

Kyrgyzstan: Parliament Votes to Abolish Torture Prevention Body – President must reverse course

3 July 2025

We, the undersigned human rights groups, are deeply alarmed by the June 25 decision of the parliament of the Kyrgyz Republic to [dissolve](#) the [National Center for the Prevention of Torture](#) (NCPT) – an independent public body tasked with monitoring detention facilities and preventing torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment. We urge President Sadyr Zhaparov to exercise his constitutional power to return the law for revision and inclusive consultation to ensure its adherence to international standards and prevent a dangerous setback in the fight against torture in Kyrgyzstan.

On June 25, Parliament approved a new Law on the country's Ombudsperson's Office on second and third reading. Unlike the version of the draft law passed on first reading, it contains a provision to liquidate the NCPT and transfer its powers to the Ombudsperson's Office. This abrupt move left no opportunity for parliamentary committees, experts, or civil society to examine its consequences or propose alternatives, in violation of the principles of a transparent and inclusive legislative process. The law will now be sent to the president, who has the power to sign it, or veto it and return it for revision.

The NCPT was [created](#) in 2012 as part of Kyrgyzstan's commitment under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT) - a binding international treaty that requires states to establish National Preventive Mechanisms. These bodies must operate independently, have full access to all places of detention without warning, and play a proactive role in preventing torture and inhumane treatment. NCPT has served as an effective mechanism for fulfilling these tasks and has been widely recognized and praised for its work by international human rights experts, including UN treaty bodies, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as UN member states during the Universal Periodic Review.

For over a decade, the NCPT has fulfilled its mandate through unannounced inspections of prisons, police stations, and psychiatric facilities. These visits have uncovered abuses, exposed systemic failures, and brought transparency to institutions that are often hidden from public view. The NCPT has also contributed to measurable improvements in detention conditions, including the closure of inhumane facilities in which cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment was documented, improved access to healthcare in prisons, and the introduction of International standards for documenting torture based on the Istanbul Protocol. Dismantling it would undermine both the progress Kyrgyzstan has made in combating abuse in detention and its reputation for taking concrete steps to prevent torture.

While the new law would transfer the NCPT's responsibilities to the Ombudsperson's Office, it is not clear at this stage how this institution would implement this function. This lack of clarity underscores our concern that the move risks turning torture prevention into a sidelined and diluted function, undermining the urgency and effectiveness it once had and weakening Kyrgyzstan's ability to protect vulnerable people behind closed doors at a time when reports of torture are increasing. We are particularly concerned that unannounced inspections of detention facilities – one of the most critical tools for preventing abuse – could come to an end. Thus, transferring the NCPT's functions to the Ombudsperson's Office risks undermining the carefully established system for effective, preventive nationwide monitoring of detention facilities and protection of detainees.

In a statement issued on June 30, the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture (SPT) [expressed](#) dismay over the decision to dismantle the NCPT without public debate, engagement with

stakeholders, or even the publication of the draft amendments. It regretted the transfer of the NCPT's functions to a body that falls short of meeting the Paris Principles, as well as the lack of a clear plan for how the Ombudsperson's office will assume the preventive mandate. The SPT stressed that the move is incompatible with Kyrgyzstan's obligations under the OPCAT. Previously, amid ongoing decisions about a possible merger of the NCPT with the Ombudsperson's Office, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [urged](#) the authorities to preserve the NCPT's independence, calling it "a model for the Central Asian region", during his visit to Kyrgyzstan in March 2025.

This move proceeded despite opposition from civil society groups, international human rights bodies, and some members of Kyrgyzstan's Parliament. Member of Parliament Dastan Bekeshev, one of the co-authors of the original NCPT law, [warned](#) that dissolving the NCPT would send the wrong signal to both perpetrators and victims of torture, which remains a persistent problem in Kyrgyzstan.

We urge the President to return the law for revision and inclusive consultation and preserve the institutional safeguards against torture that Kyrgyzstan has worked hard to build in accordance with its international obligations. If reform of the NPM is necessary, it should be carried out through open, inclusive consultation and close cooperation with civil society and international partners - including the SPT - and it should be guided by a clear plan to strengthen, rather than to erase what has already been built. However, the first priority must be to prevent the current rushed initiative from entering into force.

Signed by the following organizations:

Araminta
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)
International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR)
Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC)
Freedom For Eurasia (FfE)
Physicians for Human Rights