the Human Rights Program Manager with the Tian Shan Policy Center* by e-mail: king_s@mail.auca.kg

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