



Ethnic Uzbek refugees cross the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border on their way back to Kyrgyzstan near the village of Vlksm some 20 km outside Osh yesterday. WHO said it was working on a worst-case estimate that the crisis in Kyrgyzstan may affect up to one million people, about a third of whom could be refugees.

PHOTO: AFP

Kyrgyz death toll could be 2,000

Says interim leader

AFP, OSH, Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan's acting leader admitted the death toll from ethnic clashes is probably 2,000 -- ten times the current estimate -- as she went to the ravaged south where the UN said up to a million people may have been affected.

Interim leader Roza Otunbayeva, wearing a bulletproof vest and accompanied by a heavy security detail, landed by helicopter for her first visit to the devastated city of Osh since unrest erupted one week ago.

"I came here to see, to speak with the people and hear firsthand what happened here. We will do everything to rebuild this city," Otunbayeva said before a handful of people on the main square.

In an interview ahead of her trip, Otunbayeva admitted that the official death toll, which the health ministry said yesterday had reached 192, was vastly underestimated.

"I would multiply by 10 times the official figures," she said in an interview with the Russian daily Kommersant published yesterday.

"There were very many deaths in the countryside, and our customs dictate that we bury our dead right away, before sunset," meaning that many bodies were buried before deaths could be registered with authorities, she said.

The UN's World Health Organisation said it was working on a worst-case estimate that the crisis could affect up to one million people.

"We are working with a planning figure of one million people that have been directly or indirectly affected by this event -- 300,000 of them... refugees," said Giuseppe Annunziata, WHO coordinator for emergency programme support.

In Osh, Otunbayeva defended her government from criticism that it had been unable to contain the ethnic bloodshed and to cope with the escalating humanitarian crisis.

"Leave us some hope! Stop saying that we are not working," she said. "Our forces say that they are coping."

The provisional government, which seized power in an April uprising, has insisted it is in control.

Otunbayeva stayed away from the city's devastated Uzbek neighbourhoods -- many of which were burnt to the ground amid the worst of the ethnic bloodshed.

US envoy urges independent probe into Kyrgyzstan unrest

AFP, YORKISHLOK, Uzbekistan

A senior US envoy called yesterday for an independent investigation into ethnic clashes in Kyrgyzstan that have killed nearly 200 people and forced tens of thousands from their homes.

"I think it's important that there be an investigation... but given the large number of ethnic Uzbek refugees here in Uzbekistan whose stories need to be heard, the Kyrgyz investigation needs to be accompanied by an investigation by an independent body," Robert Blake, the US assistant secretary of state for south and

central Asian affairs, told AFP by telephone during a visit to Uzbekistan.

Blake was in Uzbekistan's border region of Andijan yesterday, where the United Nations estimates that more than 100,000 people took refuge following the clashes between Kyrgyz and ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan.

"The government of Uzbekistan has done a terrific job of meeting the needs of the refugees, the most immediate need in the short term is for the government of Kyrgyzstan to stop the violence and with it the flow of refugees," Blake added.



Expanding Opportunities Worldwide

Position Announcements

For 46 years and in 145 countries, ACDI/VOCA has empowered people in developing and transitional nations to succeed in the global economy. Based in Washington, D.C., ACDI/VOCA is a nonprofit international development organization that delivers technical and management assistance in agribusiness, financial services, enterprise development, community development and food security in order to promote broad-based economic growth and vibrant civil society. ACDI/VOCA currently has approximately 93 projects in 40 countries and revenues of over \$124 million.

We are currently seeking administrative specialists for long-term positions on a PL 480 Title II USAID multi-year assistance program (MYAP) in Bangladesh. The overall goal of the project is to reduce chronic food insecurity and vulnerability of individuals, households and communities to food security shocks. It works to improve agricultural productivity by strengthening cooperatives; improving the productivity and quality of target food crops; awarding grants to rural cooperatives and NGOs to promote post-harvest processing and commercialization of agricultural production.

Senior Commodity Specialist

The Senior Commodity Specialist will direct all ACDI/VOCA commodity monetization activity in Bangladesh; work closely with partners in coordinating and directing the transport, storage and distribution of Title II commodities; supervise and support program staff in commodity shipping, import, stocking, inventory management, delivery/distribution, and sales; ensure proper systems of control and coordination with the field and HQ accounting staff; and ensure that commodity management procedures are properly documented and in line with the requirements of USAID, Government of Bangladesh and ACDI/VOCA.

Qualifications: At least five years of logistics management experience, including warehouse management, preferably with food commodities; strong interpersonal skills; experience in commodity sales and marketing in Bangladesh; experience negotiating with host country governments and on goods clearance issues; and familiarity with food aid programs, particularly USAID Title II programs.

