



Trust through Public Accountability

briefing



Civic Union "For Reforms and Result"
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briefing

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List of abbreviations

MIA – Ministry of Internal Affairs

LCPC – Local Crime Prevention Centre

LEA – Law Enforcement Agencies (agencies of the Ministry of Internal Affairs)

NPS – Neighbourhood Police Station

CU – Civic Union “For reforms and results”

HQ MIA – Headquarters of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (Administration)

Council of LEA Reform – Council on the reform and development of the law enforcement system under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic

Summary

This briefing analyses the legislative and regulatory framework and practical implementation of reporting meetings (*otchetnyie vstrechi*) conducted by neighbourhood police officers with the public. It was produced by the Civic Union “For Reforms and Results” and Saferworld, based on desk and field research conducted in August-September 2013 (detailed information on methodology can be found in Annex 1). The research examined existing local-level mechanisms for cooperation between the police and public on communities’ security, and the effectiveness of these measures. Research was focused on the two most widespread mechanisms for cooperation between the police and public:

1. *Reporting meetings between neighbourhood police officers and the public*
2. *Local Crime Prevention Centres (LCPCs)*

This policy briefing examines public-police cooperation through **neighbourhood police officers’ reporting meetings**, while a second briefing addresses Local Crime Prevention Centres as a means of police-public partnership¹.

Objective of the policy brief: *propose research-based recommendations to the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and other stakeholders on how to increase the effectiveness of neighbourhood police officers’ reporting meetings, in order to establish dialogue with the public.*

This document draws conclusions about the frequency and content of reporting meetings, and feedback mechanisms after the meetings. It also includes recommendations to the MIA on improving how reporting meetings are conducted, in order to increase public understanding of police work, and to transform such meetings into platforms for genuine accountability of the police before the public².

Please visit the following link to access the electronic version of the document <http://reforma.kg/articles/view/114>

1 “Public and Police: Partnership through dialogue”. Policy brief prepared by Civic Union “For reforms and results”, January 2014.

2 In legislation and interdepartmental documents, the widely accepted term “reporting meetings of neighbourhood police to the public” implies a process whereby the police inform the public about their work. The emphasis is on relaying information about the results of the neighbourhood police officers’ work, rather than providing opportunities for evaluating police work, and such meetings do not include mechanisms for public feedback. Genuine accountability requires the presence of such components.

Introduction

The population is our eyes and ears.

- Neighbourhood police officer

Reporting meetings conducted by neighbourhood police officers are a mechanism for communication between police and the public, which can assist the police to gain the trust and support of the public.

The results of the study demonstrate that both representatives of Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and the public recognise the importance of cooperation. Thus, neighbourhood police officers noted the considerable role of the public in preventing and solving crimes. Similarly, respondents from the public underlined that strengthening cooperation between the police and population contributes to increasing public trust in the police.

Although some respondents from the public referred to police openness, the majority of respondents reported a lack of information about work of the police and consequently characterised the police as inactive. For their part, neighbourhood police officers noted that the public is “closed” to cooperation and unwilling to assist police, sometimes even ignoring them.

In this context, reporting meetings have the potential to become a mechanism for increasing trust in the police and gaining public respect for neighbourhood police officers, provided they ensure wider public participation and establish dialogue and feedback between the police and communities.

Article 18 of the Law “On crime prevention” regulates how LEAs report to the public. According to this article, a general measure for crime prevention is the conduction of periodic LEA reporting meetings with the public on the results of their work to fight crime and violations of the law³.

The practice of NPO reporting to the public became systematic in 2010, following the adoption of MIA Order 169 “On measures to improve the work of neighbourhood police officers” (further referred to as Order 169). An instruction annexed to this Order on the organisation of NPO work (further called the Instruction) contains rules on the conduction of reporting meetings to the public.

In February 2013, the MIA issued a separate Directive No 28, which obliged all neighbourhood police officers to hold reporting meetings during the period 11 February to 11 March. While this directive demonstrates the commitment of the LEA administration to ensuring neighbourhood police officers hold reporting meetings, it is also recognition that reporting meetings are not conducted with the frequency required by the Instruction.

