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## Kyrgyzstan says Islamist groups sparked violence

**Kyrgyz authorities claim former president's family colluded with Taliban to stir up violence**

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Kyrgyzstan's security agency claimed Thursday that relatives of the toppled president colluded with the Taliban and other Islamic militant movements to provoke the ethnic violence that has destabilized the Central Asian nation.

The agency provided no evidence and there was no way of independently confirming the claim. Former President Kurmanbek Bakiyev, now in exile in Belarus, has denied any role in the violence, which killed about 2,000 people and left 400,000 ethnic Uzbeks homeless.

The security agency said two of Bakiyev's relatives met last month in Afghanistan with representatives of the Taliban, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Tajik militants to discuss plans to trigger unrest in Kyrgyzstan.

At the meeting in the Badakhshan region, they agreed that IMU forces would stir up violence and would be paid \$30 million by the Bakiyevs, the agency said in a statement.

"The Bakiyev system has fallen, but his inner circle gave the order to international terrorist organizations to destabilize the situation in the country," interim security agency chief Keneshbek Duishebayev told reporters as the statement was distributed.

The interim government, which overthrew Bakiyev in April, has accused him of setting off this month's bloodshed by hiring gunmen to shoot at both Kyrgyz and minority Uzbeks, who have a history of ethnic tensions.

The government also claims the Bakiyev family is involved in the trafficking of heroin from Afghanistan. An estimated 20 metric tons of Afghan drugs are transported each year through southern Kyrgyzstan, where the rioting started June 10.

Since the 1991 Soviet collapse the densely populated, impoverished and conservative Fergana Valley that Kyrgyzstan shares with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan has become a breeding ground for fundamentalist Islamic groups, including the al Qaida-linked IMU.

The government's claim that the fighting was orchestrated was bolstered by the United Nations, which said it appeared to have begun with five simultaneous attacks by men wearing ski masks. The UN has not named the suspected instigator.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who said the allegations of instigation needed to be taken seriously, did not rule out that Bakiyev's supporters were to blame.

"Certainly the ouster of President Bakiyev some months ago left behind those who are still his loyalists and very much against the provisional government," she said last week.

The security chief said the Bakiyevs, international terrorist organizations and narco-traffickers each have their own reasons for wanting to see chaos in southern Kyrgyzstan. The Bakiyevs, whose stronghold was in the south, seek to return to power and reclaim their control over sources of wealth, Duishebayev said. The criminal groups believe it will be easier to move drugs through the region, while Islamic militants want to expand their influence and overthrow secular governments, he said.