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Kazakhstan crisis: President claims violent protests were "attempted coup d'état"

Криза в Казахстані: президент назвав протести із застосуванням насильства «спробою державного перевороту»

Президент Казахстану Касім-Жомарт Кемельович Токаєв заявив, що нещодавні насильницькі демонстрації, що вразили країну, були «намаганням державного перевороту» з боку «озброєних бойовиків», додавши, що його сили «ніколи» не стрілятимуть у мирних демонстрантів. Агентство контррозвідки та боротьби з тероризмом Казахстану заявило, що ситуація в країні «стабілізувалася та перебуває під контролем». Казахстанський лідер, який закликав Росію допомогти придушити протести, сказав, що «російські війська, спрямовані в країну, будуть виведені». Коментарі президента пролунали під час відеодзвінка з Володимиром Путіним та іншими главами союзних держав.

<https://www.euronews.com/2022/01/10/kazakhstan-crisis-president-claims-violent-protests-were-attempted-coup-d-etat>

The president of Kazakhstan has claimed that the recent violent demonstrations that have shaken the country were an "attempted coup d'état" by "armed fighters", adding that his forces would "never" fire on peaceful protesters.

Both President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin have said that Russian forces sent to the country will be withdrawn.

The Kazakh leader, who called for Russian help to quell the protests last week, said this would happen "soon". Putin said they would go "when their mission is complete".

The authorities in Kazakhstan said on Monday that nearly 8,000 people were detained by police during last week's violence, marking the worst unrest the former Soviet nation has faced since gaining independence 30 years ago.

Kazakhstan's counterintelligence and anti-terrorism agency said the situation in the country has "stabilised and is under control".

Monday has been declared a day of mourning for dozens of victims of the unprecedentedly violent unrest. The country's Health Ministry said on Sunday that 164 people, including three children, were killed.

The president's comments came during a video call with Putin and other allied heads of state.

"Groups of armed fighters who were waiting for their moment went into action. Their main objection has clearly come to light... it amounts to an attempted coup d'état," President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said.

"Never have we used nor will we use military force against peaceful protesters," he added. On Friday, he authorised law enforcement to shoot to kill "terrorists" without warning.

According to the president, organised "terrorist" forces included "Islamists" as well as "criminals", "troublemakers" and "little hoodlums". He also said that government forces had regained control.

On Sunday exiled opposition leader [Akezhan Kazhegeldin told Euronews](#) that "extremists" were paid by allies of Kazakhstan's former president Nursultan Nazarbayev to turn the otherwise peaceful protests violent in Almaty, the country's economic capital.

Nazarbayev let Tokayev replace him as president in 2019 but continued to wield considerable power. But last week Nazarbayev was replaced as head of the National Security Council after a reported rift between the current president and his predecessor.

The former head of Kazakhstan's anti-terror agency was arrested on charges of attempting to overthrow the government, officials said on Saturday.

The demonstrations began over rising fuel protests and snowballed into wider dissatisfaction with the regime, including poor living conditions as well as 30 years under one-party rule. Dissent was targeted against Nazarbayev in particular, with people chanting "Old man out!"