It is important to note that the public still has little information on the work of the police and neighbourhood police officers’ reporting meetings. Separate research

³ Law 82 of the KR, article 18 “On crime prevention in Kyrgyz Republic”, 25 June 2005.

The police are not transparent about their work. They do not say anything to the public.

- Member of the public

conducted by the Civic Union demonstrates that in the cities of Bishkek and Osh, 39.9% of respondents think that, apart from responding to incidences of crime, the police do not implement any measures aimed at crime prevention or improving the security situation. 20.3% of respondents said that they were not aware of such police work, or could not answer this question⁴.

A national population survey, conducted by the International Republican Institute in February 2013, found that only 26% of respondents positively evaluated police work, while 59% gave a negative assessment:⁵

«The lack of transparency in police actions leads to unsatisfactory security provision and a decrease in public trust towards the police⁶. Reform of LEAs should result in increased transparency of police work and greater accountability to the public»⁷.

Against the background of the current LEA reform process in Kyrgyzstan, which has a primary objective of strengthening cooperation between the police and public on the basis of community policing principles, the question of improving neighbourhood police officers' reporting to the public is of particular interest.

**Focus-group discussion
with the population.
Tuip village, Issuk-Kul
oblast**



⁴ Population survey on perceptions of security and performance of law enforcement agencies in the cities of Bishkek and Osh. SIAR research and consulting for the Civic Union "For reforms and result", September 2013.

⁵ National population survey of the Kyrgyzstan citizens. SIAR Research and Consulting for International Republican Institute, February 2013.

⁶ The Kyrgyz Republic Government order 220 "On Reform of the LEA of the Kyrgyz Republic", chapter 2. April 30, 2013

⁷ The Kyrgyz Republic Government order 220 "On Reform of the LEA of the Kyrgyz Republic", chapter 7. April 30, 2013

Analysis of the situation

CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS:

Frequency of reporting meetings and notification and participation of the public:

Results suggest that either such meetings are not held regularly, or the public is not aware of them, and do not therefore have the opportunity to participate.

In most cases, the media are not involved in informing the public about neighbourhood police officers' reporting meetings.

The practice of combining neighbourhood police officers' reporting meetings with reporting meetings run by *ayil* (district) heads, means in a number of cases police reporting meetings take place only once a year.

In some instances, neighbourhood police officers' reporting meetings are conducted at the level of the village administration, which limits participation of the public at large and only involves regular attendees, so called "people on duty" or "usual suspects".

According to the Instruction, neighbourhood police officers must hold quarterly reporting meetings with people living in their service area⁸; however, respondents gave mixed answers about the frequency with which meetings were held, suggesting that either such meetings are not held regularly, or the public is not aware of them. Most respondents from local self-government mentioned that reporting meetings took place once a year. A majority of respondents from NGOs did not know about reporting meetings and said that they were not conducted at all; only a few NGO respondents answered that reporting meetings were held quarterly. Meanwhile, the majority of representatives from LEAs said that NPOs held reporting meetings on a quarterly basis, although some LEA respondents also mentioned that such meetings took place every six months. Most respondents from the public answered that neighbourhood police officers did not conduct any reporting meetings at all, or that they did not know that such meetings existed, and only a small number of respondents were aware of police accountability, and declared that reporting meetings occurred once a year. Respondents representing LCPCs answered that neighbourhood police officers held quarterly reporting meetings, although some noted they were organised once a year. The vast majority of neighbourhood police officers interviewed said that such meetings took place quarterly; and a few noted that the meetings were conducted monthly.

⁸ Instruction on organization of work of neighbourhood police officers (Annex 1 to Order 169 of MIA of Kyrgyzstan, issued on March 03, 2010, part 5, p.82)

If there is cooperation, there is confidence in the police. If there is trust, people will inform police about their problems, and those problems will be solved. If the problems are solved on the spot, it will be good for the public itself.

- LCPC member

Annex 16 of the Instruction states that the schedule for conducting reporting meetings should be developed in agreement with the district administration, taking into account the reporting meetings of the heads of *ayil okrug* (village councils). According to Article 48 of the law “on local self-governance and local administration”, issued on 29 May 2008, the head of the *ayil okrug* (*ayil okmotu*), must hold reporting meetings with the public about the results of their work at least once a year at the *kurultai*⁹ of the local community. Accordingly, linking neighbourhood police officers’ reporting meetings to meetings of the heads of *ayil okrug* means that neighbourhood police officers’ reporting meetings may take place just once a year (which was reflected in some responses from the public). However, this law was repealed with the adoption of law “On local self-governance”, passed on July, 15, 2011, which does not have any regulations obliging heads of *ayil okrugs* to hold reporting meetings before the public.

Results suggest that people are not adequately informed about reporting meetings. The public should be given advance notification of upcoming reporting meetings through local media, radio, cable TV, local enterprises, institutions, and public organisations situated in the administrative area¹⁰. Research suggests that in most cases, the public is informed via the local administration or LCPCs, probably due to the fact that neighbourhood police officers’ reporting meetings take place together with a village meeting (*kurultai*), and not as a separate event. Study participants could not give examples of getting information about the forthcoming meeting from media.

According to respondents from the LCPCs, another reason for low public awareness about reporting days could be that meetings are held at the level of village (rural) councils (some of which cover a population of more than 35,000 inhabitants), rendering it difficult to inform people across the area and organize a meeting with many participants. Evidently, it is not sufficient to have one reporting meeting to cover such a large population.

The Instruction states that neighbourhood police officers should conduct reporting meetings to the population at the administrative district level¹¹. However, templates annexed to the Instruction which detail how neighbourhood police officers should invite people to, and advertise, reporting meetings¹², that these reporting meetings should be conducted at the level of *ayil okrugs/ayil okmotu*. Since each *ayil okrug* includes several administrative districts, covered by various neighbourhood police officers, these annexes cause some ambiguity about the correct procedure for organising reporting meetings with the population of their administrative areas: specifically, should they be conducted at the level of the *ayil okrug/ayil okmotu*, or at the administrative district level? Moreover, the templates concern only rural areas, meaning there are no examples given for urban areas.

⁹ Kurultai – Kyrgyz word, meaning annual meeting of the inhabitants of a particular area.

¹⁰ Instruction on organization of work of neighbourhood police officers (Annex 1 to Order 169 of MIA of Kyrgyzstan, issued on March 03, 2010, part 5, p.85).

¹¹ Instruction on organization of work of neighbourhood police officers (Annex 1 to Order 169 of MIA of Kyrgyzstan, issued on March 03, 2010, part 5, p.82).

¹² Instruction on organization of work of neighbourhood police officers (Annex 1 to Order 169 of MIA of Kyrgyzstan, issued on March 03, 2010), Annexes 15 and 16 to the Instruction.

CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS:**Content of reporting meetings and feedback:**

Neighbourhood police officers' reports to public mainly contain statistical data on the number of crimes solved, claims and appeals received from the public, etc

The public sometimes raise issues, which are not directly related to police work, but nevertheless implicitly affect public security (e.g., poor street illumination, which may create favourable conditions for commitment of crimes).

A significant number of neighbourhood police officers perceive reporting meetings as a means of unilaterally informing people, and do not use the reporting days as a platform for improving dialogue with the community on issues of public security.

There are no mechanisms for processing information received from the community during reporting meetings, nor for informing people about measures taken to address issues raised at previous reporting meetings, which prevents these meetings providing a form of genuine accountability.

According to the Instruction, report's should include information about neighbourhood police officers' work on crime prevention and other violations, his/her personal participation in maintaining public order and public security in his/her administrative areas, as well as information on the overall activities of the local LEA¹³.

Respondents mentioned that, during reporting meetings, neighbourhood police officers inform the public about the number of appeals from the public, crimes/ violations committed, crime rate, and work carried out by the neighbourhood police officers. Research also suggested that reporting meetings may provide a format to discuss other issues beyond these reports from neighbourhood police officers. According to research respondents, people express grievances about problems related to land use, provision of drinking and irrigation water, as well as other social and domestic problems (concerning power and gas supply, heating, garbage collection, low pensions, etc). Problems related to road safety and security (for example high-speed traffic on central streets), poor street-lighting and illegal trade were also raised at some meetings. In addition, participants of these meetings raised questions about previous appeals to the police, as well as complaints about police non-acceptance of some appeals.

The Instruction ensures that each reporting meeting is formally documented in official minutes¹⁴. It also obliges neighbourhood police officers to register all appeals and reports from citizens in a register of public claims and citizens' reception¹⁵. This requirement clearly also covers any appeals to neighbourhood police officers made

¹³ Instruction on organization of work of neighbourhood police officers (Annex 1 to Order 169 of MIA of Kyrgyzstan, issued on March 03, 2010, part 5, p.86).

¹⁴ Instruction on organization of work of neighbourhood police officers (Annex 1 to Order 169 of MIA of Kyrgyzstan, issued on March 03, 2010, part 5, p.87).

¹⁵ Rules on issuing, keeping, use and delivery of the register of public claims and reception of citizens by the neighbourhood police officers (Annex 4 to Order 169 of MIA of Kyrgyzstan, from March 03, 2010, p.1).

Only the police protect us, they are our only hope.

- Member of the public

during reporting meetings. Study respondents mentioned the minutes as the main document recording the meeting. These are completed by the secretary of the territorial council, because neighbourhood police officers' reporting meetings are not usually held as a separate event, but as an integral part of regular citizens meetings, organised by local authorities. The majority of respondents from LEAs stated that there were no claims from the citizens at the reporting meetings; and some LEA respondents said that claims received were not usually processed.

In this study particular attention was given to feedback from LEA officers to the public as a result of the reporting meetings, and taking measures to address aims and suggestions, received during these meetings.

According to the Instruction, neighbourhood police officers must identify problems facing the population and take measures to tackle them¹⁶. In spite of this requirement, only a few LEA respondents stated that claims and suggestions received during reporting meetings were taken into account and measures taken to address them and could not give examples of exact mechanisms for either handling this information or feedback. Some neighbourhood police officers answered that generally they tried to take measures to address issues raised. Some respondents further mentioned that questions raised were considered at the ROVD (district police department) level; however they stated that this practice was not widespread. Representatives of one LCPC answered that after the meetings, NPOs, together with LCPC members, discussed questions raised by the public and jointly made decisions.

Organisation and monitoring of reporting meetings

CONCLUSIONS AND FINDINGS:

Heads of territorial units of LEAs are not required to monitor reporting meetings, and they are not considered during evaluation of neighbourhood police officers' work.

Neighbourhood police officers's meetings are currently the only means for LEAs to report to the public, meaning that senior management need not be involved in accountability and reporting mechanisms).

The MIA and heads of territorial units of LEAs should play a major role in increasing the quality of neighbourhood police officers' reporting meetings. This should include building police officers' capacity and skills to organise and conduct successful meetings and by ensuring proper monitoring of the meetings, as well as follow up to solve questions raised during the meetings. They should also work on development and adoption of necessary changes in the actual legislation, in particular, on the monitoring and evaluation of the work of the neighbourhood police officers.

Meanwhile, analysis of the Instruction, conducted during this study, showed that at present reporting meetings of neighbourhood police officers were not included as a criterion for senior officers to check during the monitoring of neighbourhood police

¹⁶ Instruction on organization of work of neighbourhood police officers (Annex 1 to Order 169 of MIA of Kyrgyzstan, issued on March 03, 2010, part 3, p.53.22)

People do not want to engage with police officers; they are not well informed about our activities.

- Neighbourhood police officer

officers' activities¹⁷, or as a criterion to evaluate their work¹⁸.

