

## Tashiev's dismissal: a political earthquake in Kyrgyzstan

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On 10 February, the President of Kyrgyzstan, Sadyr Japarov, issued a decree removing Kamchybek Tashiev – *de facto* the second most powerful figure in the state – from his post as head of the State Committee for National Security (GKNB). Shortly thereafter, three of his deputies were also dismissed, and further personnel changes were introduced within the GKNB itself. According to an official statement by the presidential spokesperson, the decision was motivated by a “desire to prevent divisions within the country and to ensure national unity”. The source of these divisions was reportedly not Tashiev himself but other individuals who, “hiding behind his name”, had allegedly encouraged various figures, including members of parliament and representatives of the intelligentsia, to undertake actions directed against the head of state. As recently as December 2025, the former head of the GKNB had denied speculation that he intended to stand in the presidential election scheduled for January 2027.

Tashiev was a co-architect of Japarov's electoral success in 2021. From that point onwards, the two politicians formed a duumvirate in which the president represented the country on the international stage, while the head of the GKNB frequently made key decisions in the sphere of domestic policy. His effective authority was at least equal to that of the president, and his influence increased steadily over the five years he held office. Tashiev and his aides assumed control of numerous companies, and he became known for employing harsh methods against political and business opponents. The unexpected decision to remove him – taken while he was undergoing medical treatment in Germany – represents a further step towards the monopolisation of power in Kyrgyzstan ahead of the presidential election. It is likely that the election will be brought forward (most probably to the autumn of this year), following the removal of Tashiev's remaining supporters from the state administration.

### Commentary

- **Tashiev's dismissal forms part of a broader process of consolidating power in Japarov's hands.** On 10 and 11 February, supporters of the former leader were removed from the security services in order to forestall any reaction from groups associated with him. Zhumgalbek Shabdanbekov, formerly head of the Committee's Ninth Directorate – responsible for the protection of the state's highest officials – was appointed acting head of the GKNB. The competences of the Committee itself have also been significantly curtailed. The Border Service and the aforementioned Ninth Directorate have been removed from its jurisdiction and now report directly to the president. The GKNB is responsible for the special services; its remit encompasses intelligence, counterintelligence, and combating terrorism and organised crime. During Tashiev's

tenure, however, the institution was also involved in suppressing the opposition and exerted influence over decisions concerning both domestic and foreign policy. According to media reports, the GKNB is expected to undergo further reforms, as a result of which its influence within the state will be substantially reduced.

- **The changes introduced by Japarov are intended to secure his victory in the forthcoming presidential election.** On the day preceding Tashiev's dismissal, a petition addressed to the president and the speaker of parliament – signed by 75 well-known public figures – called for a snap election. Independent media outlets have demonstrated, however, that some of the alleged signatories denied having endorsed the document and that the origin of the petition remains unknown. Its publication most likely represented an attempt to legitimise the acceleration of the vote by creating the impression of broad societal support for such a move. On 17 February, the Constitutional Court of Kyrgyzstan is due to rule on whether Japarov may stand again under the provisions of the 2021 constitution. This decision, however, appears to be a mere formality. In the coming months, the president is expected to continue removing Tashiev's supporters from political life in order to prevent them from undermining his bid for the office of head of state.
- **Attempts by Tashiev to regain power appear unlikely.** The process of removing his supporters from state positions was carried out with remarkable speed. On local social media, this prompted speculation that Japarov may have been assisted by the Russian security services, primarily on the grounds that the Kyrgyz authorities are not perceived as capable of carrying out such a complex operation independently. Moreover, Tashiev was regarded in Russia as anti-Russian, whereas a president ruling without a powerful partner may prove more susceptible to external influence – both from Russia and from China. The former head of the GKNB has called for "refraining from unlawful actions in order to preserve peace and stability". The situation could potentially be altered by protests or unrest organised by Tashiev's supporters from the south of the country. However, at present such a scenario appears unlikely, as in recent years – as a result of repression and advancing authoritarianism – Kyrgyz society has largely lost interest in politics (see '[Parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan: consolidating the presidential system](#)').