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Russian advisers in Osh

On 28 September, during a visit to Osh, Kyrgyzstan, the head of the Russian FSB's Border Forces announced a decision to send a group of 40 Russian advisers to this place, "with the aim of fighting the cross-border criminal groups operating in this region". This decision and its quick implementation (according to the Fergana.ru portal, Russian representatives were already in Osh by 30 September) is aimed at demonstrating the influence and efficiency of Russian actions in Kyrgyzstan.

The group of 40 Russian representatives of the Russian FSB's border services was selected from among 60 advisers stationed in the village of Novo-Pokrovka near Bishkek since the withdrawal of Russian troops from Kyrgyzstan in 1999. Their transfer to Osh (a city in which bloody ethnic clashes took place this June, and which currently is *de facto* beyond Bishkek's control) and their formal task of combating criminal groups, gives the FSB a chance to take greater control of the situation in Kyrgyzstan's least stable point, as well as the opportunity to exploit tensions, both locally and between Osh and Bishkek. At the same time, the effective transfer of representatives of Russia's power structures to Osh is a demonstration of Moscow's strong position in Kyrgyzstan, and contrasts with the failed attempts by the OSCE to send a mission of political advisers to Kyrgyzstan, attempts by the USA to open a military training centre in Osh, and the open insubordination by the authorities in Osh towards the central government. <ola>