It is evident that the most efficient means for such monitoring is the participation of the heads of LEA units in neighbourhood police officers' reporting meetings, which is stipulated in the current Instruction¹⁹. Thus, study respondents from the public underlined the importance of more active participation of LEA heads in such meetings, noting that reporting meetings were more effective when attended by heads of LEA units.

Despite current practice, analysis of current legislation shows that neighbourhood police officers' reporting meetings should not be the only means of police reporting to the public. Thus, the Law "On crime prevention in Kyrgyz Republic" obliges LEA as a whole to conduct regular reporting meetings to the public on the work achieved in the fight with crime and law violations²⁰. This statute provides a legal basis for various LEA departments and services, as well as their chiefs at all levels, to participate in reporting meetings along with neighbourhood police officers.

NPOs are the closest to the population category of police officers in Kyrgyzstan



¹⁷ Instruction on organization of work of neighbourhood police officers (Annex 1 to Order 169 of MIA of Kyrgyzstan, issued on March 03, 2010, part 10, p.170)

¹⁸ Instruction on organization of work of neighbourhood police officers (Annex 1 to Order 169 of MIA of Kyrgyzstan, issued on March 03, 2010, part 11, p.172)

¹⁹ Instruction on organization of work of neighbourhood police officers (Annex 1 to Order 169 of MIA of Kyrgyzstan, issued on March 03, 2010, part 5, p.84)

²⁰ Law 82 of the KR, article 18 "On crime prevention in Kyrgyz Republic", June 25, 2005.

Recommendations

1. At the Ministry of Interior level

- 1.1. Consider modifying the Instruction to clarify articles concerning neighbourhood police officers reporting meetings, in particular the administrative level at which they are conducted and their relationship to similar activities conducted by local self-government in urban and rural areas (*p.82 of Instructions, Annexes 15 and 16 to the Instructions*).
- 1.2. Make heads of territorial LEA personally responsible for compliance with the requirements of the Instruction, in particular, concerning implementation of neighbourhood police officers' reporting meetings and handling of public claims and appeals expressed to officers.
 - 1.2.1. Consider modifying the Instruction to increase the authority of the departments responsible for neighbourhood police officers' work to ensure that reporting meetings are properly conducted (p. 139, p. 145 of the Instruction).
- 1.3. When monitoring the work of LEAs, include comprehensive checks on implementation of neighbourhood police officers' reporting meetings to the public.
- 1.4. Incorporate components on public speaking, report writing, agenda development and organization of reporting meetings into training programmes for LEA staff.
- 1.5. As part of the LEA reform process, when developing legislation regarding criteria for evaluating the work of neighbourhood police officers, develop norms for monitoring the results and efficacy of reporting meetings.
 - 1.5.1. Consider modifying the Instruction to include effective conduction of reporting meetings (chapter 10 and 11 of the Instruction) as a benchmark for monitoring and evaluating neighbourhood police officers' work. Develop criteria to measure efficacy of these reporting meetings.
- 1.6. Include a criterion on regular, high-quality implementation of reporting meetings in the selection criteria for the annual competition for best neighbourhood police officers (LEA staff member).

2. At the level of Bishkek-city GUVd, UVDs of the regions and Osh-city

- 2.1. Ensure that neighbourhood police officers' reporting meetings are conducted in line with the frequency required by the Instruction. It is important to underline that combining these meetings with annual meetings conducted by local self-governance authorities should not relieve NPOs from the responsibility to conduct separate reporting meetings on a quarterly basis²¹.
- 2.2. Use reporting meetings as a forum for dialogue with citizens to discuss problems of public security relevant to the population, and take measures to find solutions to tackle them, as well as mobilise the public to fight crime.
- 2.3. Ensure periodic participation of the heads of city and region LEAs at neighbourhood police officers' reporting meetings.