Procurement Officer

The Procurement Officer will provide procurement oversight to the project; solicit bids and requests for pro forma invoices for project procurement at the Chief of Party's request; maintain financial records related to all procurement (bids, pro forma invoices, etc.) based in Bangladesh; monitor compliance with procurement within the budget provided by the Team Leader and Program Staff to effectively manage project procurement and logistics in Bangladesh.

Qualifications: Bachelor's degree or equivalent in training and experience; USAID experience preferred; ability to work under tight deadlines with minimal guidance and manage priorities and workflow; strong oral, written and analytical skills and working knowledge of Excel with proficiency in Word; strong analytical, organizational, research and problem-solving skills; good written and spoken English required.

IT Officer

The IT Officer will manage and administer all IT related systems and equipment for the project; monitor and trouble-shoot IT related issues as needed; provide guidance and technical input on any IT related procurements or activities undertaken by the project. **Qualifications:** Bachelor's degree in computer science or equivalent in training and experience; USAID experience preferred; five years of experience in similar posts working w/international NGOs. Good written and spoken English required.

Accountant/Assistant Accountant

The Accountant and Assistant Accountant will maintain, and update proper books of accounts in the manual accounting ledgers, and in the computerized accounting system in use; ensure effective filing of accounting documents; formulate and/or participate in the formulation of the finance and administration manuals.

Qualifications: Minimum requirements include a higher diploma or a university degree in accounting, commerce or financial management and a minimum of seven years (Accountant) or three years (Assistant Accountant) of experience in a similar position with a recognised NGO or international organization (private or public); ability to track numerous budgets and adhere to donor reporting requirements. ACCA, ICSA, CIMA, CPA or other recognized professional certification is preferred. Experience in a computerized environment and a good working knowledge of an accounting package (i.e., Quickbooks) and MS Office packages.

Human Resources Director

The Human Resources Director recruits and hires staff for the Dhaka and Khulna offices; ensures all human resource policies are in line with Bangladesh law and USAID regulations; plans payroll and ensures staff benefits, including leave; and monitors and ensures timesheets are completed in a timely manner.

Qualifications: Bachelor's degree or equivalent in training and experience; USAID experience preferred; ability to work under tight deadlines with minimal guidance and manage priorities and workflow; strong oral, written and analytical skills and working knowledge of Excel with proficiency in Word; strong analytical, organizational, research and problem-solving skills; good written and spoken English required.

Receptionist

The Receptionist will convey a professional company image through in-person and phone interaction; coordinate and maintain office records and inventory; assist and support administrative and technical teams; and organize meetings and workshops.

Qualifications: Minimum 3-5 years of experience in similar posts; ability to multi-task with minimal guidance and manage priorities and workflow; working knowledge in Excel and Word; good written and spoken English required.

Please send CVs to Bangladesh@acdivoa.org. No phone calls please. Only finalists will be contacted. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. EOE.

Iraq car bombs kill five, wound 79

AFP, Kirkuk

Two car bombs targeting a provincial councillor and a police officer north of Baghdad yesterday killed five people and wounded 79, many of them women or children, police said.

The five dead came in a bombing in the town of Tuz Khurmatu and targeted the home of Niazar Nomaroglu, a Shiite Turkmen councillor in mainly Sunni Arab Salaheddin province, police Colonel Hussein al-Bayati said.

Women and children were among the 47 people wounded in the 3:45pm (1245 GMT) bombing, which severely damaged several surrounding houses as well as Nomaroglu's home, Bayati said.

It was unclear whether the councillor was among the casualties.

Salaheddin province has its headquarters in heavily Sunni Arab Tikrit, hometown of now executed dictator Saddam Hussein, but the province also has Kurdish and Shiite Turkmen minorities, particularly on its eastern margins.

Earlier, a car bomb targeting the home of police Captain Mustafa al-Tamimi in Baquba wounded 32 people, 20 of them women or children, a spokesman for the city's operations command said.

"His house was completely destroyed," the spokesman said.

"Three of his children, his wife and two brothers were among the wounded. The rest included nine women and seven children."

The police officer himself escaped injury as he was at the mosque attending the main weekly Muslim prayers.

Baquba is the capital of ethnically and confessionally divided Diyala province, which has become one of the bastions of Al-Qaeda in Iraq.

Gulf oil full of methane, adding new concerns

AP, New Orleans

It is an overlooked danger in the oil spill crisis: The crude gushing from the well contains vast amounts of natural gas that could pose a serious threat to the Gulf of Mexico's fragile ecosystem.

The oil emanating from the seafloor contains about 40 percent methane, compared with about 5 percent found in typical oil deposits, said John Kessler, a Texas A&M University oceanographer who is studying the impact of methane from the spill.

That means huge quantities of methane have entered the Gulf, scientists say, potentially suffocating marine life and creating "dead zones" where oxygen is so depleted that nothing lives.

"This is the most vigorous methane eruption in modern human history," Kessler said.

