

Kazakhstan Program Summary

Notwithstanding Kazakhstan's regression toward one-party rule, political opportunities have emerged for the International Republican Institute's (IRI) work in that country. Kazakhstan's importance is evident both in its role as an economic leader in Central Asia and as the 2010 chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. As Kazakhstan assumes an increasingly important position on the international political stage, internal democratic reforms become more critical. Consequently, IRI feels that the potential for additional reform does exist.

Political Party Development

IRI's political party development program provides intensive assistance on party building in the areas of message development, issue-based party platform development, grassroots outreach strategies, voter contact, party image improvement and the creation of regional-level party structures. The program was designed to engage political parties between elections and assists regional party offices to identify and incorporate into their platforms issues that are important to the electorate.

Youth Civic Activism

IRI's youth program provides motivated young people with the necessary skills to be successful youth activists and increase political leadership at both the national and local levels. The program was designed to promote the political, social and civic engagement of young people by focusing on skills development and hands-on activities that support leadership, teamwork and community activism.

Public Opinion Polling

IRI has conducted surveys in Kazakhstan since 2005, including three national polls over the past 10 months. The goal of the program is to both gauge public opinion and to use this information in conjunction with IRI's work with Kazakhstan's political parties.

IRI's latest poll, conducted May 9-23, 2009, is a comprehensive analysis of attitudes regarding the Kazakhstani economic, social and political landscape. The current survey shows an improving attitude among the residents of Kazakhstan since IRI's February 2009 poll, though the population is increasingly negative about their current economic situation.

Thirty-eight percent claimed that their economic conditions got worse in the past year, 39 percent said there is no change in their economic condition and 20 percent said their economic condition got better.