3. At the level of district/city LEAs

- 3.1. Notify the public about the place and date of neighbourhood police officers' reporting meetings regularly and in a timely manner via publication of the information in local newspapers, internet sites, and by informing village heads.
- 3.2. Develop a common schedule for reporting days in the city, territory of administrative areas, and present it at the information stands of local self-government, LCPCs, and on internet sites.
- 3.3. Develop action plans (when necessary, jointly with LCPCs and other relevant agencies) to address claims and suggestions raised by the public during reporting meetings.
- 3.4. Inform the public on progress and results in addressing questions raised during reporting meetings, and include such updates in the agenda of subsequent meetings.
- 3.5. While conducting systematic monitoring of neighbourhood police officers, pay particular attention to agendas and minutes of reporting meetings, advertisements/notifications in media and internet resources, as well as action plans developed as a result of the reporting meetings to address suggestions and recommendations on improving public security.

²¹ The practise of holding neighbourhood police officers meetings with general meetings (*selskie skhody*) on an occasional basis is good, as it encourages info-sharing, but at the same time, there is a need to ensure that reporting meetings nevertheless occur on a quarterly basis as stipulated in the instruction

4. At the level of the Council of LEA reform

Take into account the recommendations of this policy brief during implementation of the LEA reform action plan (by the MIA HQ (central apparatus):

- 4.1. While developing Regulation on neighbourhood police officers²².
- 4.2. While planning basic training on ensuring cooperation between neighbourhood police officers and the public²³.
- 4.3. While developing formats and procedures for constant cooperation between LEA and civil society²⁴.
- 4.4. While developing public feedback mechanisms to register and monitor public opinion on the work of LEAs²⁵.

Reporting meetings can be one of the effective instruments for police to receive credible information from the communities



²² Action plan on LEA reform implementation, approved by Order 220 of the Kyrgyz Republic Government, issued on April 30, 2013, p.1.1.7

²¹ Action plan on LEA reform implementation, approved by Order 220 of the Kyrgyz Republic Government, issued on April 30, 2013, p. 1.4.2.

²⁴ Action plan on LEA reform implementation, approved by Order 220 of the Kyrgyz Republic Government, issued on April 30, 2013, p.1.1.3.

²⁵ Action plan on LEA reform implementation, approved by Order 220 of the Kyrgyz Republic Government, issued on April 30, 2013, p. 3.4.2.

Annexes

Methods and Sampling

This study used the following methodologies:

1. Desk study: Analysis of the current legislation, statistical data, media publications.
2. In-depth interviews
3. Focus groups

The study covered the cities of Bishkek and Osh, and seven areas/regions:

	Region/City	Village/Town (Address zones)
1.	Batken region	Ortoboz village, Batken region
2.	Jalalabad	Jalalabad city, Sputnik district
3.	Osh region	Aravan village, Aravan region
4.	Osh city	TOS №7
5.	Issyk-Kul region	Balykchy village, Issyk-Kul region
6.	Naryn region	At-Bashi village, At-Bashi district
7.	Talas region	Talas city, Talas district
8.	Chuiy region	Orok village, Sokuluk region
9.	Bishkek city	Archa-Beshik (newly-built quarter)

Target areas were specifically chosen to include localities situated both near and far from urban centres, and representing mixed and mono-ethnic communities, as well as densely and sparsely populated areas.

In each of the target areas, one focus group with the public and one focus group with members of the LCPC were conducted, as well as one in-depth interview with each the below-listed respondents:

Local level	Middle level (regional, district)	National level
• LCPC	• GUVD/ROVD	• Public Monitoring Council at MIA
• Local self-government	• Coordination Meetings of LEA	• NGO
• Neighbourhood police officers	• Rayon Advisory Committees	• MIA
• NGO	• Oblast Advisory Committees	
	• NGO	



The Civic Union for Reforms and Result – is a voluntary, open and nationwide network of organisations and citizens of Kyrgyzstan, which aims at promoting positive changes in the country.

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Saferworld – Saferworld works to prevent and reduce violent conflicts and promote co-operative approaches to security. We work with governments, international organisations and civil society to encourage and support effective policies and practices through advocacy, research and policy development and through supporting the actions of others.

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