Methane is a colourless, odorless and flammable substance that is a major component in the natural gas used to heat people's homes. Petroleum engineers typically burn off excess gas attached to crude before the oil is shipped off to the refinery. That's exactly what BP has done as it has captured more than 7.5 million gallons of crude from the breached well.

A BP spokesman said the company was burning about 30 million cubic feet of natural gas daily from the source of the leak, adding up to about 450 million cubic feet since the containment effort started 15 days ago. That's enough gas to heat about 450,000 homes for

four days.

But that figure does not account for gas that eluded containment efforts and wound up in the water, leaving behind huge amounts of methane. Scientists are still trying to measure how much has escaped into the water and how it may damage the Gulf and its creatures.

The dangerous gas has played an important role throughout the disaster and response. A bubble of methane is believed to have burst up from the seafloor and ignited the rig explosion. Methane crystals also clogged a four-story containment box that engineers earlier tried to place on top of the breached well. Now it is being looked at as an environmental concern.

The small microbes that live in the sea have been feeding on the oil and natural gas in the water and are consuming larger quantities of oxygen, which they need to digest food. As they draw more oxygen from the water, it creates two problems. When oxygen levels drop low enough, the breakdown of oil grinds to a halt; and as it is depleted in the water, most life can't be sustained.

The National Science Foundation funded research on methane in the Gulf amid concerns about the depths of the oil plume and questions what role natural gas was playing in keeping the oil below the surface, said David Garrison, a program director in the federal agency who specializes in biological oceanography.

Suu Kyi supporters mark 65th birthday

AFP, Yangon

From tree planting in Myanmar to a solidarity rally in Washington and flash mobs in Britain, people around the world are holding events today to mark the 65th birthday of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Supporters of Myanmar's iconic democracy leader plan to throw a small party for her at one of their houses in northern Yangon, but Suu Kyi won't be there.

Instead the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, in detention for almost 15 years, is expected to spend a quiet day at her lakeside mansion where she is kept without telephone or Internet access, cut off from the outside world.

Members of her National League for Democracy are planting about 20,000 saplings around Myanmar to mark her birthday.

Nandar Lin, 22, said women NLD youth members would recall Suu Kyi's past speeches today "as a birthday present to her".

"I haven't seen Daw Suu in person since I joined the party in 2007," she lamented. 'Daw' is a term of respect in Myanmar.

Her party won the last vote in 1990 but was never allowed to take office, and she is barred from standing in the upcoming polls -- the country's first in two decades.

Critics say the elections are a sham aimed at simply entrenching the generals' power, and a UN working group this week pronounced her detention a breach of international human rights law, prompting new calls for her release.

Suu Kyi's NLD is no longer recognised by the junta as an official party after refusing to meet a May 6 deadline to re-register -- a move that would have forced it to expel its leader and other members in detention.

Under election legislation unveiled in March, anyone serving a prison term is banned from being a member of a political party and parties that fail to obey the rule will be abolished.

Among events planned worldwide, activists will stage a rally on today outside the Capitol Building in Washington, while in London campaigners plan a demonstration yesterday in front of the Myanmar embassy.

Elsewhere in Britain, supporters are calling for flash mobs -- large groups of people who mass suddenly in public places -- to gather Saturday in different locations with Suu Kyi face masks to raise aware-

ness of her plight.

And in Bangkok, opposition groups held a ceremony where they cut a birthday cake and delivered impassioned speeches calling for her release.

Suu Kyi had her incarceration lengthened by 18 months in August last year after being convicted over a bizarre incident in which a US man swam to her lakeside home, and there are fears her detention may be extended again.

BRITAIN URGES SUU KYI'S RELEASE

Britain called yesterday for Myanmar democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi to be immediately and unconditionally released.

"Aung San Suu Kyi is 65 this Saturday [today], having spent 14 of the last 20 years under house arrest," said Foreign Secretary William Hague.

"Her continued detention, and that of more than 2,100 other political prisoners in Burma (Myanmar), contravenes international human rights law and casts

a long shadow over planned elections in the country.

"I urge the military regime to release all political prisoners immediately and unconditionally, and respect the human rights of Burma's people."

THE ELDERS LEAVE EMPTY CHAIR

A group of global statesmen founded by Nelson Mandela urged Myanmar's neighbours Thursday to boost pressure on the reclusive state, to mark democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi's 65th birthday.

The Elders, who include former United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan, ex US president Jimmy Carter and South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu, made the appeal after leaving a seat symbolically empty for Aung Sang Suu Kyi at a meeting in South Africa.

At a recent meeting in Johannesburg, the Elders kept an empty chair draped in Burmese silk to symbolise the absence of "Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma's thousands of political prisoners."



PHOTO: AFP

British Ambassador Martin Hatfull reads a statement in front of the large portrait of jailed Myanmar democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi outside the British embassy in Jakarta yesterday. Hatfull reiterated Britain's demand for the Nobel Peace Prize laureate's immediate and unconditional release as she prepares to mark yet another birthday in detention.