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Uzbeks Flee as Kyrgyzstan Troops Aim to Crush Protests

Posted By [Jason Ditz](#)

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Protests against the interim government in the largely Uzbek south of Kyrgyzstan have turned into an increasing bloodbath, with [Kyrgyz troops pouring into the region with orders to “shoot to kill,”](#) in an escalating incident that mirrors the April uprising which ousted the previous government and installed the current one.



The death toll has [continued to rise throughout the day](#) and at least 80 confirmed kills have been reported, with nearly a thousand protesters wounded by riot police and later, troops. Counter-protests have been reported in the northern capital of Bishkek, where

ethnic Kyrgyz protesters supportive of the new government call for the Uzbek uprising to be crushed.

Ethnic Uzbeks, apparently have seen the writing on the wall, and [thousands of them have poured across the border into Uzbekistan](#). The Uzbek government, for its part, has attempted to blockade the border and force the fleeing protesters back into Kyrgyzstan.

The current government [came to power in April amid international outcry over the pro-US Bakiyev government killing somewhere in the neighborhood of 100 protesters](#) in the north. Bakiyev was seen more favorably in the south and the Uzbek protesters are largely in favor of his return.

It seems now that the interim government, after [all its posturing about human rights](#), is pursuing the exact same path Bakiyev did in trying to crush the protesters with a bloodbath. [If there is any good news to be had it is that the Russian government, largely supportive of the new government, has declined an official request](#) to dispatch troops of their own to join in the crackdown.