

---

## **KYRGYZSTAN: ARRESTED MP FOUND TO HAVE KAZAKH CITIZENSHIP**

-

23.02.2018

---

Eurasianet, Feb 22, 2018

The scandal involving a Kyrgyz lawmaker arrested in Kazakhstan last week on suspicion of involvement in a smuggling racket has taken a surprising turn with the revelation that he holds Kazakh citizenship.

This development, which Kyrgyzstans Foreign Ministry announced on February 22 after receiving confirmation from officials in Astana, means Damirbek Asylbek uulu is all but certain to lose his seat in parliament. People with multiple citizenship in Kyrgyzstan are barred from holding elected office, serving in law enforcement, working in the civil service or as judges.

As irony would have it, Asylbek uulu is a member of the patriotically named Kyrgyzstan party, a key pillar of the ruling coalition in parliament.

A representative for Kazakhstans prosecutorial service, Oksana Loskutova, said that 35 people in total have been detained following the February 16 sweep over their involvement in attempts to smuggle goods from China into Kazakhstan and Russia via Kyrgyzstan.

The smuggled goods were brought in \* through the use of shadow customs administrations and fake documents, Loskutova said.

A court has ordered Asylbek uulu to remain in custody for two months pending further investigation.

Kanatbek Aziz, a lawyer, has said that there are no mechanisms in place to verify if Kyrgyz legislators are in possession of additional citizenships. In 2015, Aziz chaired an elections commission working group dedicated to vetting aspiring parliamentary election candidates.

Neither the Central Election Commission nor the Civilian Affairs Commission has the resources to verify this information, because each country has personal data protection laws, he said.

Election officials in Kyrgyzstan are expected to proceed to stripping Asylbek uulu of his parliamentary mandate as soon as they receive documentary evidence from Kazakhstan confirming his citizenship there.

Asylbek uulu, 37, has been an MP with the Kyrgyzstan party since 2015. He actively supported incumbent President Sooronbai Jeenbekovs run for the presidency in the October election. According to his profile on the Kyrgyz parliament website, he is the deputy president of the Asian Associated Wrestling Committee at the Olympic Council of Asia.

Controversy has been hounding Asylbek uulu for some weeks now.

A photo unearthed by the RFE/RLs Kyrgyz service earlier this month shows Asylbek uulu pictured with Salim Abduvaliyev, a well-known patron of sport in Uzbekistan and allegedly one of that countrys most powerful crime kingpins. The MP insisted, however, that the photo was taken four years ago at a function devotedly exclusively to sporting issues.

---

Kaynak/Source: