

Pro-government and Pro-opposition Newspaper Coverage of the Zhanaozen Conflict in
Kazakhstan

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This thesis titled
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ABSTRACT

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Pro-government and Pro-opposition Newspaper Coverage of the Zhanaozen Conflict in Kazakhstan

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This study examines the coverage of a conflict on December 16, 2011, between protesters and government security services in the oil town of Zhanaozen in western Kazakhstan during the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the country's independence. The study looks into the coverage of the Zhanaozen conflict by four newspapers published in Kazakhstan – the pro-government *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Karavan* and the pro-opposition *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad*. A textual analysis of articles was used to establish whether the coverage of the same events by these newspapers differed and, if so, how. Results showed that the pro-government newspapers had blamed the conflict on the rioters and opposition, while shielding government security forces. They also relied solely on the official accounts of the conflict. The findings showed that the pro-opposition newspapers covered the conflict from both sides and helped the sides engage in communication. The findings also established that the pro-government newspapers made significantly less contribution to the resolution of the conflict than the pro-opposition newspapers. By comparing the coverage of the Zhanaozen conflict in pro-government and pro-opposition newspapers, the study offered a better understanding of the conflict, including its causes, resolution of the conflict, and the role of media in executing the basic principles of peace journalism in the context of social conflict.

DEDICATION

To my dear parents:

my dear mother Khalipa Kabizhanova and my dear father Tulegen Bissenov

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In December 2011, the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of Independence Day turned into riots in the oil town of Zhanaozen in western Kazakhstan. Disgruntled oil workers staged the riots, which were suppressed by riot police in what was later characterized as a massacre (Salmon, 2012). The so-called police massacre opened a dark chapter for the workers' movement in the country, leaving 15 dead and 64 injured (Salmon, 2012; Solovyov, 2012). Then in May 2011, a long-running industrial action at state-owned oil enterprises in Mangystau Province, including Zhanaozen-based Ozenmunaygaz, culminated in the dismissal of almost 2,000 workers in the summer and about \$400m in revenue losses for the oil sector (Lillis, 2011a). The Zhanaozen conflict is only part of the ongoing instability in Kazakhstan, the source of which is the struggle between power groups in Kazakhstan. According to Evstafiyev (2012), the root cause of political instability is the expectation of the imminent retirement of the country's President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has ruled Kazakhstan since 1989, before the country gained independence in 1991.

The central purpose of this study is to examine how the conflict was covered in pro-government and pro-opposition newspapers. The newspapers selected are the country's main opposition-leaning newspapers *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad*, as well as the government-leaning newspapers *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Karavan*. The study has two goals: first, to understand whether the pro-government newspapers placed the blame on strikers and rioters for the deaths and injuries, and absolved police as security forces reacting to the events; second, to understand whether the pro-opposition newspapers found fault with the government and employers for failing to solve the social

problems of oil workers and laid fault on the security forces for the heavy-handed overreaction.

According to the freedom of the press global rankings, Kazakhstan is ranked 175th in the world alongside Ethiopia and The Gambia and just behind Zimbabwe and regional neighbor Tajikistan. Kazakhstan's position is in line with its regional neighbors' ratings, with Russia in 172nd place, Uzbekistan 195th, Turkmenistan 196th, but unfairly when compared with Kyrgyzstan in 22nd place (Karlekar & Dunham, 2012). Also, Reporters without Borders (2012) ranks Kazakhstan 154th in the world's press freedom index alongside Libya (Russia in 142nd place, Tajikistan 122nd, Kyrgyzstan 108th, Uzbekistan 157th, and Turkmenistan 177th). In Freedom House's freedom of the Internet index in 2011, it is ranked as "partly free" with a score of 58 out of 100, with higher scores meaning less free (Kyrgyzstan 35, Russia with 52, and Uzbekistan 77, with no data on Tajikistan and Turkmenistan) (Kelly, Cook, & Truong, 2012). Kazakhstan's government exercises strict controls over both traditional print and broadcasting outlets and new media outlets over the Internet (Lillis, 2011b). According to Lillis (2011b), the stringent measures curtailing press freedom range from convictions of journalists, restrictions on the publication of pro-opposition newspapers, failure to issue licenses to undesired broadcasters or revocation of licenses as retaliation, blocking the Internet, and state-sponsored hacking of websites that have information critical of government policies. IREX (2012) states that libel and defamation have not been decriminalized and regulations regarding media registration and re-registration have not been liberalized, with government officials pressuring the media, demanding one-sided, biased coverage of

events. In such a hostile media environment, this study comes at a critical moment to assess how much bias and pandering, if any, was in the press coverage of the Zhanaozen conflict.



Figure 1. Map of Kazakhstan and Mangystau Province (Human Rights Watch, 2012)

1.1: Scope and Context

The coverage of the Zhanaozen conflict has not yet been sufficiently studied because the events took place not so long ago and to some extent they continue to unfold. This study is one of the known first attempts to examine the coverage of the conflict in the newspapers published in Kazakhstan and to understand the scope of the conflict. In the immediate aftermath of the Zhanaozen massacre, authorities imposed restrictions on the movement of journalists who were suspected of being sympathetic to the rioters (Committee to Protect Journalists, 2011). Authorities also are reported to have harassed sources who were quoted by the “critical” journalists and observers (Open Dialogue Foundation, 2012). What is unknown is whether the pro-government publications were curtailed by the same authorities who clamped down on the independent press.

Peace journalism maintains that reporting of conflicts and violence should actually be approached as a propagation of peace. This theoretical argument was first advanced by the Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung (1965). Peace journalism is essentially a theoretical framework that argues for journalists covering a conflict to abide by certain rules which should help in the peace process and to pursue an agenda of de-escalating the conflict they are covering (Galtung, 1965).

There is, however, an inherent dichotomy between the coverage of conflicts from the points-of-view of a peace journalist and that of a regular war correspondent. Peace journalism is an active effort at being neutral in terms of not reporting facts which might disturb or antagonize the warring parties and create more discord by spreading messages of hate and violence (Hanitzsch, 2004). It is based on the idea that journalists work

actively to help de-escalate the conflict, which might not always be possible if the conflicting parties do not want to de-escalate. Moreover, by not reporting facts which might increase the spread of stories containing violence and hate, journalists are essentially barred from their basic duty of reporting an important geo-political event (Loyn, 2007). The concepts outlined by Hanitzsch (2004) on peace journalism will be used for this study to underline the scope of the conflict, the plight of the victims, and the indirect outcomes of violence such as the impact of the textual undertones of the coverage on audiences.

In addition to peace journalism, this study employs a social conflict theoretical argument. Many conflicts are caused by the possession of or exclusion from power, while conflict groups emerge in the process of power struggles (Dahrendorf, 2008). Oberschall (1978) provided a definition of “social” conflict, whereby parties involved are groups of individuals, organizations, communities, and crowds as opposed to single individuals. Social conflict is the “interaction in which the means chosen by the parties in pursuit of their goals are likely to inflict damage, harm or injury, but not necessarily in every case” (Oberschall, 1978, p. 291). For Oberschall (1978), social conflict ranges from class, racial, religious, communal conflicts to riots, rebellions, to revolutions. It also ranges from strikes to civil disobedience, including demonstrations, protests and other forms of resistance. The two theoretical perspectives of peace journalism and social conflict are employed to examine and explain Kazakhstan’s press coverage of the conflict.

CHAPTER 2: THEORY

2.1: Peace Journalism

The longheld assumption that journalists “just report the facts,” no longer holds true in the present media environment. In the present media-savvy world, there are ways in which some people can create or spin facts they disseminate to journalists or by appearing on various media. Also, some governments often think of their actions and statements as part of a media strategy, which cannot be separated from the business of running the country (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2001). As a result, governments are in a position of influencing the way journalists report the facts through journalists or their sources and the audiences become “counterparts in a feedback loop of cause and effect” (McGoldrick & Lynch, 2001, p. 6). McGoldrick & Lynch (2001) argued that the claim that journalists “just report the facts” gives an incomplete and often inaccurate account of their role. Peace journalism is a different approach to the profession, with journalists covering the rift between opposing parties by avoiding the repetition of facts that demonize the parties involved.

Peace journalism was first developed by the Norwegian sociologist Johan Galtung, with a simple idea that journalism should actually be used as an instrument of peace (Galtung, 1965). He suggested that in the coverage of a conflict, events become a news item if they concern elite nations, elite people, personified; or, if the event has negative consequences (Galtung, 1965).

Meanwhile, Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) theorized that peace journalism is when editors and reporters choose what stories to report and how to report them in order to

enable the broader society to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict, the ethics of journalistic intervention, and building an awareness of non-violence and creativity into the practical job of everyday editing and reporting.

Peace journalism avoids an emphasis on what divides parties involved in the conflict but seeks areas of common ground, and treats the suffering, fears, and grievances of all sides equally. It also avoids demonizing language but covers crimes of all parties involved equally.

Galtung (1965) singled out 12 factors of the news coverage of the Congo, Cuba, and Cyprus conflicts to identify whether the coverage helped with the resolution of conflicts by emphasizing conciliation, not conflict. Lee & Maslog (2005) later applied Galtung's peace journalism framework to study the coverage of four conflicts in five different countries – the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, the Tamil Tigers movement in Sri Lanka, the civil wars in the Indonesian provinces of Aceh and Maluku, and the Mindanao conflict in the Philippines in 10 English-language newspapers in India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. That study found that the coverage of the Kashmir conflict in the Indian and Pakistani newspapers and the Aceh and Maluku conflicts in the Indonesian newspapers frequently used a “war journalism” frame. At the same time, the Sri Lankan newspapers' coverage of the Tamil Tigers frequently used a “peace journalism” frame. The peace/war journalism framing in the coverage of the Mindanao conflict by the Philippines newspapers was less evident.

Although the media neither start conflicts, nor do they end them, they are capable of having a significant influence on processes of social communication and societal

change (Becker, 2004). Rubin (1989) suggested that scholars had shifted their attention to conflict settlement from resolution: “In contrast, conflict *settlement* denotes outcomes in which the overt conflict has been brought to an end, even though the underlying bases may or may not have been addressed” (Rubin, 1989, p. 196). He compared it to a distinction between the three consequences of social influence, which also were suggested by Kelman (1958): compliance, identification, and internalization. According to Rubin (1989), conflict settlement implies the consequence of compliance (a change in behavior), while conflict resolution implied internalization (a change in underlying attitudes, as well as behavior) and identification (a bridge between behavior change and attitude change). He explained this shift in focus from attitude change to behavioral change by a difficulty to change attitudes in order to eliminate conflict. This shift, in turn, increased the importance of understanding negotiation as a method of settling conflicts rather than resolving them so that negotiation could aim at not changing attitudes but behavior in order to achieve settlement (Rubin, 1989).

Meanwhile, Hanitzsch (2004, p. 484) identified peace journalism as a “special mode of socially responsible journalism” and as a “programme or frame of journalistic news coverage which contributes to the process of making and keeping peace respectively to the peaceful settlement of conflicts.” Kempf (2007) suggested that as a form of public communication, journalism differs from public relations because journalism is expected to adhere to the principles of truthfulness, objectivity, neutrality, and detachment, while the only thing that matters to public relations is success in achieving aims set by a client (Hanitzsch, 2007).

Loyn (2007) argued that “peace journalism is at best meaningless, and at worst a uniquely unhelpful and misleading prescription for journalism in general, and broadcast journalism in particular” (p. 2). He argued that peace journalism’s prescription that reporters artificially seek out peacemakers was the “more dangerous part” of the theoretical framework because “creating peacemaking politicians is not the business of a reporter” (p. 2).

The main theoretical proposition of peace journalism is that it contributes to “the process of making and keeping peace respectively to the peaceful settlement of conflicts” (Hanitzsch, 2004, p. 484). Peace journalism looks into the background of a conflict to make it understandable to the audience, seeks causes and solutions to conflicts on every side, and covers views of all sides involved in a conflict.

Galtung (1965) identified the following criteria for peace journalism:

- 1) Focusing on other, indirect aspects of the conflict such as the victims and their plight, the refugees, and the property damage.
- 2) Studying the background of the conflict and the actual root causes while not blaming any particular belligerent for the initiation of the conflict.
- 3) Refrain from reporting which deals merely with facts and details of the destruction, casualty and damage entailed in the war; details which lead one side of the conflict to believe that they are to blame for the escalation or the damage done during the conflict.
- 4) Helping in furthering the peace process by discussing the aspects related to peace and settlement rather than the details of the conflict.

Hanitzsch (2004) stated that peace journalism seeks to act as an indirect mediator and tries to advocate for a de-escalation of the conflict through a fair coverage of all sides and their suffering. It exposes both sides and their fallacies and cover-ups, and views the conflict itself, rather than any belligerent, as the problem. Lee & Maslog (2005) define peace journalism as avoidance of demonizing language, a non-partisan approach, and a multi-party orientation which gives equal weight to all sides participating to the conflict.

Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) formulated the following criteria for journalism to qualify as peace journalism: 1) to avoid covering a conflict as if only two parties with the same goals are involved in it—instead, these two groups should be disaggregated into many smaller groups with many goals; 2) to avoid distinguishing between “self” and “other”—instead try to find “other” in “self”; 3) to avoid regarding a conflict as if it concerns only the place where and the time when the violence is taking place—instead, find links and consequences for people in other places and in future; 4) to avoid assessing the merits of a conflict in terms of its visible effects only—instead, report on the invisible effects such as long-term consequences of psychological damage; 5) to avoid letting parties define themselves by quoting their leaders’ reiteration of known demands—instead, establish goals, needs and interests independently; 6) to avoid focusing on divisions and differences between the conflicting sides—instead, establish common grounds; 7) to avoid only reporting violence and describing “the horror”—instead, explain how conditions for violence are being created; 8) to avoid blaming those who started the conflict—instead, look how common problems are creating consequences the

parties never intended; 9) to avoid focusing on suffering, fears and grievances of one side—instead, treat both sides equally.

There are several other criteria for journalism to qualify as peace journalism according to Lynch & McGoldrick (2005). They include 10) to avoid “victimizing” language which tells what has been done or could be done for one side by the other; instead reporting on what has been done or could be done by the people; 11) to avoid emotive words describing what happened to people; instead always being precise about what we know; 12) to avoid demonizing adjectives to describe one side’s view of the other; instead reporting on the wrongdoing in great detail to help audiences decide the severity of the wrongdoing for themselves; 13) to avoid labeling the sides; instead calling them what they call themselves; 14) to avoid focusing exclusively on the human rights abuses and crimes of one side; instead reporting on crimes of all wrongdoers; 15) to avoid making an opinion or claim seem like a fact; instead telling readers who said what; 16) to avoid greeting the signing of documents by leaders which bring about military victory or a ceasefire as a condition for peace; 17) to avoid waiting for “our” leaders to suggest solutions; instead exploring peace initiatives from everywhere.

2.2: Social Conflict

Theorizing social conflict is useful to understand how the media coverage of a conflict helps its resolution via interaction between the parties involved. The theory of social conflict was first suggested by Marx and further developed by Durkheim and Weber (Giddens, 1971). Dahrendorf (1958) classified wars and conflicts among political

parties as two different types of struggle. “With regard to a given society, A, one could say there are *exogenous* conflicts brought upon or into A from the outside, and there are *endogenous* conflicts generated within A.” (p. 171). Among these conflicts, Dahrendorf (1958) further distinguished conflicts by their structural significance, with one group of conflicts arising only in specific societies because of special historical conditions (e.g. black people versus white people in the United States or Protestants versus Catholics in the Netherlands) and the other being expressions of general structural features of societies or of societies at the same stage of development (Republicans versus Democrats in the United States, or trade unions versus employers). Dahrendorf (1958) suggested that “the sociological theory of conflict would do well to confine itself for the time being to an explanation of the frictions between the rulers and the ruled in given social structural organizations” (p. 173).

Purposeful interaction among two or more parties in a competitive setting result in conflict (Oberschall, 1978), while competition means a clash of goals of interdependent parties such that “the probability of goal attainment for one decreases as the probability for the other increases. However, conflict may occur even when there is no perceived or actual incompatibility of goals” (Deutsch, 1977, p. 10). But for Boulding (1963), conflict “is a situation of competition in which the parties are *aware* of the incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party *wishes* to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other” (p. 5).

Social conflict theories aim to cover the following topics:

1) the structural sources of social conflict, namely structures of domination that make struggles over values or scarce resources likely. A social conflict theory here relies heavily on stratification, social change, and macrosociological theories that identify important explanatory variables in conflict theories.

2) conflict-group formation and mobilization for collective action of opposition groups and their opponents. This covers theories of collective action, recruitment, participation, commitment, and internal structure.

3) the dynamics of conflict consisting of important variables of social conflict theories such as processes of interaction between conflict groups; the forms of conflict; its magnitude, and duration; escalation and de-escalation; conflict regulation and resolution; the consequences of conflict outcomes for the contending groups and the larger societies.

Edmund (2010) theorized that the correct diagnosis of source and dynamics of conflict was essential to conflict resolution, as it improves the effectiveness of intervention. He categorized conflicts into three groups: event-based conflict, communicative-affective conflict, and identity-based conflict. Event-based conflicts, according to Edmund (2010), are short-term conflicts without deep roots, caused by a single event or incompatible goals of involved parties. These conflicts are resolved through fair negotiations between the parties without third-party intervention. Communicative-affective conflicts are caused by a long shared history of involved parties, and can be resolved without third-party intervention if the parties involved put group interests before individual ones and invest in communication. Otherwise, without

correct intervention, these conflicts may turn into identity-based conflicts, the resolution of which almost always requires third-party intervention. This is because parties involved in identity-based conflicts cannot be objective (Edmund, 2010).

Wani (2011) also attached great significance to communication between parties in resolving conflicts; parties involved should be interested in informing and being informed by the opponents. Poor communication may cause mistrust and suspicion and, as a result, may lead to conflict. This is why communication should be precise and clear.

According to Joseph (2003), capitalism generates social division and inequality (between capitalists and workers), which in turn leads to a conflict between the ruling and working classes. Boulding (1963) defined industrial conflict as the conflict between employer and employee and suggested it arose as soon as the employer-employee relationship emerged in the course of economic development. Dahrendorf (1958) suggested that the interest groups involved in industrial conflict are employers' associations and trade unions and that the conflict between them varies in its intensity depending on the conditions of conflict. According to his assumption, the form of ownership (private or state-owned) has no impact on either the existence or intensity of industrial conflict which is present even if a system of regulation is in place.

One of the main moral assumptions of social conflict theory is that conflict leads not only to ever-changing relations in society but the entire social system changes because of the conflict (Coser, 1964). Also, early research showed that conflict is driven by various frustrated groups' desire to increase their share of gratification (Coser, 1964). Another assumption, according to Dahrendorf (1958, p. 180) is that co-determination

(promoting workers to managerial posts) “not only is useless as an instrument for regulating industrial conflicts but also, in the long run, threatens to lead to a sharpening of such conflicts.”

The weakness of social conflict theory is the issues of whether it is possible to apply it directly from an analysis of the structure of domination, without discussing the development of the sides involved in conflict.

The newspapers in question covered the Zhanaozen conflict in line with their editorial stances. In order to determine how their coverage complied with the theoretical framework discussed here, this study looked at the tone of their reports, the sources they used, and the angles they covered. The study aimed to identify themes and sources the pro-government newspapers and pro-opposition newspapers used in their coverage of the conflict and the subsequent trials of trade union activists, members of opposition, and journalists.

Social conflict theory can be used to explain the interactions between actors involved in conflict (Medler, Fitzgerald, & Magerko, 2008). These interactions are often propagated by the media, in turn, influencing the actors. Fisher (1997) suggested that some protracted conflicts require a third party to mediate between the actors or at least facilitate interaction between them. This study looked into whether interaction between the actors is apparent in the newspapers’ coverage of the Zhanaozen conflict.

2.3: Research Questions

This study examined how the selected pro-government and pro-opposition newspapers covered the Zhanaozen conflict and events related to it. The study attempted to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: Did the pro-government *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Karavan* newspapers and the pro-opposition *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad* newspapers cover the conflict partially according to their political stances?

RQ2: How did the newspapers present the Zhanaozen events and main actors involved, i.e. labor activists and riot police, government and opposition?

RQ3: Were they fair and balanced in presenting the positions taken by all sides?

RQ4: Did pro-government newspapers mostly report official statements and actions, whereas pro-opposition newspapers mostly focused on rioters and criticism of government action?

RQ5: Did the tone of these newspapers' coverage of the conflict help to resolve the conflict?

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The media used for this study are national newspapers with wide reach and strong online presence. The study analyzes text such as editorials, news reports, articles, opinions, and readers' letters published in pro-government *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Karavan* and pro-opposition *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad* newspapers between December 16, 2011 and October 15, 2012. The reason for selecting these dates is twofold: the Zhanaozen conflict started on December 16, 2011 and Vladimir Kozlov, the leader of the unregistered opposition Alga! (Forward) party, was sentenced to seven-and-a-half years in prison after he was found guilty of "seeking to overthrow the government and fomenting unrest" on October 15, 2012 (Lillis, 2012a).

Kazakhstanskaya Pravda (Truth of Kazakhstan) was chosen for this study because it is the country's main government daily newspaper with a circulation of 76,420 (Adil Soz, 2012a). It is a 100% state-owned well-established, clearly identified voice. It has been a government mouthpiece since it was established in 1920. Until acquiring its present name in 1932, it was known as *Izvestia Kirgizskoy Step'i* (Heralds of the Kyrgyz Steppe), *Stepnaya Pravda* (Truth of the Steppe), and *Sovetskaya Step* (Soviet Steppe). In essence, it was a regional version of the Moscow-based Pravda newspaper for the then Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. Along with the coverage of news, current affairs, sport, and cultural events, the newspaper publishes official government documents (laws, presidential decrees, government resolutions, calls for tenders, and other government documents), which come into force after their publication in the newspaper. (Bayterek, 2009; *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 2012).

Karavan is Kazakhstan's major weekly tabloid with a circulation of 225,000 (Adil Soz, 2012b). The newspaper leans pro-government. It was established as Kazakhstan's first private newspaper by journalist Boris Giller in 1991. In the early 1990s the newspaper raised controversial issues of ethnic minorities in Kazakhstan, mostly ethnic Russians, thus angering ethnic Kazakh nationalists and Kazakh nationalist newspapers. Under the editorship of Giller, which lasted until 1998, the newspaper was critical of government policy and was close to the former prime minister of Kazakhstan, Akezhan Kazhegeldin, who went to live abroad in exile after resigning in late 1997. After Giller's departure, the newspaper became critical of Kazhegeldin and became close to President Nursultan Nazarbayev's former son-in-law Rakhat Aliyev. In 2001, the newspaper was rumored to have been owned by Aliyev, who denied it at the time. In 2007, Aliyev admitted that he and his ex-wife Dariga Nazarbayeva owned stakes in *Karavan* and other media outlets. The same year the then chairman of the state-run KazAkpapat (Kazinform) news agency, Zhanay Omarov, was appointed the newspaper's editor-in-chief, which marked a new change of ownership and pro-government editorial policy (Mamashuly, 2011).

Golos Respubliki is the country's main pro-opposition weekly newspaper, with a circulation of 15,000 copies, with a further 6,000 electronic subscriptions (Golos Respubliki, 2012). It has been critical of the government since it was founded as *Respublika* in 2000. As a pro-opposition outlet, the newspaper faced administrative, legal, operational, licensing, and physical troubles throughout its existence. Since its establishment it had been published under various titles because of government orders to

shut it down, including *Nasha Respublika* (Our Republic), *Vsya Respublika* (The Whole Republic), *Moya Respublika* (My Republic) and *Respublika Delovoye Obozreniye* (Republic Business Review). Its editor Irina Petrushova had to move to Russia after authorities brought tax evasion charges against her. Because of printing problems (publishing houses' refusal to publish it and police seizures of published issues), the newspaper has maintained heavy online presence, running websites on various domains and in social media networks because of government blocks of access to them. It is believed to be linked to the fugitive Kazakh billionaire, Mukhtar Ablyazov (he has denied the links). The government accused Ablyazov of being involved in labor disputes at oil companies operating in western Kazakhstan (Lillis, 2012a).

The *Vzglyad* weekly was chosen for this study because its editor, Igor Vinyavskiy, was detained on charges of “anti-constitutional activities” which was believed to be a reprisal for the newspaper’s coverage of the Zhanaozen conflict. He was accused of possessing and distributing leaflets calling to “overthrow Kazakhstan’s constitutional regime.” (Committee to Protect Journalist, 2012; Lillis, 2012b). The circulation of the newspaper, founded in 2006, is about 16,000 copies and it is published in Almaty and Karaganda (Vzglyad, 2012). Before *Vzglyad*, Vinyavskiy published the *Vesti Pavlodara* (Pavlodar News in northern Pavlodar Province), which was shut down after Vasiliy Maksimonko, the former member of the Kazakh parliament, sued the newspaper for defamation and demanded thousands of dollars in damages in 2003 (Adil Soz, 2003; Reporters without Borders, 2012b).

On November 22, 2012, *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad* (along with satellite K+ and online stan.tv television channels) were suspended by Almaty's Medeu District Court two days after the Almaty City Prosecutor's Office requested their closure for "extremist propaganda" because of their coverage of the Zhanaozen events. On December 6, 2012, legal action was launched against *Respublika* and *Vzglyad* in order to ban them (Article 19, 2012b, 2012c).

The language of the newspapers is Russian, and the excerpts of the texts used for this study were translated into English; all newspapers were accessed online: at <http://www.kazpravda.kz/> for *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, <http://www.caravan.kz/> for *Karavan*, <http://www.respublika-kaz.biz/pdf/> for *Golos Respubliki* (in PDF), and at <http://www.respublika-kaz.info/vzglyad/> for *Vzglyad* (in PDF).

In order to identify the tone of the coverage of the Zhanaozen conflict, a textual analysis of articles, opinions, editorials, interviews, and readers' letters was conducted. McKee (2003) defines textual analysis as a data-gathering process that helps researchers collect information about other human beings' understanding of the world. The purpose of textual analysis is to establish how discourse works to construct meanings that represent certain events in specific ways (Lin, 2012). Discourse is defined as a particular type or pattern of language use, with each discourse representing "a way of talking about, and therefore understanding, the social world from a particular perspective" (Lin, 2012, p. 50). Lin (2012) suggests framing theory is introduced and applied in media studies in order to understand how media discourse represents social discourse because the analysis of headlines, leads, subjects, and propositions of news discourse can reveal news frames

and major topics. According to Gitlin (1980), frames are “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis, and exclusion, by which symbol-handlers routinely organize discourse” (p. 7).

The time span of this study is from December 16, 2011 when the violence started, to October 15, 2012, a week after a court ruling was issued following the trial of trade union activists, and the leader of the opposition Alga! party, Vladimir Kozlov, was sentenced. For this study, four stages and/or themes of the conflict were examined.

The first stage is coverage of the riot in the town of Zhanaozen during the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence on December 16, 2011, and the use of force by authorities with riot police killing 15 and injuring 64 protesters. For the analysis of this theme, the following number of news articles (referred to as items of text or texts) published between December 17, 2011 and December 23, 2011 were chosen: 38 items of text published in *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, 11 items in *Karavan*, 12 items in *Golos Respubliki*, and 13 items of text in *Vzglyad*.

The second theme is the January 23, 2012 detention of opposition and labor activists and *Vzglyad*'s Editor-in-Chief Igor Vinyavskiy in connection with the December 16, 2011 events. The number of news articles published in the week of January 24-30, 2012 is as follows: five news articles for *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, one article for *Karavan*, 13 news articles for *Golos Respubliki*, and five for *Vzglyad*.

The third theme is the beginning of the trial of detained opposition leaders and labor activists on August 16, 2012. The number of news articles published in the week of

August 17-23, 2011 is only one article for *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, one article for *Karavan*, seven articles for *Golos Respubliki*, and eight for *Vzglyad*.

The fourth theme is the end of the trial of the opposition and labor activists and the issue of a court ruling on October 8, 2012. The total number of news articles published in the week of October 9-15, 2012 is 16: five news articles for *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, one for *Karavan*, five news articles for *Golos Respubliki*, and five for *Vzglyad*.

3.1: Conflict in the Context of Communication

Communications studies show that mass media can “delegitimize” or “marginalize” protest groups that challenge the status quo (McLeod & Detenber, 1999; Cohen, 1980; Gitlin, 1980; McLeod & Hertog, 1992; Shoemaker, 1984). Chan & Lee (1984, p. 187) suggested that media coverage of protests are conditioned by different sets of “paradigms,” which they describe as “a ‘metaphysical’ world view that defines the entities of concerns, indicates to journalists where to look (and where not to look) and informs them what to discover.” They also suggested that in case of Hong Kong, leftist papers were more supportive of protesters than rightist papers which had high propensity to advocate suppressive measures to end the protest, showed strong support for government policies and harshly criticized protesters. The authoritarian nature of Kazakhstan’s government and the lack of competitive elections (as well as restrictions imposed on the legal existence and operation of opposition parties) make it possible to

group pro-government and pro-opposition newspapers into Chan & Lee's classifications of rightist and leftist newspapers.

In order to interpret the coverage of the Zhanaozen events, research questions as formulated in Chapter 2 were applied to the newspapers' texts, and the particular use of vocabulary, headlines, and wording were examined.

Groups involved in the issue are government, security, and law-enforcement forces, and oil companies and executives, protesters, oil workers who went on strike, opposition forces, journalists, human rights activists, witnesses, and families of those killed and injured during the violence.

Government, security and law-enforcement forces, and oil companies aimed at stopping the violence, normalizing the situation, and identifying those whom they perceived were responsible for the violence. Protesters, human rights activists, opposition politicians, witnesses, and families of those killed and injured demanded investigations into the violence and to bring to justice those responsible for the violence.

Whether the media are pro-government or pro-opposition affected the content of the text. Pro-government newspapers mostly concentrated on covering government measures positively, while their coverage of actions of the strikers, rioters or opposition was negative. Meanwhile, the pro-opposition newspapers' text was negative about government measures and neutral or sympathetic towards the rioters or opposition. The pro-government newspapers did not provide comprehensive background to the events that led to the Zhanaozen conflict, whereas the pro-opposition newspapers did.

The primary audience of the pro-government newspapers was the general public and they were hardly concerned about reaching out to the protesters or opposition. At the same time, the pro-opposition newspapers' primary source was the public and authorities, including security services. As a result, the style of the former was more in the peremptory mood and less engaging, i.e. not open to communication with the opposite side of the conflict, whereas the pro-opposition newspapers' style was softer and more engaging.

CHAPTER 4: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1: Political Background

The collapse of the Socialist bloc in the late 1980s and the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 opened up the opportunity for democracy to develop in formerly socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and Mongolia. At the same time, the end of the Cold War and America's emergence as the world's sole superpower threatened authoritarian regimes elsewhere, but transitions did not necessarily lead to democracy (Levitsky & Way, 2010). The departure from single-party authoritarianism and military dictatorships created a new form of political system that combined electoral competition with authoritarianism. This, in turn, created conceptual challenges for scholars because of a range of post-authoritarian regimes (Collier & Levitsky, 1997). Levitsky & Way (2010) defined such regimes as "competitive authoritarian," i.e. regimes that habitually rig elections, restrict press freedom and freedom of speech, abuse state resources and so on, with existing competition, albeit unfair.

The pace of democratization in such regimes has been slow because the ruling elites feel confident enough to delay this process. Siegle (2004) pointed to the fact that often the authoritarian rulers cite the sentiment that a poor country must achieve economic development before embarking on the path of political modernization and democratization, maintaining that poor countries that choose a democratic path are bound to fail or endure economic problems.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Kazakhstan enshrined some principles of democratic rule in its constitution, but its political culture was largely styled on the Soviet model, since its Soviet elite continued to run it after independence (Hoffman, 2010).

Kazakhstan, which Siegle describes as a “democratizer,” has adopted precisely this policy – “economy first and then politics” – has never held an election, either presidential or parliamentary, that is deemed “free and fair” by international observers (Knox, 2008; Lillis, 2012c). Since independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has had only one head of state – Nursultan Nazarbayev, a former communist apparatchik (a member of the ruling apparatus who does not go against the party line) who was appointed the first secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan in 1989 and was elected president in 1990, emerging as the central figure in the country’s politics (Isaacs, 2011). Cummings (2002) identifies the following main stages of the country’s political development in the first decade of its independence: economic liberalization, i.e. a switch from Soviet planned economic relations to market relations, between 1992 and 1994; heightened institutional in-fighting in 1994-5; executive consolidation in 1995 and 1996, with the adoption of a new constitution in 1995; greater authoritarianism since 1997; and more open elite divisions since 2001. Nazarbayev consolidated his authoritarian rule further after re-election in 2005 (Mishra, 2009) and in 2012 (Lillis, 2012c). Kazakhstan is often described as “soft authoritarianism,” “illiberal democracy,” “noncompetitive [authoritarian] regime,” “hybrid regimes,” “electoral authoritarianism,” and “semi-

authoritarian” (Schatz, 2009; Zakaria, 1997; Levitsky & Way, 2010; Olcott, 1999; Schatz, 2006).

Studies (Collins, 2002; Schatz, 2000; Luong, 2002; Cummings, 2000) show that there are two sources of conflict in politics in Kazakhstan: 1) old clan identities of the ethnic Kazakh people rooted in kinship and blood¹ determine who gains access to political and economic resources, and 2) conflict arising from two distinct groups – regional elites in the periphery and central elites in the capital, but Junisbai (2010) considers financial-industrial groups which represent business interest of major economic and political elites as an alternative source of conflict, as political conflict is largely the result of economic conflict between these groups. According to Junisbai (2010), the financial-industrial groups play an important role in Kazakhstan’s political system because political parties and NGOs are underdeveloped in Kazakhstan; there are no independent trade unions, while the national union (Atameken) is closely linked with the state; there are no alternative channels to gain influence through elected political office and no popularly elected regional governors or free and fair elections. As a result financial industrial groups act as substitutes for political players and fill the vacuum created by the lack of comparable political and economic players (Hale, 2005). Junisbai (2010) divides financial-industrial groups into two groups – the inner circle that is close to Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev (mostly made up of his close relatives) and the second-tier groups who refrain from political activity and prefer neutrality. Economic conflict between these two groups spilled over into open political conflict in 2001, when

¹ Historically, ethnic Kazakhs are divided into three unions of tribes known as *Juz* or *Zhuz*: the Great (or Senior) Juz, the Middle Juz, and the Little (or Junior) Juz, which are respectively in the country’s south and southeast, centre, north and east, and west. In turn, tribes are divided into clans and sub-clans.

more than a dozen high-ranking government officials and leading entrepreneurs formed the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan opposition movement to oppose encroachments on their business interests by members of the inner circle. Satpayev (2007) suggested financial-industrialists began to convert their financial power into political power and intended to take part in government decision-making and influence this process. As a result, financial-industrial groups started sponsoring and advancing their people in parliamentary elections and in the government. Some groups set up parties and movements that share their interests.

One example of this power struggle occurred in 2007 when President Nazarbayev's son-in-law Rakhat Aliyev fell from grace because of his tense relations with other members of the elite. He claimed the criminal charges brought against him were politically motivated, undermining his argument by acknowledging that his business interests caused his problems: In an attempt to increase his influence at Nurbank in which he held a stake Aliyev was implicated in the abduction of two senior managers of the bank; Aliyev was also suspected of racketeering and seizure of businesses that belonged to other entrepreneurs (Lillis, 2007). More recently, in 2009, Mukhtar Ablyazov, the chairman of the Board of Directors of Kazakhstan's major BTA Bank, had to flee the country for Britain because of a conflict with the ruling elite (Lillis, 2009). These cases were preceded by the following conflicts in the ruling elite:

- In 1998, Akezhan Kazhegeldin, the country's prime minister in the 1990s, fled the country following a conflict with President Nazarbayev;

- In March 2004, Governor of Almaty Region Zamanbek Nurkadilov fell out with President Nazarbayev and announced his intention to stand for president in the following election, but was found dead in his house in November 2005;
- Altynbek Sarsenbayev, who occupied various Cabinet posts, but joined the opposition accusing the government of election fraud in 2004, was allegedly killed by elite National Security Committee officers in 2006 (Fedorov, 2012).

Opposition forces have proven incapable of uniting or of mustering a significant following. The opposition party called Alga! is unregistered, thus prevented from full-fledged participation in the country's political life at the national level, while the Communist Party of Kazakhstan is banned by a court order (Kilner, 2012), and other parties have been coopted by authorities. The officially recognized opposition OSDP social democratic party did not gain any seats in the January 2012 parliamentary election and claimed the results had been rigged (Lillis, 2012d). The 2008 amendments to the country's constitution require parliament to be elected on party ticket – a deliberate act to prevent the opposition's election to parliament because of the lack of official registration. Opposition presidential candidates are prevented from standing in the race under various bureaucratic ploys, such as the Kazakh language test or a law preventing people with convictions (including minor misdemeanors) from occupying public office. Civil society activities that were already under strict government control prior to the December 2011 protests have been scaled down further; independent media are almost non-existent, save

for a number of pro-opposition websites that are blocked within Kazakhstan. The government strictly oversees the issuance of broadcasting licenses and the forthcoming switchover to digital television (by 2015) may further limit media pluralism (IREX, 2012; Mould, 2012; Lillis, 2012e, 2007b, 2012f). The state security apparatus is very efficient and has been beefed up further following the December violence. The country's intelligence services employ methods that resemble Soviet KGB methods, with opposition members and civil society activists under close surveillance and subject to intimidation (Lillis, 2012d). The ruling Nur Otan party boasts about a million members, with public sector workers pressured to join the party in order to preserve their jobs or secure career advancements: again, this is a legacy of the Soviet Communist Party style (Isaacs, 2011). Party and election commission officials have been implicated in electoral fraud. State regulations and widespread corruption have effectively imposed state control over businesses, with state support provided to those who are loyal to the regime. The country's labor is not organized, and attempts to organize are resisted by the authorities (Human Rights Watch, 2012). Those who are organized are coopted into state institutions or the ruling Nur Otan party (Borisov & Clarke, 2006).

4.2: Media Background

Kazakhstan's constitution provides for freedom of speech and freedom of the press but they also provide special protection for the president. The government uses various legislative and administrative measures, such as licensing, Internet regulations, criminal and administrative charges, to control the media and to limit freedom of

expression. Ahead of the country's chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), a regional security and human rights body, in 2010, the country made pledges to amend legislation to promote freedom of speech and freedom of the press. It adopted amendments to media legislation in February 2009, which cut some redtape but made little contribution to improving the media situation. At the same time, Kazakhstan's government broke its promise, made ahead of the vote on the country's chairmanship of the OSCE in Madrid in 2007, to decriminalize libel and in 2010 passed a law that granted President Nazarbayev the status of Leader of the Nation, which envisages criminal responsibility for those who libel or defame him (Ognianova, 2010; Karlekar & Dunham, 2012; U.S. Department of State, 2012; Article 19, 2010). Article 19 (2012a, p. 5) also points out that Kazakhstan's civil legislation does not provide a legal definition of defamation. The law enables individuals and legal entities to claim remedies when "information damages their honour, dignity or business reputation." Thus, the elements of civil defamation are information itself and that it damages one's honor, dignity, or business reputation. This disproportionately restricts freedom of expression because one can seek compensation for true statements that damage their reputation. Also, the law does not distinguish between statements of fact and statements of opinion. While providing for compensation for damage, the law does not define "honor" and "dignity," which results in the broad interpretation of these terms (Article 19, 2012a).

The country also adopted restrictive amendments to media, Internet and privacy laws in 2009, under which all forms of Internet content, including websites—both Kazakh and foreign—blogs, and chat rooms, are considered as media outlets and are

subject to restrictive media laws. The amendments provide for grounds to ban media content relating to elections, strikes, and rallies. (Kazakh Statutes, 2009; IREX, 2012; Article 19, 2012b; Lillis, 2009b; Dave, 2010). Meanwhile, amendments to the media law “prohibit undermining state security or advocating class, social, race, national, or religious superiority, or cruelty and violence” (U.S. Department of State, 2010). The law prohibits publication of any statement that promotes or glorifies “extremism,” which, according to international legal experts, was not clearly defined by the government (U.S. Department of State, 2011, p. 14), and the amendments to the Internet law were needed to fight “cyber-crime, terrorism, [and] extremism” (Lillis, 2009b). The new amendments to the Internet law also classify output of a foreign media outlet distributed in Kazakhstan that contain information contradicting the law and courts can rule to close the operations of foreign media outlets in Kazakhstan and require corresponding government bodies to enact these rulings (Kazakh Statutes, 2009; IREX, 2012). Following wiretapping scandals, the 2009 amendments to the privacy law further tightened to criminalize unauthorized access to citizens’ telephones and information networks or intercepting the post and disclosing information obtained during criminal investigation (Kazakh Statutes, 2009; Lillis, 2010b).

Using these laws, Kazakhstan’s government shut down 950 websites between January and November 2012 and was reviewing a further 150 websites due to “extremist” content; among the victims are popular blogging platforms Wordpress and LiveJournal (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2012; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2011; Voice of Russia, 2011). One of the prominent cases of Kazakhstan’s blockage of foreign

websites was with the livejournal.com blogging platform after the Kazakh president, Nursultan Nazarbayev's former son-in-law, Rakhat Aliyev, ran a blog on this website (Harding, 2009; Lillis, 2009b). Bloggers who published articles critical of the government were subject to legislation that protects the president's "honor and dignity" (Dave, 2010). The Leader of the Nation law bans insulting remarks about President Nazarbayev, and the prison sentences are potentially higher if the remarks are made in the media (Lillis, 2010a). According to Druzin & Li (2011), defamation is punishable by a prison term of up to five years in Kazakhstan. Civil defamation suits have been more often used against media outlets and journalists that are critical of the government and its policy (Article 19, 2011).

There were attacks on journalists in Kazakhstan in previous years which observers linked to their professional activities, as well as harassment of journalists and obstacles to the publication of pro-opposition newspapers (Kaleyeva, 2012). In previous years, there were also cases of imprisonment of journalists, with the latest case being *Vzglyad*'s Editor-in-Chief Igor Vinyavskiy who was detained in January 2012 for alleged anti-constitutional activities, faced up to seven years in prison but was freed under amnesty in March 2012 (Karlekar & Dunham, 2012; Lillis, 2012b). In a move to tighten control over the Internet, the president signed amendments into legislation concerning intellectual property rights to criminalize the illegal use of copyrighted material and the file-sharing of copyrighted material: critics say the law is vague and leaves room for its selective and arbitrary application (Schenkkan, 2012). Journalists from independent outlets were also summoned for interrogation by the security services in 2012 amid an

atmosphere of intimidation, after violence in Zhanaozen (Lillis, 2012d). A court ruling that sentenced Alga! leader Kozlov to seven-and-a-half years in prison in connection with the Zhanaozen conflict described the *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad* newspapers as “extremist,” but they have appealed that ruling (CASCFEN, 2012). This contributes to an atmosphere of intimidation and undermines free speech. This also leave something of a legal uncertainty, since they are thus described but no legal action has been taken against these newspapers for being “extremist.”

The U.S. Department of State (2012) cites Kazakh official statistics that the government owned 15% of 3,018 media outlets operating in the country. Many private outlets receive government direct subsidies, with companies allegedly controlled by members of the president’s family and some loyal associates owned most broadcast media outlets although the government did not control outright. Mould (2012) cites government statistics, according to which there are now 63 TV and 42 radio stations on the air. There are a further 147 cable and six satellite operators. Kazakhstan is expected to start a digital switchover by 2015 in the country’s three major urban centers – Almaty, Astana and Karaganda (with a satellite city of Temirtau) – and Zhanaozen, the scene of bloody police crackdown. Zhanaozen, a community of 25,000 households, was favored over western Kazakhstan’s major regional urban centers of Aktobe, Aktau, Atyrau, and Oral (Mould, 2012). Mould suggested that this could be a tool to shut down independent local television stations. The government also uses technical regulations, such as a tender process to grant broadcasting licenses or assign domain names, to stifle opposition and control media ownership (Article 19, 2008)

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Kazakh Service (2012) reported that in the aftermath of the Zhanaozen events, the government adopted a code of ethics for journalists, which is "an instrument of self-discipline for journalists, a moral and ethical standard for journalists that helps reporters and mass media earn society's trust and respect." Even though the government claimed violations of the code would not entail criminal prosecution, independent journalists and human rights activists condemned it as a tool to control the media through self-censorship among journalists. Even without it, self-censorship exists—partly a Soviet legacy, and partly a pragmatic approach by media that want to stay in business. Serious discussion of ethnic and racial issues has never been on the media agenda (Kenny & Gross, 2008; Tussupova, 2010).

Following the conviction of Kozlov to seven-and-a-half years in prison, authorities accused his Alga! party and the People's Front organization of "extremist actions" and filed a suit to ban them. In addition, authorities sought to ban *Golos Respubliki* and associated outlets, as well as *Vzglyad*, the satellite K+ TV channel and the Stan TV Internet station, for "inciting social enmity" and "calls to overthrow the state" (Lillis, 2012g).

Despite Kazakhstan's poor human rights record and the way it has dealt with the Zhanaozen event, the country was elected to the UN Human Rights Council in November, 2012 (General Assembly of the United Nations, 2012).

4.3: Oil Industry Background

Kazakhstan became a significant oil producer in the 1990s, after signing major oil production agreements with several multinational companies (Palazuelos & Fernández, 2012). Between 1991 and 1995, oil production fell from 570,000 to 430,000 barrels per day (b/d), with output coming mainly from small fields using outdated technology and exported through Russian pipelines belonging to the Russian network (Van der Leeuw, 2000; Olcott, 2002). Due to the collapse of economic relations between Kazakhstan and former Soviet republics, the country's economy contracted by 38% between 1991 and 1998 (Pomfret, 2005).

Between 1992 and 1997 Kazakhstan's government signed agreements with multinational oil companies to develop the major Tengiz and Karachaganak fields and to explore new offshore fields in the Caspian Sea (Kashagan and Kurmangazy, for example), and to build export routes from these fields. A Production Sharing Agreement (PSA) was signed to develop Tengiz for 40 years through a joint venture created by Chevron (50%), Exxon (25%), Kazakhoil (20%), and Russia's Lukoil (5%); the development of Karachaganak was granted also for 40 years to an international consortium led by British Gas and Agip (32.5% each), Chevron (20%), and Lukoil (15%) (Cohen, 2008; Olcott, 2002).

Production at Karachaganak and Tengiz increased the country's oil output sharply from 631,000 b/d in 1999 to 1.6 million b/d in 2009. The launch of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium pipeline with a capacity of 1.3 million b/d from Tengiz to the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiisk took Kazakhstan's oil to the global markets.

This propelled Kazakhstan into the 18th place among oil producing countries, with a share of 1.8% worldwide. But the country's importance is even greater when taking into account its proven reserves, now standing at about 40 billion barrels: Kazakhstan accounts for 3.2% of global reserves and ranked 9th in the world in 2008 (BP, 2009). However, this figure somewhat conflicts with the most recent figure provided by BP (2012): As of the end of 2011, Kazakhstan's oil reserves stand at 30 billion barrels (1.8% and 12th).

Helped by high prices, the oil sector has made a major contribution to the rapid development of Kazakhstan's economy since the late 1990s; GDP growth averaged 10.2% a year between 1999 and 2007. As a result of the global economic crisis, economic growth slowed to 3.3% in 2008 and 1.2% in 2009, but rebounded to 7.2% in 2010 and 7.5% in 2011 (Doi, 2010; Ismagulova, 2012).

Oil revenues rose from \$6 billion to \$41.5 billion between 2000 and 2007, bolstering the ruling elite. As public revenue and expenditure rose, the government showed willingness to share these funds with regional elites and the bulk of public spending was allocated for social services, housing, and transportation. The population also benefited from the oil boom through imports of consumer goods (Palazuelos & Fernández, 2012; Daly, 2008).

In the late 1990s-early 2000s, Russian and Chinese companies started entering Kazakhstan's oil industry. Russia's entry was explained by the political support of President Vladimir Putin's administration; the fact that the jurisdiction of many offshore

fields in the Caspian Sea is not clearly defined; and the fact that most oil export routes lie through Russia (Kandiyoti, 2008; Torbakov, 2007; Palazuelos & Fernández, 2012).

There were three main reasons for the strong Chinese positions: China's huge investment potential; Chinese oil companies' technological and financial capacity; and the government's objective to meet its growing demand for oil.

Bolstered by new economic conditions and the opportunities offered by Chinese and Russian oil companies, Kazakhstan's ruling elite was able to revise oil contracts with Western multinationals to boost the national share in the oil sector and strengthen the role of the national oil and gas company KazMunayGaz (KMG). In 2007, the government accused Chevron's Tengizchevroil joint venture, which develops Tengiz, of violations of the environmental protection legislation and the company agreed to pay a \$300 million fine (Reuters, 2008). Because of environmental and labor disputes, Canada's PetroKazakhstan was forced to sell its assets in Kazakhstan to China's CNPC in 2005. As a result of this sale, KazMunayGaz (KMG) acquired a 33% stake in the company's oil producing assets and a 50% stake in its oil-refining assets (Olcott, 2007).

The 2004 PSA law, which replaced earlier the 1995 law, required all new production sharing agreements to include at least a 50% stake to be held by KMG. Also, PSAs were limited to offshore fields. Oil companies were also required to source most services and products from local suppliers. The new law was extended to all projects after the October 2005 amendments to legislation on the development of natural resources and oil operations. The amendments also granted the government a right to change contracts that threatened the country's economic interests (Olcott, 2007).

The government applied the new legislation in 2007 when BG decided to sell its 16.7% stake in Kashagan. The negotiations resulted in KMG's acquisition of an 8.63% stake and other partners sharing 8.63%. When Agip announced a delay in the launch of oil extraction in the field and cost overruns, the government demanded compensation for lost revenue: the negotiations resulted in KMG's increasing its stake to 16.81% at the expense of other partners (Campaner & Yenikeeff, 2008; Palazuelos & Fernández, 2012).

In 2002, the government decided to consolidate all state-owned oil companies into KMG, a fully state-owned national oil company, with its production arm being KMG Exploration Production (KMG E&P). KMG E&P was formed by the merger of the Ozenmunaygaz and Embamunaygaz production arms, with 62% of shares belonging to KMG and 38% floated on the London and Kazakhstan Stock Exchanges (Olcott, 2007; Palazuelos & Fernández, 2012).

Ozenmunaygaz, the company where a protracted strike led to the Zhanaozen riots, increased its output from 84,000 b/d in 2001 to 135,000 b/d in 2006 and 2007 before reducing it to 126,000 b/d in 2009 (Palazuelos & Fernández, 2012).

Despite the economic boom of the past decade, Kazakhstan's human rights record, including protection of workers' rights, has been dismal. Even though the official poverty level fell from 46.7% in 2001 to 6.5% in 2010, rural poverty is still a serious problem in Kazakhstan. The country's Statistics Agency defines the poor as those who live for 40% of the subsistence level, which was approximately \$120 per person per month in September 2012 (Tengrinews, 2012). Despite being one of the richest regions in

oil and gas and the second highest oil producer after the neighboring Atyrau Province, official poverty in Mangystau Province stood at 21.2% in 2010, the highest of any province in Kazakhstan (Statistics Agency of Kazakhstan, 2011; Human Rights Watch, 2012).

Some towns in western Kazakhstan lack basic infrastructure, such as paved roads, electricity, and running water. Many towns, like Zhanaozen, are single-industry settlements. The harsh climate of western Kazakhstan makes it difficult to grow produce locally, raising the cost of living as residents have to pay higher prices for food imported from elsewhere. Workers in the extractive industries work in conditions that expose them to various hazards, including exposure to poisonous chemical gases, or dangerous machinery. Oil and gas workers in western Kazakhstan also face difficult environmental conditions, with temperatures rising to over 45 degrees Celsius (113 degrees Fahrenheit) in the summer and dropping to 49 degrees Celsius below zero (56 degrees Fahrenheit below zero) (Human Rights Watch, 2012; Kazhydromet, 2012).

In May 2011, workers at the service company Ersai Caspian Contractor LLC and oil-producing Karazhanbasmunay and Ozenmunaygaz in Mangystau Province stopped work in three separate strikes because of long-running grievances over low pay and company management's interference in trade union activity. In response to the strikes, Kazakhstan's authorities and the three companies variously violated workers' rights, including freedom of association, collective bargaining and expression, and the right to strike. The strikes lasted from six weeks to seven months, marking major strikes in Kazakhstan's oil sector. Courts declared these strikes illegal, citing workers' failure to

comply with national legislation regarding strikes and labor legislation that bans strikes at “hazardous production facilities,” a designation that includes oil companies. After the court rulings outlawing the strikes, local authorities brought administrative charges against alleged leaders of the strikes and sentenced them to short terms of detention. Strikers’ lawyer Natalya Sokolova was sentenced to six years in prison on the criminal charges of “inciting social discord” and a total of 2,000 oil workers, out of about 15,500 employed by these companies, were sacked.

When workers continued their strikes despite the court rulings, authorities broke the strike at Ersai Caspian Contractor in June 2011 threatening to bring administrative charges against the strikers. Government security forces put down the strike at Ozenmunaygaz on December 16, 2011, when people gathered on Zhanaozen’s central square clashed with police amid Independence Day celebrations (Human Rights Watch, 2012; Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 2011).

CHAPTER 5: NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

5.1: Coverage of the Beginning of the Conflict

5.1.1: Pro-government Newspapers

This chapter analyzes the newspaper texts from the start of the conflict (December 17-23, 2011) to the arrest of the suspected organizers of the violence, Vladimir Kozlov, Akzhanat Aminov, and Serik Sapargali (January 24-30, 2012), the beginning of their court trial (August 17-23, 2012) to the end of the trial (October 9-15, 2012).

Kazakhstanskaya Pravda ran its first report on the Zhanaozen conflict on December 18, 2011, under the title “Situation under control, those guilty to be punished,” which was fully devoted to President Nazarbayev’s speech delivered at a government Security Council meeting on December 17, 2011, the day following the violence (See Appendix A). The newspaper text said the meeting, chaired by President Nursultan Nazarbayev in the presidential residence Akorda (translated from Kazakh as White Camp or White House), was attended by Prosecutor-General Askhat Daulbayev, Chairman of the National Security Committee Nurtay Abykayev and other unidentified government officials. President Nazarbayev started his speech with an account of the events: “Yesterday, in the town of Zhanaozen in Mangystau Region during [Independence Day] festive events, criminal actions of a group of individuals resulted in mass disorders. Peaceful civilians gathered on a central square to mark the [20th] anniversary of Independence were subject to an attack by a group of hooligans. Culprits attacked police, destroyed yurts set up in connection with holiday, [and] set a police bus on fire. They assaulted the civilian population, destroyed cars parked nearby, and set them on fire.”

President Nazarbayev's speech repeatedly contained the following phrases: "unlawful actions," a "group of hooligans," an "attack on police officers," "mass disorders," "set on fire," "subject to attack, arson or destruction."

Nazarbayev said that "according to preliminary information, 10 people died and there were those seriously injured, including a police officer" and that "police impeccably performed their duty and acted within their powers according to the law." He "sincerely expressed his condolences" to the victims' relatives and said "families of the killed and injured will be provided with assistance."

Nazarbayev said criminal investigations into "cases of violations of law" were under way, and an "investigation-operative group" headed by the Minister of Interior Affairs was set up to take all the necessary measures to "identify and punish organizers of disorders" and to restore public order in the city. He added that "the situation was under control of law-enforcement agencies" and "those guilty will bear punishment to the full extent of the law." In his speech, the president also issued threats to unspecified masterminds of the violence: "[L]abor dispute of oil workers should not be mixed with deeds of bandit elements who wanted to use the situation for their criminal intentions. We will uncover where funding is coming from and who is involved in this."

Nazarbayev's speech also commended the government's work in Zhanaozen: "During these years the state has done a lot to improve the social situation in Zhanaozen. Salaries have been increased. We have invited to Zhanaozen fellow compatriots [ethnic Kazakhs] living in other countries and have created all the necessary conditions for them. For this they should be grateful to the state." President Nazarbayev said that "protest

actions, mass disorders are today taking place in many countries. They have largely become a result of the global recession caused by the global financial-economic crisis.” He warned against attempts by outsiders to destabilize the situation in the country: “All these years we have been strengthening stability, people and accord in our country. These [are] our main values thanks to which we have achieved success. We will not allow any attempts to destroy peace and tranquility in our home, achievements of our Independence.”

Nazarbayev reassured the public: “[T]he public has no grounds for concern. The situation is under control.” A warning followed: “The law is the law. Requirements of the law are the same for everyone. The law will be used to ensure security and tranquility for town residents. The state will prevent any attempts to violate the tranquility and security of our citizens to the full extent of the law.” The president urged “all people of Kazakhstan to condemn this incident alien for our country and maintain tranquility. I call on residents of Zhanaozen for wisdom and tranquility. We will sort out all these issues.”

In closing remarks, President Nazarbayev said that he had issued a decree to impose a curfew for 20 days “to restore the economy of the town of Zhanaozen, restore burnt facilities, and, most importantly, to ensure the security of citizens,” adding that it could be withdrawn any time.

The second text carried by *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* in the December 18, 2011 issue was titled “The Prosecutor-General’s Office reports” by Olga Semenova who suggested that Zhanaozen oil workers’ discontent was usurped by “third forces” to “stage mass disorders in the town, disrupt the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of

Kazakhstan's independence and create a flow of negative news" (See Appendix B). The newspaper article was fully based on the account of the events that unfolded in Zhanaozen as presented at a news briefing in the capital of Astana on December 17, 2011 by Prosecutor-General's Office spokesman Nurdaulet Suindikov. Semenova wrote that the spokesman's presentation was accompanied by a number of videos filmed on the spot by police, local television stations and witnesses. From the very beginning, the reporter blames "third forces" mentioned by President Nazarbayev for the violence: "In videos it is clearly seen that young people (mostly in clothes of a dark color) who were present among strikers [protesters] repeatedly tried to provoke police to use force."

The report also blamed "hooligan elements" who tried to disrupt Independence Day celebrations. According to the Prosecutor-General's Office, about 800 "aggressive" individuals were at central square where order was maintained by "only 120 unarmed police."

The news article quotes the government spokesman, saying that until the last moment, police did not take drastic measures to detain protesters or to drive them away from the square, even though "aggressive" groups made constant "provocations." The report said "one of the hooligans" hit a four-wheel drive carrying food for the celebrations with an unidentified object, although this vehicle did not belong to police or any other government bodies. "This means rumors about a police vehicle which allegedly run into a crowd do not stand up to scrutiny," and the "police's attempt to stop the violator of law who hit the vehicle caused a scuffle which was immediately used by hooligans," the report said. "Using strikers as a battering ram, they broke police

encirclement,” the report quoted Suindikov as saying. Afterwards, the so-called “hooligan groups” attacked police, overturned a fir tree, destroyed yurts and the stages set up for celebrations and “set a police bus on fire,” the report said. Even when “instigators” continued “mass disorders” and started “assaulting the civilian population” and “destroying cars parked nearby” with six police officers receiving injuries and one of them in a coma, police did not start using weapons and special equipment and means to kill and “in order to avoid bloody clashes and unjustified casualties [they] retreated, limiting themselves to firing into the air,” the report reiterated some of the wording of the president’s speech. “Thus, reports, which emerged in the media are not accurate that the conflict was provoked by law-enforcement agencies using weapons, smoke pellets, and other special equipment and devises,” the report cited Suindikov.

The second text said that riots had spread to other parts of the town, with protesters setting fire to the Ozenmunaygaz Oil and Gas Company building, a hotel and a local administration building. According to that report, “hooligans” had “petrol bombs” and “sticks with knives attached to their ends” which, according to the Prosecutor-General’s Office, showed that “young people who went to the square were predisposed to violence and riots from the very beginning. Ten people were reported dead, 86 people were taken to hospital, including six police officers, with four being in intensive care. One body was found in an electronics shop which was burnt down, the second text said. According to Suindikov, 46 facilities (two banks, 20 shops, two cafes, a notary office, two pawnshops, a photo shop, two police stations, a hotel and three houses) were looted and burnt down and over 20 cars were damaged during “mass disorders.” Additional

interior troops and police forces were deployed to restore order in town, vital facilities were put under heightened security, and 70 “participants in mass disorders and marauders” were detained. “The Prosecutor-General’s Office called on residents of the town and nearby districts to observe the law and to not yield to misinformation spread by certain individuals with the aim of provocation,” Suindikov said.

On December 17, 2011, the newspaper published a statement, issued by the Federation of Trade Unions of Kazakhstan, an organization controlled by the government, on “mass disorders,” which led to “human casualties.” The federation claimed union members had not taken part in “anti-constitutional and unlawful actions.” It called on unions and members for “tranquility and forbearance” and not to “yield to provocations, inaccurate information and rumors that aim to destroy peaceful order and stability in the state.” The Federation urged employers to observe labor legislation and contract provisions and to engage in talks with employees. Also, it appealed to international federations of trade unions not to “draw premature conclusions.” that the Federation referred to the country’s constitution, which stipulates that labor disputes should be settled using means provided by the law, including right to strike.

The December 18, 2011 issue of *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* also published an interview with the president’s adviser, Yermukhamet Yertysbayev, in which the adviser described the riots as “thoroughly planned action” and suggested that labor disputes and social conflicts should be separated from “bandit elements.” He said he believed all citizens condemned “instigators of disorders” and that the president issued orders to provide material assistance to the victims’ families and assumed personal control over

this issue. He reiterated the president's remarks that the global economic crisis had complicated the situation "even in developed countries" like Kazakhstan, and cited the riots in London in August 2011 and similar events in Greece. The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Prosecutor-General's Office were expected to carry out the "most thorough, most objective, [and] transparent investigation" into the Zhanaozen events, and the president suggested independent experts could be involved in the investigations. Yertysbayev is reported as saying in that report that the government hoped "no one accuses us of a partial investigation," and that all "instigators of criminal deeds" should be named and punished. "In this difficult moment the people of Kazakhstan acutely felt great need to rally around the Leader of the Nation, around our President," Yertysbayev said, and justified the government's use of force against protesters: "Temporarily, by January 5 [2012], by the Head of State's Decree the state of emergency has been imposed. I believe this is justified if there are people who take weapons to their hands and think it is possible to use them against civilian citizens and police officers. This is an international law measure, and it is used during events of this sort. And the Head of State has full right and all functional leverages to take adequate measures."

While offering condolences to the victims' relatives, the presidential adviser said it was hard for him to talk about people who were killed as a result of nonsensical and criminal deeds of some citizens with unbalanced mind who thought it was acceptable to kill their compatriots.

In the December 18, 2011 issue, *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* published excerpts from Russia's Rosbalt news agency of Russian experts' views on the Zhanaozen events.

Aleksey Vlasov, director of the Lomonosov Moscow State University's analytic center, suggested the situation was seized by the government opposition who "tried to manipulate protest mood from London" in reference to the fugitive Kazakh billionaire, Mukhtar Ablyazov. Another Russian expert Yuriy Solozoboyev shared Vlasov's idea that "riots have been provoked from outside by radical opponents of President Nursultan Nazarbayev" and that this provocation aimed at, if not destabilizing the country, undermining stability in Kazakhstan. Dmitriy Zhuravlev, director of the Institute for Regional Problems, believed that oil workers became pawns of the government's opponents hiding abroad [reference to Ablyazov] and "an instrument for undermining stability."

Experts interviewed praised police behavior. "I didn't hear statements that police used force and weapons, [but] there were actions that aimed to appropriately force back the attackers," Vlasov said. "Response by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor-General's Office and other power-wielding bodies was very quick and open for the media. It should admit Kazakhstan's law-enforcers have learnt [to] correctly react to such events," Zhuravlev said. "Authorities reacted exactly as they should have," Solozobov added.

Vlasov suggested the country's leaders and law-enforcement top brass should go to Zhanaozen for the "localization" of the conflict: "Thorough inspection should be conducted and those guilty of the deaths of people should be identified. Then, the protracted conflict in Mangystau Region should be solved so that grounds are knocked out from those who are using the situation for personal political ends. Authorities should

sort out and without hesitation name the plotters, as well as not concealing names of those who are funding the conflict from abroad,” Vlasov said, with a reference to Ablyazov.

The text said that Vlasov, Zhuravlev, and Solozobov had suggested that the conflict was an attempt to usher a “color revolution” or “Arab spring” and those who masterminded it were trying to “blow up a scandal in the foreign media but the majority of the country’s population will not support destructive forces.” President Nazarbayev’s policy of integration with Russia and Belarus through the creation of the Customs Union “may not be liked by certain forces wishing to obtain lucrative [oil] contracts. That is why they resort to such desperate methods.” They also said by allowing themselves to be used “rioters” put themselves not only “out of the law” but also “out of society.”

On December 18, 2011 *Karavan* carried an article that was earlier released by the Prosecutor-General’s Office about the events in Zhanaozen, which highlighted the casualties and damage wrought by “participants in mass disorders and marauders” (See Appendix C). According to the newspaper, “hooligan elements had killed 13 people.” It heavily quoted Suindikov on the spillover of the conflict into the nearby railway station of Shetpe the following day, where “a group of individuals who blocked [railway] traffic made calls in support of participants in mass disorders” in Zhanaozen, with “about 50 hooligans categorically rejecting persuasions of peaceful settlement of the problem and continuation of dialogue in another appropriate place.” It justified the police’s use of force: “a hooligan group showed active resistance to police officers, set a locomotive of a freight train on fire, [and] threw petrol bombs on carriages” and “taking into account that

hooligans' action realistically threatened the life and health of civilians and police officers, following repeated warning shots police had to use weapons." According to the newspaper, the Prosecutor-General's Office stressed that "shots were made into the air and on the legs of a hooligan group," as "eight out of those 12 who suffered from them received injuries on precisely lower limbs. Five people were sent home after receiving medical aid, six were admitted to hospital and one died. In addition, five police officers received various injuries and burns."

In a separate December 18, 2011 article headlined "Who is leading the protesters?" the newspaper quoted Suindikov saying that police had indicated that the conflict could be resolved through persuasion (See Appendix D). The police claimed that their officers behaved "loyally" even when they had been attacked by "clubs and steel bars." According to the Respubika website (*Golos Respubliki* was previously known as *Respublika*) which cited a witness called Ayzhangul Amirova, an activist of the opposition People's Front Movement, protesters were fired at from a "black four-wheel drive" and ten oil workers were taken away with injuries. *Respublika* received telephone calls that "mothers who came after their children, elderly women, and elderly men died from shots." It noted that "our journalists working on the spot of events, in contrast to correspondents of Respublika working in an office in Almaty, have somewhat different information and thoughts." "How could *Respublika* get in touch with Mrs. Amirova?" if communications were switched off in Zhanaozen immediately after the events, *Karavan* asked. It cited authorities that claimed she was in Almaty and her husband was in the regional center of Aktau and that these events had taken place without their direct

involvement. However, according to the governor of Mangystau Province, Krymbek Kusherbayev, “these events could not take place without the involvement of a third force,” the newspaper said.

5.1.2: Pro-opposition Newspapers

Golos Respubliki titled its front-page article on December 23, 2011 “Bloody Friday” with a subheading reading “Under a volley of automatic gunfire and whizz of bullets residents of Zhanaozen marked the holiday of their country’s independence” (See Appendix E). The newspaper said that the events in Zhanaozen had achieved what Astana had not managed by hosting an OSCE summit, an Asian Winter Games or congresses of world religions: “the entire week’s main pages of foreign press – first of all, Russian, – were devoted to the bloody events in Zhanaozen.” The text was based on the account of the events published by correspondents of Russia’s *Kommersant*, *Novaya Gazeta* newspapers and the gazeta.ru website because a *Golos Respubliki* correspondent had managed to arrive in the region only the following night. It depicted special task forces’ detention of people suspected of taking part in “disorders” as violent. It quoted a *Novaya Gazeta* interview with an intensive care doctor as saying that “on the first day I personally did not manage to save 22 people.” Since *Golos Respubliki*’s latest issue following the conflict was published on December 23, 2011 (a week later), it summarized how the conflict developed. *Golos Respubliki* provided the official account of the start of the conflict: dismissed oil workers tried to spoil Independence Day celebrations during the erection of yurts on the town’s central square. However, it said, according to Aktau’s

Lada newspaper and the opposition K+ satellite channel and Respublika website, authorities forced children and youth to walk through the square with flags and exactly where “workers stood, oil workers” stopped them and the first clash took place. It noted that the “fight” attracted media attention, with authorities feeding information to news agencies; while at the same time civil society activists were having difficulties communicating after authorities switched off the Internet, mobile communications and electricity in Zhanaozen and blocked Twitter, Youtube and Respublika website. It quoted activist Amirova as saying that a “group of men aged 20-35 who were unfamiliar to oil workers” appeared with “bottles from which something stuck out” on the square. When police arrived and used teargas, the violent group blended in among the oil workers. Amirova described it as “a provocation” because the oil workers had nothing to do with rioting.

Golos Respubliki provided quotes from Suindikov’s statement on the conflict with the summary of the official version. *Golos Respubliki* also mentioned that the leader of the opposition unregistered Alga! party, Vladimir Kozlov, held a news conference on the night of December 16, 2011, even though an Almaty district prosecutor warned him that his action might be classified as an “attempt to incite social discord.” When Kozlov and a group of People’s Front activists tried to board a flight to Aktau at 7:00am the following morning, their flight was delayed until 7:00pm but their aircraft did not take off until 1:30am on December 18, 2011. *Golos Respubliki* also said that authorities had established checks of identities of all people travelling to Zhanaozen, “including foreign journalists.” *Golos Respubliki* also covered a Security Council meeting chaired by

President Nursultan Nazarbayev on December 16, 2011 and the announcement of “the first state of emergency in his [president’s] years-long rule.” Asked by journalists who fired the first shots, Minister of Internal Affairs Kalmukhanbet Kasymov replied that it was the police: “They did not have such order; each police officer took decision independently based on security concerns.” Asked what the police would do in the regional center of Aktau where the situation was tense, the minister answered: “If disorders similar to those in Zhanaozen were to start [in Aktau], I will issue orders to fire.”

Golos Respubliki said that its correspondent Zhanar Kasymbekova was not able to reach Zhanaozen even a week after the outbreak of the conflict.

In the same December 23, 2011 issue, *Golos Respubliki* titled its front-page editorial “Instead of president’s triumph – new tragedy” (See Appendix F). It said that it was symbolic that “December events in Zhanaozen” coincided with both the 25th anniversary of the Zheltoksan (December) events in Almaty when young people and students protested against Soviet policies and the 20th anniversary of Kazakhstan’s independence. It expressed regret that an “information blockade” including switching off of the Internet and mobile services in Zhanaozen had made it impossible to obtain a “full, objective and clear picture of what happened;” as it was still not clear how many people had suffered and who acted as “instigator” or “provoked the tragedy.” *Golos Respubliki* said that authorities had blamed fugitive “Mukhtar Ablyazov and Rakhat Aliyev, the United States, opposition media outlets and some destructive forces of unknown origin” without waiting for the results of their own investigation. *Golos Respubliki* blamed

authorities for the conflict because “nothing” had prevented them from “entering dialogue with striking oil workers of Zhanaozen and solving the problem.” The text suggested that authorities “only” needed to send a delegation led by a deputy prime minister with corresponding powers and orders to “settle the social conflict” and release lawyer Natalya Sokolova who defended the strikers. It predicted that “we will be told time and again that the state did not have [the] right to get involved in the conflict.” However, the state got involved in it by “trumping up criminal cases against activists of the striker movement and openly siding with the employer.” It is the state’s duty to act as “arbiter” and prevent “the escalation of the conflict”. Moreover, the government “had all the possibilities to press the employer and force it to reach a rational compromise,” the editorial said. In a situation when 2,000 citizens of Kazakhstan with their family members had been trying to survive for seven months with help from their relatives, the “slightest pretext was enough for a social outbreak.” Even when members of the European parliament tried to respond to it, Astana’s reaction was “indifferent silence.” It also criticized the prime minister for pretending that the conflict “ended a long time ago”: “as a result, tens killed, hundreds injured and suffering, great material damage, psychological breakdown among those who were shot and among those who fired. The most worrying is that nothing has yet ended as lawlessness is continuing in the region,” the *Golos Respubliki* editorial concluded.

In an interview with *Golos Respubliki*, published on December 23, 2011, the chairman of the board of directors of the opposition K+ satellite station, Bakhytzhan Ketebayev, said that his outlet had come to realize in summer 2011 that the situation in

Zhanaozen was a “volatile cocktail.” K+, believed to be linked to the fugitive billionaire Mukhtar Ablyazov, extensively covered the labor dispute between oil workers and their employers. Ketebayev said K+ reports had shown how “strikers were gradually radicalizing.” In response to accusations that independent journalists fomented the conflict, Ketebayev said that since K+ had regularly covered the strike, its journalists were on the spot when the conflict broke out. He argued that state-run television channels had not covered oil workers’ strike and were not on the spot to report on the conflict. Ketebayev said that if the government had dealt with the strike as soon as it started, the conflict would have been avoided, regardless of “how we would have covered it or whoever would have stirred it up or somehow would have provoked it”. Ketebayev rejected claims that his channel had spread inaccurate information or rumors about the conflict. “Authorities did everything to spread rumors as they cut off mobile communications, cut off the Internet services and blocked landlines,” Ketebayev told *Golos Respubliki*. K+ helped draw international attention to the Zhanaozen conflict and thus prevented special task forces’ “uncontrolled deployment in the state of emergency” in the region. Ketebayev rejected earlier claims that Ablyazov was behind the Zhanaozen conflict. He said that if state-run television channels had reported on the oil workers’ strike and provided them with an outlet, the conflict would have been avoided.

On December 23, 2011, *Golos Respubliki* also published an interview with the leader of the unregistered Alga! party, Vladimir Kozlov, who was later charged with inciting the conflict and sentenced to seven-and-a-half years in prison in October 2012. Kozlov said that authorities tried to prevent his scheduled journey to Zhanaozen on

December 17, 2011, a day after the outbreak of the conflict. They delayed his plane, but later gave up because he was never deterred by barriers the authorities set up for him. Even though local authorities promised to take Kozlov to Zhanaozen upon his arrival in Aktau, his car was stopped by special-task police officers. He described the situation as “tense” and the people became “angry” because of “irrational actions” by authorities. “Authorities deliberately used mortal weapons with the aim of suppressing not only riots but the very desire to protest,” Kozlov said. “The labor conflict was turned into an active protest against the system because of the actions of state authorities.” He advised that in order to investigate the Zhanaozen events, authorities should adopt a “neutral” position. He described a home-made video that showed police chase people fleeing the central square and fire at them as a “dangerous drift” by authorities.

Vzglyad ran its first issue after the Zhanaozen events on December 21, 2011, with a front-page article headlined “Zhanaozen: How myth about stability has burnt down” (See Appendix G). The article’s subheading said that December 16, 2011, would go down in history as a “day of bloody massacres.” *Vzglyad*’s Editor-in-Chief Igor Vinyavskiy said in the editorial “Bloody Friday” that “Friday, December 16, 2011, marked the beginning of the last, final stage of [President] Nazarbayev’s authoritarianism.” For “seven months these guys [strikers] had stood on the square, but authorities had not found a way of resolving this conflict. Seven months these guys were provoked into riots. Seven months they hoped that they would achieve human treatment: sit at the same table and start to search for consensus,” the editorial said. “We were

shown that these authorities would pile corpses on any square only to preserve their future right of existence. We were shown that authorities do not want to negotiate...”

In separate articles, *Vzglyad* ran the government’s account of the events and quoted Minister of Internal Affairs, Kalmukhanbet Kasymov as saying that in Aktau, the capital of Mangystau Province, “if need be we will use weapons there too. If strikers start killing our officers, what do you suggest we do?” Public figures, opposition members, and cultural figures called on authorities to involve civil society in establishing the causes and assessing the consequences of the conflict. The newspaper also published the account of Kozlov’s problems with getting from Almaty to Zhanaozen.

5.2: Detention of Opposition Members and Union Activists

5.2.1: Pro-government Newspapers

Kazakhstanskaya Pravda published the January 25, 2012, statement by Prosecutor-General’s Office on the events of December 16, 2011 entitled “Investigation continues.” The statement said that “a group of former employees of the Ozenmunaygaz oil-extracting enterprise with assistance from hooligan youth staged mass disorders, accompanied by attacks on property, robbery, arsons against the civilian population and police officers.” A total of 125 facilities were “burnt down, damaged, and looted” with damage inflicted on “the state, legal entities, and individuals” totaling “billions of tenge [millions of dollars],” according to the press statement. To “stop mass disorders and protect civilians” the regional interior department sent a police detachment which was “attacked by a crowd using firearms and side arms, stones, sticks, and petrol bombs.” In

these circumstances, after repeated warning shots the police detachment used service weapons against “active participants in disorders.” Consequently, 64 individuals “received gun wounds, [and] 14 people died. Two more deaths are not linked to mass disorders,” the statement said. “Thirty-five police officers received various bodily injuries.”

The statement said six “organizers of mass disorders” had been identified and arrested. A further 23 “active participants in mass disorders” and 11 individuals involved in “attacks on property and looting” had been identified and detained, with many of them admitting their involvement. They said that they “prepared for mass disorders in advance, involving a group of young people who prepared petrol bombs and got armed with improvised means,” the statement said.

The Prosecutor-General’s Office said that under the orders from the president, the legitimacy of actions of police officers, pertaining to the use of weapons, had been established. An investigation found that police officers “mostly acted lawfully in circumstances of a real threat to life and health” of both civilians and the officers themselves. The Prosecutor-General’s Office admitted that in certain cases the use of firearms by police was “disproportionate” and their response was “inadequate to the threat.” This resulted in the arrests of high-ranking officers for “abuse of power that led to deaths.” The statement revealed the death of a certain Kenzhebay Zholdybayev in custody and said that measures were being taken to establish those responsible for “beating up the slain.”

The statement also said “unlawful actions” by local government officials and managers of oil firms prompted social tension and the protracted strike by oil workers which had grown into mass disorders. These officials, according to an investigation, had embezzled public funds allocated for social projects aimed to benefit the local population and oil workers.

The Prosecutor-General’s Office said that mass disorders were caused by certain individuals to “force dismissed employees to continue protest actions and violent confrontation with authorities.” It said signs of “incitement of social enmity” had been found in “propaganda materials” distributed by them and a criminal case had been launched by the National Security Committee under Clause 3 of Article 164 of the Criminal Code (“incitement of social enmity”). Under this case, “leaders and active members” of the unregistered Alga! party and People’s Front movement, Vladimir Kozlov, Ayzhangul Amirova, and Serik Sapargali, had been detained on suspicion of “involvement in incitement of social enmity.” *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* carried letters and opinions of public figures, members of parliament, leaders of public organizations, farmers, and pensioners on the Prosecutor-General’s statement but no editorial or press statement about the arrests of Kozlov, Amirova, and Sapargali.

Karavan published an article based on the statement of the Prosecutor-General’s Office on January 27, 2012, adding that a criminal case had been launched against *Vzglyad*’s Editor-in-Chief Igor Vinyavskiy who was suspected of “public calls for the forced overthrow of government using the media.”

5.2.2: Pro-opposition Newspapers

On 27 January, *Golos Respubliki* covered the arrest of opposition and union leaders with an interview with Alga! activist Mikhail Sizov under the front-page headline “KNB will not break Alga members by arrests and interrogations.” Sizov said on January 23, 2012 that when Alga!’s leader Vladimir Kozlov was detained, National Security Committee (KNB) officers raided the party’s offices and houses of its members. Officers presented Sizov with an arrest warrant saying that “the investigation has all grounds to assume that the place of residence of M. Sizov may contain incriminating evidence of Ayzhangul Amirova who is appearing in a criminal case of incitement of social enmity and mass disorders in Zhanaozen.” Sizov said that after documenting their actions and making a list of property seized from him, Sizov was taken to the KNB department for “interrogation.” This turned out to be, Sizov said, an “elementary interrogation” on Amirova’s criminal case in which he was designated as a “witness.” “We were ready for this situation, especially after the tragedy in Zhanaozen,” Sizov said. He added that his party expected the law-enforcement agencies to attack the party’s regional offices and activists. Sizov told *Golos Respubliki* that Alga!’s immediate objectives were 1) to break through a “media blackout” around the Zhanaozen events by drawing attention from national and international audiences, to establish the truth and “true culprits” of the violence; 2) to create an international commission to investigate the Zhanaozen events to bring to justice those responsible for organizing the violence and those who gave the order to open fire against protesters; 3) and to defend people suspected of organizing the violence.

In an article “They will imprison [Vinyavskiy] for show” published on January 27, 2012, *Golos Respubliki* said that Vinyavskiy had been charged as not just a journalist but as a “public figure” on suspicion of calling for violent overthrow or change of the constitutional order or violation of Kazakhstan’s integrity using the media or an organized group. *Golos Respubliki* explained that Vinyavskiy was accused on January 23, 2012, of organizing a group and spreading leaflets that undermined the foundations of the state. A KNB officer discovered over 3,000 leaflets almost two years prior to the Zhanaozen events – in April 2010. According to *Golos Respubliki*, leaflets read “Kyrgyzstan got rid of the criminal family of [former President] Bakiyev. Stop putting up with it, take [it] to a dumping site” and carried President Nazarbayev’s picture. Vinyavskiy was apparently even made to confront individuals who had claimed “Vinyavskiy gave them instructions to where and how to distribute” these leaflets. *Golos Respubliki* questioned the timing of the charges if Vinyavskiy “committed” a crime almost two years ago and the KNB’s and the Prosecutor-General’s inaction. “The weekly, headed by Igor Vinyavskiy, is one of few media outlets which told the truth about the situation in the country, including the shooting of civilians in Zhanaozen. In order to prevent journalists from writing on topics banned by the government, Akorda [presidential residence] decided to publicly execute Igor Vinyavskiy,” *Golos Respubliki* said.

The prominent journalist and critic of President Nazarbayev, Sergey Duvanov, published his opinion piece in *Golos Respubliki* on January 27, 2012, under the headline “Season to hunt opposition open.” Judging by the KNB’s active prosecution of Alga! and

independent media, a “big hunt” on the opposition had been launched, Duvanov suggested. Duvanov said authorities had been worried the opposition would want to capitalize on the oil workers’ strike but the opposition was “enviably law-abiding,” preferring to work in a “legitimate field.”

Alga! leaders did not break any law but their criminal cases would be trumped up anyway; Duvanov suggested that authorities shifted responsibility for “bloody events” in Zhanaozen onto Alga! members. “Those at Akorda so much outraged by Mukhtar Ablyazov want to revenge on him,” said Duvanov. The outspoken journalist also had a message for authorities: “If one assumes that authorities would become stronger after destroying Alga! one is mistaken... Each new reprisal only increases [the number of] disgruntled people, nearing its end. This is a formula of demise of all authoritarian regimes.”

On January 25, 2012, *Vzglyad* ran a short story on Vinyavskiy’s arrest on its front page under the headline “Editor-in-chief detained.” “For the first time in Kazakhstan a journalist is suspected of extremism,” read a subheading. Vinyavskiy was arrested on separate charges on January 23, the same day as Kozlov, Amirova and Sapargali.

Vzglyad, which means “view, opinion” in Russian, published an editorial headlined “*Vzglyad* without Igor’s opinion is not *Vzglyad*.” Saying that Vinyavskiy never concealed his critical attitude to the present government, the editorial said (emphasis retained): “We openly and publicly state: We, the editorial team of the *Vzglyad* newspaper, do not call for violent overthrow of the existing constitutional order! We are against the breakup of the state’s [territorial] integrity. We are for a prosperous and

democratic Kazakhstan! At the same time, no one will cancel our natural civil right to fight for our editor using all legal means. He is not a criminal!”

5.3: The Trials: Kozlov, Aminov, and Sapargali

5.3.1: Pro-government Newspapers

The hearings of the criminal case opened against Alga! party leader Vladimir Kozlov, former oil worker Akzhanat Aminov, and People’s Front activist Serik Sapargali started on August 16, 2012, in Aktau. Aminov was convicted of “leading an illegal strike” in summer 2011. Kozlov and Aminov were charged with three criminal counts: incitement of social enmity (entailing a prison term of up to 12 years); calling for the violent overthrow of the constitutional order (up to seven years in prison); and organizing a criminal group (up to 12 years in prison). Sapargali was charged with the first two counts. Kozlov pleaded not guilty on the first day of trial, while Aminov pleaded guilty and Sapargali admitted some responsibility but did not plead guilty (Lillis, 2012f).

On August 22, 2012, four days after the opening of the trial, *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* carried a short article with a headline “Trial continues” and mentioned only that the defendants were charged with “incitement of social enmity” which led to “disorders” in Zhanaozen in December 2011. It also said that the trial was held in “open regime” with the presence of “relatives of the defendants, representatives of the media, and observers, including international” observers. It provided further factual details: “10 witnesses have been questioned since the beginning of the trial” and “three experts on a number of economic issues and results of linguistic expert examinations” gave evidence at the

hearings. “The next sitting was postponed until August 27 [2012] in connection with one of Vladimir Kozlov’s defenders’ [lawyers’] inability to attend for family reasons,” *Kazhstanskaya Pravda* said. “It has become known at the trial that A. Aminov and S. Sapargali partly admitted their guilt.”

On 24 August, 2012, *Karavan* also carried an article headlined “Trial in Zhanaozen: Witnesses started speaking.” It said that for eight months the public was being persuaded that employers at the Ozenmunaygaz oil company and leaders of Zhanaozen and Mangystau Region “did not want to talk to strikers,” but “[w]itnesses’ evidence shows the opposite.” The newspaper published accounts of government, local government and employers who had given evidence as witnesses against the defendants.

5.3.2: Pro-opposition Newspapers

On August 24, 2012, *Golos Respubliki* extensively covered the trial and drew attention to procedural irregularities: “I request to draw state prosecutors’ attention and ask court to consider indictments in the Russian and Kazakh languages – there are different answers,” *Golos Respubliki* quoted the defendants’ lawyer Venera Sarsembina as asking the judge. “Also I ask [you] to open 42nd tom, page 9 [because] I have a suspicion that a witness’s protocol was falsified and Kozlov’s name was inserted in it.” *Golos Respubliki* described the trial as a “sci-fi novel,” authored by Kazakhstan’s intelligence officers, whose “plot” was falling apart, while “main characters” were rejecting roles invented for them, but the judge as “the main reader” was happy about everything so the trial continued. According to *Golos Respubliki*, witnesses said they

personally did not hear or did not see Kozlov speak before oil workers, but they were convinced that he and K+ channel were responsible for the Zhanaozen events.

Golos Respubliki said that when lawyer Sarsembina grilled the judge and prosecutors about differences in the Kazakh and Russian versions of trial materials and alleged “falsifications” in witness’s protocols, Judge Myrzabekov replied: “There is a difference in the manner of speech in the Kazakh and Russian languages and this explains differences [in indictments].” Prosecutor Emirgali Zhanayev explained that “This is a creative approach and creative conclusion by investigators.” Then Sarsembina argued that all documents should be identical even when they were translated, and the prosecutor asked the defense to submit a motion to remove those witness’s protocols, *Golos Respubliki* said. Kozlov demanded his and his family’s security protection after a smear campaign had been launched against his wife. Also, some strangers had visited her in her rented apartment. “We will assume control over this issue,” Zhanayev said, while Judge Myrzabekov promised: “Yes, we will clarify and sort this out.”

On 22 August, 2012, *Vzglyad* carried an article on the beginning of the trial under the headline “Kozlov’s trial to issue a verdict to Akorda” and said that there were no doubts about the “political component” in his case. “Hastiness, encroachment of rights and negligence of procedural norms, and violation of ethics are an incomplete list of what the defendants and observers faced,” *Vzglyad* said. “What the trial will end with does not cause doubts either – Vladimir Kozlov will be found guilty,” *Vzglyad* predicted. “However, from the political point of view this is a verdict on the very political system of [President] Nazarbayev, which is showing the world its impotence in this absurd case.”

5.4: End of trial of Kozlov, Aminov, and Sapargali

5.4.1: Pro-government Newspapers

On October 9, 2012, *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* published an article on the trial's ruling, issued on October 8, 2012, under the headline "Organizers of mass disorders in Zhanaozen convicted." It said "they were found guilty of incitement of social enmity and sentenced: Kozlov to seven-and-a-half years in prison, Aminov and Sapargali to five and four years [respectively] with the suspended application of Article 63 of the Criminal Code of Kazakhstan with a probation of three years."

Kazakhstanskaya Pravda said that "there were no doubts that someone skillfully used ordinary workers' anger for their own ends."

"The investigation of tragic events and subsequent trial fully confirmed that one of the reasons for mass disorders in Zhanaozen in December 11, 2011 was active actions of certain individuals to compel dismissed workers to continue protest actions and violent confrontation with the authorities. Expert examination established that propaganda materials they distributed contained elements of incitement of social enmity."

Kazakhstanskaya Pravda said the "maximum objectivity" of the trial was confirmed by the "fact that the entire trial was held openly and publicly" and that the defendants received the rights and procedures guaranteed by the constitution and law.

Kazakhstanskaya Pravda said that while not pleading guilty, Kozlov had admitted that the fugitive banker Mukhtar Ablyazov funded his unregistered Alga! party. It recalled that Ablyazov was convicted in absentia of "creating an organized criminal

group and stealing funds worth over \$7bn” from Kazakhstan’s major BTA Bank and its subsidiaries.

On 12 October, 2012, *Karavan* ran a short factual article under a headline “Trial arranged... by years.” The article contained information on the charges brought against the defendants and sentences they received. According to *Karavan*, Kozlov’s brother Dmitriy said they would appeal against the ruling.

5.4.2: Pro-opposition Newspapers

On October 12, 2012, *Golos Respubliki* said that “Kozlov’s harsh ruling was a blow to [President] Nazarbayev.” It said authorities unleashed a media war against Alga! with a documentary on the unregistered party which was aired on all national television channels the same day. However, *Golos Respubliki* said, authorities lost this media war, as Western embassies, officials, lawmakers, human rights and nongovernmental organizations condemned the ruling “literally within hours” of its announcement. “Noone abroad believes them [Kazakhstan’s authorities], even the most sincere supporters of maintaining ‘constructive relations’ with Kazakhstan,” said *Golos Respubliki*. Authorities made a number of “unacceptable mistakes,” for example by releasing the documentary on Alga! within hours of the ruling: “A film cannot be done within several hours, which is why someone knew what the court ruling would be in advance and, correspondingly, got prepared for its information support and pushing into masses.”

One of the “arguments” used in the media war was the opinions of “public figures” who welcomed Kozlov’s sentence and expressed their conviction that he was

“guilty,” which is why his sentence is just and lawful, *Golos Respubliki* said. It noted that Kozlov’s sentence was much softer than expected as the prosecution requested a nine-year-long prison term for Kozlov.

Golos Respubliki speculated that since Aminov could not be acquitted fully because his charges were similar to those of Kozlov, authorities reached an agreement with him that he would admit his guilt and acknowledge Kozlov’s guilt in return for freedom. “This freedom at any price materialized into a five-year suspended term for a leader of an organized criminal group (given what it has done, *vide supra*) which is insult to commonsense and legality,” said *Golos Respubliki*.

On October 10, 2012, in an editorial titled “Volodya, alga!” (Volodya being diminutive for Vladimir and alga meaning “forward” in Kazakh), *Vzglyad*’s Vinyavskiy said the trial had been totally controlled by President Nazarbayev. A day before the ruling, President Nazarbayev told Russia’s major television channel that the court had already sorted it out with a guilty verdict for the culprits. “Noone is surprised that this person knows everything even before the ruling—who is guilty and how the court sorted it out. Everyone understands that he is the judge. He is also a prosecutor and main prison guard,” Vinyavskiy said.

Vinyavskiy suggested that the suspended sentences of Aminov and Sapargali showed that in reality there was no crime: “Criminals who were accused of such serious crimes cannot receive suspended terms.”

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1: Peace Journalism

This analysis of the coverage of the Zhanaozen conflict shows that pro-opposition newspapers *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad* and pro-government newspapers *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Karavan* provided contrasting coverage of the same events related to the conflict. *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Karavan* reported the events concentrated on the government version of the conflict. *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* articles talked about the conflict as if there were only two parties involved (“government,” “police,” and “state” and “group of hooligans,” “organizers of disorders,” “bandit elements,” and “culprits”) and in terms of “us” against “them” (“situation under control” implying the government restored order and “those guilty to be punished” shifting blame on the protesters); its coverage placed strong emphasis on visible effects (“mass disorders,” “disrupt the celebrations,” “set a police bus on fire,” and 46 facilities “were looted”) and did not discuss the background or long-term consequences of the conflict. *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* also relied heavily on government actions and statements, while almost ignoring the strikers, protesters, or later defendants, although it provided space for views and opinions of public organizations (for example, the state-backed Federation of Trade Unions of Kazakhstan), individuals in various capacities (farmers, artists, and pensioners among others), and public and government figures (Presidential Adviser Yermukhamet Yertysbayev) who spoke in favor of the government and against protesters. Out of 38 articles published in a week following the outbreak of the conflict on December 16, 2011, *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* published only two short articles noting

that opposition leaders (including Kozlov) and public figures had set up a public commission to investigate the events. While presenting the government account of the events as undisputed facts, *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* described witness accounts as “rumors.” *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* also republished the Russian Rosbalt news agency’s interview with Russian experts who suggested the Zhanaozen events had been an attempt to implement a scenario of the “Arab spring” or “color revolution” in Kazakhstan.

Like *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda*, *Karavan*’s coverage was also one-sided and heavily reliant on sources and information from authorities. *Karavan*’s language was very accusatory (“hooligan group,” “marauders”). *Karavan* did not publish any editorial or opinion piece on the Zhanaozen conflict or tried to cover the conflict from both sides.

In contrast to the pro-government newspapers, opposition *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad*’s coverage tried to provide both sides of the conflict, even though they were critical of government actions during and after the conflict. The newspapers also paid particular attention to details of the events and the background that had led to the violence. At the same time, the newspapers used the Zhanaozen conflict to criticize the government and its action in dealing with the labor dispute and the violence that followed. In contrast to the pro-government newspapers, they used neutral language to describe protesters (“group of men”) but a harsh language to describe police action (“new tragedy,” the president’s “first state of emergency”).

While *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Karavan* did not cover the events from the strikers’, protesters’ or opposition’s side, *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad* devoted a significant part of their coverage to other groups involved. *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and

Karavan avoided reporting negative actions such as police brutality in containing rioters and detaining suspects and the cutting off of jerking mobile, landline and Internet communications. Meanwhile, *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad* made excesses in government actions a central point of their coverage.

While both pro-government and pro-opposition newspapers published articles about casualties and damage, the former relied on official information and the latter tallied statistics based on witness accounts and participants. Similarly, pro-government newspapers mostly cited official sources close to the government or sources that were not critical of government actions. The pro-opposition newspapers' sources were from both sides.

As a result, *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Karavan* coverage of the Zhanaozen conflict does not meet the peace journalism criteria as articulated in Chapter 2. Even though *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad* did not meet all these criteria, they covered the conflict in greater compliance with the elements of peace journalism.

6.2: Social Conflict Theory

The study determined that *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Vzglyad* concentrated on relaying the government's message. Even when the pro-government newspapers' articles aimed not to communicate with the actors (rioters and the defendants) involved in the conflict, they conveyed the government message that popular protests and discontent would not be tolerated. Branding rioters and protesters as "hooligans," "marauders," and "instigators," the newspapers blamed the conflict on them without looking into the causes

and circumstances that led to police opening fire. The official point of view in the controlled media environment combined with letters from public, cultural and academic figures sidelined the striking oil workers and rioters as “alien” to Kazakhstan, and helped the government advance the idea that the Zhanaozen conflict was “instigated” by “third forces.” This is a convenient stance that the government used to turn the conflict to its advantage by blaming it on fugitive billionaire Mukhtar Ablyazov and the opposition Alga! party.

Golos Respubliki and *Vzglyad*, on the contrary, used their pages as a channel to communicate the protesters’ and opposition’s message to all concerned parties and the readers. *Golos Respubliki* rebuffed the government’s claim that the violence was instigated by the fugitive “Mukhtar Ablyazov and Rakhat Aliyev, the U.S. government, opposition media outlets and some destructive forces of unknown origin.” Moreover, it communicated to authorities, suggesting that “nothing” had prevented them from “entering dialogue with striking oil workers” and from “solving the problem.” *Golos Respubliki* also reported that the government could have “settled the conflict” by dispatching a delegation to the region. Its coverage pointed to the state’s duty to act as an “arbiter” so it could press the oil firms to reach a compromise with the strikers. *Golos Respubliki* indirectly told the government that by cutting off mobile communications and the Internet, the government had done “everything” to help spread rumors about the scale of the conflict.

Vzglyad also actively editorialized by reporting that it was a newspaper that had not called for the violent overthrow of the existing constitutional order in the country. It

reminded Kazakhstan's government that *Vzglyad* had the right to fight for its Editor-in-Chief Vinyavskiy because he was not a criminal.

On the detention of suspected "organizers" of the violent, *Golos Respubliki* published the prominent journalist Sergey Duvanov's opinion piece in which he argued that authorities would not become more powerful than they already were by destroying the country's opposition forces because reprisal only increased the number of disgruntled people.

On the conviction of Alga! leader Vladimir Kozlov, *Vzglyad*'s Editor-in-Chief Vinyavskiy directly accused President Nazarbayev of being "judge" and "prosecutor" in the case. Vinyavskiy also told authorities that the other two defendants Aminov and Sapargali were not sentenced to imprisonment although there was no crime committed by Kozlov either.

This analysis shows that even though *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Karavan* served as mouthpieces for the government, they did not communicate to strikers, protesters, or opposition leaders. The government could have used these newspapers to hold a dialogue with the other side to settle the conflict.

On the contrary, *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad* and opposition leaders actively engaged with the parties concerned, albeit one-way. By engaging the government directly or indirectly, the newspapers relayed their positions and gave explanations as where the government was wrong or how a problem could be solved.

Consequently, the government and *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Karavan* did not communicate with their opponents and engage in a peace dialogue. Coverage of the

Zhanaozen conflict by these newspapers missed an opportunity of settling the conflict via communication. At the same time, *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad* and opposition leaders engaged with the government to solve the conflict via means of communications. Even though the study showed that the coverage utilized the principles of war journalism, it should be expanded further to operationalize Galtung's (1965), Hanitzsch (2004), and Lynch & McGoldrick's (2005) classification of peace/war journalism and measure it quantitatively, i.e. provide ratios of articles meeting peace journalism versus articles framed in war journalism. The study supports previous research that showed governmental influence on the media's coverage of conflicts (Hiebert, 2003; Reese & Buckalew, 1995) and that the media serve as a propaganda tool for the government (Chomsky, 1997).

The limitation of this study was that the pro-government newspapers (*Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Karavan*) were accessed online, and thus the prominence of their stories which could be visible on hard copies was impossible to judge. Since the study was based only on the Russian language newspapers, research into the media coverage of the Zhanaozen conflict could be further expanded to include Kazakh-language media. Further research should also extend the "textual" analysis to include photos and videos posted on the newspapers' websites, readers' comments and interviews with journalists and contributors.

6.3: Conclusion

As discussed in Chapter 2, the widespread belief that journalists “just report the facts” is not entirely supported in this analysis. This conclusion is backed by textual evidence from the coverage of the Zhanaozen events of December 16, 2011, and of subsequent developments by *Kazakhstanskaya Pravda* and *Karavan*. This study showed that these pro-government newspapers, acting as outlets to relay the government’s messages, did not meet the criteria defined by Lynch & McGoldrick (2005) for peace journalism, and constituted some elements of war journalism. At the same time, the opposition *Golos Respubliki* and *Vzglyad* newspapers covered the Zhanaozen conflict with a relatively balanced journalistic approach, providing a relatively fair voice. The possible explanation for this is that the Zhanaozen conflict was the first incident in the history of independent Kazakhstan when government security forces opened fire on protesters, killing civilians. Kazakhstan’s media in general is not accustomed to the coverage of a conflict based on the principles of peace journalism.

While both pro-government and pro-opposition newspapers seized the opportunity to explain the positions of the conflicting parties they sided with, the study showed that there was little effort to establish interaction between these parties using the newspapers. The pro-government newspapers were mostly concerned with informing the public of the government’s positions on the conflict with almost no effort to give voice to the government’s opponents. In this context, the pro-opposition newspapers engaged in exposing government inaction or fault in the conflict.

These newspapers could have acted as mediators by covering the conflict as peace brokers to encourage negotiations between the warring parties and to contribute to the peaceful settlement of the conflict.

While the pro-government newspapers avoided discussing the causes of the Zhanaozen events, the pro-opposition newspapers identified the root cause of the conflict as the government's and oil firms' reluctance to solve social grievances in a timely and fair manner. Had the government and oil firms taken some measures to meet oil workers' demands when they threatened industrial action over wages and working conditions, the government would have avoided strikes and consequently the Zhanaozen violence. The government has over many years put great effort into promoting the country regionally and internationally, via the chairing of the OSCE in 2010 and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 2011 and hosting the Asian Winter Games in 2011. As part of its efforts to promote Kazakhstan, it will also host EXPO in the capital of Astana in 2017, which was decided by the Bureau International des Expositions in November 2012. Yet the Zhanaozen events have inflicted significant damage on the country's international reputation, offsetting the government's public relations campaigns. President Nursultan Nazarbayev, who has repeatedly presented Kazakhstan as a stable and dynamic country, has also suffered a blow to his image as "Leader of the Nation," as the events in Zhanaozen marked the first violent suppression of protest with human casualties in Kazakhstan's modern history. The fact that the violent clashes took place during celebrations of the 20th anniversary of independence as officials lauded Kazakhstan's

economic and social achievements with pomp lends particular significance to the Zhanaozen conflict.

Seen by some observers and presented by the government as a struggle for power in Kazakhstan, the Zhanaozen events should be considered of great significance as they indicate that the Nazarbayev administration – despite its iron grip on the political sphere and its apparent confidence in its own popularity – is in fact extremely sensitive to any signs of dissent, suggesting that it fears the erosion of its own power. It also suggests that the ruling elite harbors a certain fear that opposition forces, unable to attain power using lawful means due to the absence of free and fair elections in Kazakhstan, may ultimately seek power through violence.

Moving forward, it is still unknown how the conflict and the government's dealing of it are going to be resolved. In this regard, questions arise whether the Zhanaozen events will be judged as a watershed of President Nazarbayev's rule and whether it will be considered his "Waterloo." Another important issue is how similar labor disputes will be solved in future and whether the deaths and casualties of the oil dispute that led to the Zhanaozen conflict will have an effect that will ultimately benefit the workers' movement in Kazakhstan by making the government more receptive to conflict resolution. It also remains to be seen what Kazakhstan's government has learned from this conflict in order to prevent similar events in the future.

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APPENDIX A: SITUATION UNDER CONTROL, THOSE GUILTY TO BE

PUNISHED

Вчера в Акорде под председательством Главы государства Нурсултана Назарбаева состоялось заседание Совета безопасности. Обсуждена ситуация в городе Жанаозене Мангистауской области.

С докладами выступили генеральный прокурор Асхат Даулбаев, председатель КНБ Нуртай Абыкаев, представители ответственных государственных органов.

Глава государства подвел итоги заседания:

– Уважаемые казахстанцы!

Вчера в городе Жанаозене Мангистауской области во время праздничных мероприятий вследствие преступных действий группы лиц произошли массовые беспорядки. Мирные граждане, собравшиеся на центральной площади для празднования юбилея Независимости, были подвергнуты нападению группы хулиганствующих лиц. Правонарушители напали на полицейских, разрушили расставленные по случаю праздника юрты, подожгли полицейский автобус. Они избивали мирное население, разбивали припаркованные рядом автомобили и поджигали их.

На требования правоохранительных органов прекратить противоправные действия хулиганствующая группа совершила нападение на сотрудников правоохранительных органов с целью захвата оружия. Но они этого не позволили.

В результате массовых беспорядков сожжены здания городского и сельского акиматов, гостиницы, административное здание компании «Озенмунайгаз». Уничтожению подверглось имущество физических и юридических лиц, сожжены автомобили, разграблены банкоматы, магазины, банки и так далее.

Всего подверглось нападению 46 объектов. В маленьком городе почти все объекты подверглись нападению, сожжению или уничтожению.

К сожалению, в результате этих беспорядков погибли люди, наши граждане. По предварительным данным, погибли 10 человек, имеются тяжело раненные, в том числе сотрудники полиции.

Хочу отметить, что полицейские четко выполняли свой служебный долг и действовали в рамках своих полномочий по закону.

У каждого погибшего и пострадавшего есть родные, близкие. Я искренне выражаю свои соболезнования. Семьям погибших и пострадавших будет оказана помощь.

По всем фактам правонарушений возбуждены уголовные дела. По моему поручению создана следственно-оперативная группа во главе с министром внутренних дел. Эта комиссия примет все необходимые меры по выявлению и наказанию организаторов беспорядков, восстановлению общественной безопасности в городе.

В настоящее время ситуация находится под контролем правоохранительных органов.

Виновные лица понесут наказание по всей строгости закона.

При этом считаю, что трудовой спор нефтяников нельзя смешивать с деяниями бандитствующих элементов, которые хотели воспользоваться ситуацией для своих преступных замыслов. Мы раскроем откуда идет финансирование и кто этим занимается.

За эти годы для улучшения социальной ситуации в Жанаозене государством сделано многое. Была увеличена заработная плата. Мы приглашали в Жанаозен соотечественников, живущих в других странах, создали для них все необходимые условия. За это они должны быть благодарны государству.

В Жанаозен выедет специальная комиссия Правительства, «Казмунайгаза» для решения трудовых споров и разъяснения населению случившегося и принимаемых мер.

Генеральной прокуратуре с другими правоохранительными органами поручаю тщательно расследовать случившееся, обеспечить максимальную открытость информации, рассказать о результатах народу, при необходимости привлечь независимых экспертов.

Следует отметить, что акции протеста, массовые беспорядки сегодня происходят во многих странах. Во многом они стали результатом мировой рецессии, вызванной глобальным финансово-экономическим кризисом.

Все эти годы мы укрепляли стабильность, мир и согласие в нашей стране. Это наши главные ценности, благодаря которым мы достигли успехов. Мы не допустим каких бы то ни было попыток нарушить мир и спокойствие в нашем доме, достижения нашей Независимости.

Поэтому у общественности нет никаких поводов для беспокойства. Ситуация

находится под контролем.

Закон есть закон. Требования закона для всех одинаковы. Закон будет применен для обеспечения безопасности и спокойствия жителей города. Государство будет по всей строгости закона пресекать любые попытки нарушить спокойствие и безопасность наших граждан.

Призываю всех казахстанцев осудить этот чуждый для нашей страны инцидент и сохранять спокойствие. Жанаозенцев призываю к мудрости и спокойствию.

Мы со всеми этими вопросами разберемся.

Для восстановления экономики города Жанаозена, восстановления сожженных объектов и, самое главное, для обеспечения безопасности граждан я издаю Указ о введении чрезвычайного положения в городе Жанаозене согласно Конституции и Закону «О чрезвычайном положении». Он будет действовать 20 дней, с сегодняшнего дня. Если до этого мы разберемся со всеми вопросами, будет установлено спокойствие, он может быть отменен в любое время.

APPENDIX B: THE PROSECUTOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE REPORTS

Недовольство нефтяников Жанаозена было использовано третьими силами, чтобы устроить массовые беспорядки в городе, сорвать празднование 20-летия Независимости Казахстана и создать негативную информационную волну. Это стало понятно сразу после подробностей, обнародованных вчера в Астане на брифинге в Генеральной прокуратуре РК.

Официальный представитель ведомства Нурдаулет Суиндииков в своем выступлении детально и поминутно изложил хронику массовых беспорядков в Жанаозене, происходивших 16 декабря. Его слова сопровождалась видеорядом с места событий (частично это оперативная съемка полиции, частично – кадры, снятые местными телекомпаниями и очевидцами). На них ясно видно, что присутствовавшие среди забастовщиков молодые люди (преимущественно в одежде темного цвета) неоднократно пытались спровоцировать полицейских на применение силы.

Хроника прискорбных событий такова: около 11 часов утра хулиганствующие элементы попытались перекрыть путь движения праздничной колонны жителей города, среди которых было много детей. Эти действия сопровождалась нецензурной бранью и угрозами.

По словам официального представителя Генеральной прокуратуры, на тот момент на площади уже находилось около 800 агрессивных настроенных лиц, при этом порядок здесь обеспечивался всего 120 невооруженными полицейскими.

Чтобы обеспечить проведение праздничных мероприятий, полиция приняла меры, оцепив часть площади, на которой шли торжества. Причем до последнего, как подчеркнул официальный представитель, и это подтвердили продемонстрированные видеозаписи, полиция не применяла никаких мер ни для того, чтобы задержать кого-то из протестующих, ни для того, чтобы вытеснить их с площади.

При этом со стороны агрессивных настроенных групп постоянно шли провокации. В частности видно, как майору полиции, который пытается мирным тоном успокоить толпу, показывают оскорбительные знаки, выкрикивают в его адрес бранные слова.

Когда казалось, что ситуация взята под контроль, около 11.40 один из хулиганов нанес каким-то предметом удар по узику, доставившему продукты на праздник.

Официальный представитель Генпрокуратуры обратил внимание на внешний вид и номера машины. Здесь явно видно, что узики не только не полицейский, но и не имеет никакого отношения к государственным органам.

То есть слухи о полицейском автомобиле, якобы врезавшемся в толпу, не выдерживают никакой критики. Тем более что этот автомобиль никуда не двигался, а стоял на месте. Попытка полицейского пресечь правонарушителя, ударившего по уязву, вызвала потасовку, которой сразу же воспользовались хулиганы.

– Используя забастовщиков как таран, они прорвали полицейское оцепление, – сказал Нурдаулет Суиндигов.

После этого хулиганствующие группы стали нападать на сотрудников правоохранительных органов, перевернули новогоднюю елку, разрушили расставленные по случаю праздника юрты и сцену, подожгли полицейский автобус.

Возникшие массовые беспорядки были продолжены зачинщиками, которые стали избивать мирное население и громить припаркованные рядом автомобили. Шесть полицейских получили различные телесные повреждения, один из них – заместитель начальника УВД Жанаозена – в настоящее время находится в коме.

Даже в таких обстоятельствах сотрудники полиции не стали применять оружие на поражение и спецсредства и во избежание кровавых столкновений и неоправданных жертв отошли, ограничиваясь выстрелами в воздух.

– Таким образом, появившиеся в СМИ сообщения о том, что будто конфликт был спровоцирован правоохранительными органами, что ими для принуждения хулиганов к порядку применялись оружие, дымовые шашки и другие спецсредства, не соответствуют действительности, – заявил официальный представитель Генеральной прокуратуры.

Он также опроверг информацию о том, что к беспорядкам якобы причастны властные структуры. Домыслы о том, что лица в гражданской одежде, спровоцировавшие беспорядки, были представителями органов власти, опровергаются теми же видеозаписями.

– Подробный анализ показал, что данные молодые люди, прибыв на площадь, активно общались с бастующими нефтяниками, обсуждали с ними какие-то вопросы, а затем совместно участвовали в противоправных действиях, – отметил Н. Суиндигов.

В 12.35 беспорядки перекинулись за пределы площади, около 500 человек напали на здание компании «Озенмунайгаз», оно было разграблено и подожжено. Аналогичная судьба постигла гостиницу и здание акимата. Кроме того, злоумышленники разбили еще и банкоматы.

Во всех этих противоправных действиях наибольшую активность, по словам очевидцев, проявляла молодежь. У многих хулиганов были бутылки с зажигательной смесью, палки с закрепленными на концах ножами. Как считают в Генеральной прокуратуре, все это свидетельствует о том, что пришедшая на площадь молодежь изначально была настроена на погромы и беспорядки.

В 12.50 около 70 участников беспорядков ворвались в акимат Жанаозена и стали громить мебель и оргтехнику, поджигать кабинеты.

– На тот момент оставалась неизвестной судьба сотрудников акимата, подвергшихся нападению в своих кабинетах. Поэтому для их защиты был сформирован сводный отряд полиции, – пояснил Н. Суиндигов.

Отряд тут же подвергся массовой атаке камнями и встречен выстрелами из огнестрельного оружия со стороны участников массовых беспорядков. Полицейские по-прежнему стреляли в воздух. Однако ситуация накалялась.

– С учетом того, что несмотря на предупредительные выстрелы в воздух, бесчинствующая толпа продолжала нападение на сотрудников правоохранительных органов, в целях защиты жизни и здоровья мирных жителей, а также предотвращения попадания оружия в руки хулиганов, полицейские вынуждены были применить табельное оружие. В результате активные участники беспорядков получили ранения, – сказал официальный представитель.

Всего в медучреждения города доставлено 86 человек с различными телесными повреждениями, в том числе шесть полицейских. Из доставленных в больницы десять человек скончались, четыре находятся в реанимации. Кроме того, уже на момент проведения брифинга поступила информация о том, что обнаружено тело еще одного мужчины, погибшего во время разграбления и поджога торгового дома «Сулпак». Труп – без видимых телесных повреждений, судя по предварительному осмотру, человек скончался от ожогов.

Несмотря на принятые полицией меры, организаторы и участники массовых беспорядков продолжили противозаконные действия, в городе начались погромы. Около пяти вечера был подожжен дом директора компании «Озенмунайгаз», в 23 часа – здание акимата пригородного поселка Тенге.

– Всего в результате массовых беспорядков разграблено и подожжено 46 объектов, среди них банки и банкоматы (в частности, разграблены офисы Народного и Альянс банков), 20 магазинов, включая крупные торговые дома «Сулпак» и «Атлант», два кафе, нотариальная контора, два ломбарда, фотосалон, два опорных пункта полиции, гостиница, три частных дома. Повреждено более 20 автомашин, уничтожены сцена, праздничные юрты, музыкальная аппаратура и новогодняя елка

на центральной площади, – подвел печальный итог погромов официальный представитель Генпрокуратуры.

Как было заявлено на брифинге, для восстановления порядка в Жанаозен стянуты дополнительные подразделения внутренних войск и полиции, оснащенные вооружением и спецтехникой. Все основные объекты жизнедеятельности города взяты под усиленную охрану. В целях задержания лиц, участвовавших в мародерстве, с 17.30 16 декабря специальными подразделениями начата операция по точечной зачистке территории.

В настоящее время задержано 70 участников массовых беспорядков и мародеров, установлены их личности.

В Генеральной прокуратуре заверили, что принимаются все меры по пресечению преступных действий, выявлению и наказанию организаторов и наиболее активных участников бесчинств, а также наведению порядка в Жанаозене.

– Генеральная прокуратура призывает жителей города и близлежащих районов соблюдать законность и не поддаваться дезинформации, распускаемой отдельными лицами в провокационных целях, – сказал Н. Суиндигов.

Пока идет следствие, в главном надзорном ведомстве не называют имен зачинщиков беспорядков и тех лиц, в интересах которых, скорее всего, они действовали.

APPENDIX C: OVER 20 MILLION TENGE STOLEN FROM ATMS IN
ZHANAOKEN

"Ущерб, нанесенный вандалами и мародерами, в данный момент оценить сложно – это будет сделано позднее в ходе следствия, – заявил аким Мангистауской области Крымбек Кушербаев во время своего визита в Жанаозен, – по предварительным данным, это несколько сотен миллионов тенге".

Напомним о событиях в Жанаозене по официальной версии **представителя Генеральной прокуратуры Суиндикова Нурдаулета:**

"16 декабря 2011 года на центральной площади Независимость города Жанаозена произошли массовые беспорядки с применением насилия к мирным

гражданам и сотрудникам правоохранительных органов, погромами, разграблением, поджогами имущества физических и юридических лиц.

Беспорядки, как уже известно, начались с действий группы хулиганствующих молодых лиц, а также поддавшихся их влиянию уволенных

нефтяников, которые начали активно воспрепятствовать проведению на площади праздничных мероприятий, приуроченных Дню независимости.

Около 11 часов 16 декабря 2011 года хулиганствующие элементы попытались физически перекрыть путь движения праздничной колонны мирных жителей города, среди которых было много детей, сопровождая свои действия нецензурной бранью и угрозами. На тот момент на площади уже находилось порядка 800 агрессивно настроенных лиц, а общественный порядок обеспечивался всего 120 невооруженными полицейскими. Оружие имел лишь их командир.

В целях обеспечения праздничных мероприятий сотрудниками полиции были приняты меры по оцеплению той части площади, на которой шли торжества.

При этом, несмотря на явные признаки противоправных действий и провокации со стороны хулиганствующей группы, какие-либо меры принуждения полицией не применялись.

Вместе с тем, когда ситуация была практически взята под контроль, примерно в 11 часов 40 минут 16 декабря 2011 года, один из хулиганов, невзирая на присутствие сотрудников полиции, игнорируя их законные требования по соблюдению

общественного порядка, нанес неустановленным предметом удар по автомашине УАЗ с продуктами питания для праздничных угощений, стоявшей рядом с оцеплением.

Попытка полицейского пресечь действия правонарушителя вызвала потасовку, которой сразу же воспользовались хулиганы. Они использовали забастовщиков как таран и прорвали полицейское оцепление.

Прорвав оцепление, хулиганствующие лица напали на полицейских, перевернули новогоднюю елку, разрушили расставленные по случаю праздника юрты и сцену и подожгли полицейский автобус. Возникшие таким образом массовые беспорядки были продолжены зачинщиками, которые стали избивать мирное население и разбивать припаркованные рядом с площадью автомобили.

В результате 6 сотрудников полиции получили различные телесные повреждения, один из них – заместитель начальника УВД города Жанаозена Адилов – находится в настоящее время в коме. В 12 часов 35 минут 16 декабря 2011 года беспорядки перекинулись за пределы площади, и около 500 человек напали на здание компании "Озенмунайгаз", подвергли его разграблению и подожгли.

Аналогичные действия были осуществлены в отношении гостиницы "Ару-Ана". В обоих зданиях, а затем и в здании акимата злоумышленниками были разграблены находившиеся там банкоматы.

При этом наряду с бывшими нефтяниками наибольшую активность проявляла молодежь, которая, по сообщениям очевидцев, была вооружена палками с закрепленными на конце ножами и бутылками с горючей жидкостью. Это свидетельствует о том, что пришедшая на площадь молодежь изначально была настроена на погромы и беспорядки.

В 12 часов 50 минут этого же дня около 70 участников беспорядков ворвались в здание акимата города Жанаозена, где стали разрушать мебель и оргтехнику, а также поджигать кабинеты. Между тем на тот момент оставалась неизвестной судьба работников акимата, подвергшихся нападению в своих служебных помещениях, само здание было охвачено огнем. В этой связи для защиты мирных жителей, оказавшихся в захваченном здании, был сформирован и направлен сводный отряд полиции, который также подвергся массовой атаке камнями и был встречен выстрелами из огнестрельного оружия со стороны участников беспорядков.

С учетом того, что, несмотря на предупредительные выстрелы, бесчинствующая толпа продолжала нападение на сотрудников полиции, в целях защиты жизни и здоровья мирных жителей в лице захваченных работников акимата, сотрудников правоохранительных органов, а также предотвращения попадания оружия в руки

хулиганов, полицейские были вынуждены применить табельное оружие, в результате активным участникам беспорядков причинены ранения.

Всего в медицинские учреждения города было доставлено 86 человек с различными телесными повреждениями, в том числе 6 полицейских. Из доставленных в больницы города 10 человек скончались, в реанимации находятся 4 человека.

Получена информация о том, что при осмотре места происшествия обнаружено тело еще одного погибшего в ходе разграбления и поджога торгового дома "Сулпак" мужчины. По факту массовых беспорядков возбуждены уголовные дела, следственно-оперативную группу, как уже сообщалось, возглавил министр внутренних дел К. Касымов.

Несмотря на принятые меры, организаторы и участники массовых беспорядков продолжили противозаконные действия, в городе ими были начаты погромы и мародерство. Примерно в 17 часов 00 минут 16 декабря 2011 года участники массовых беспорядков подожгли дом директора компании "Озенмунайгаз" К. Ешманова, а в 19 часов 00 минут подожгли торговый дом "Сулпак". В 23 часа 00 минут 16 декабря 2011 года было подожжено здание акимата пригородного поселка Тенге.

Всего в результате массовых беспорядков разграблено и подожжено 46 объектов, из них:

– 8 банковских объектов (банкоматы, банки), в том числе разграблены

офис Народного банка, филиал "Альянс банка";

– 20 магазинов (разграблены торговый центр "Сулпак" и торговый дом "Атлант");

– 2 кафе;

– 1 нотариальная контора;

– 2 ломбарда;

– 2 акимата (городской акимат и акимат поселка Тенге);

– 1 фотосалон;

– 2 опорных пункта полиции;

- гостиница "Ару-Ана";
- здание компании "Озенмунайгаз";
- 3 частных дома;
- сожжено и повреждено более 20 автомашин;
- уничтожены сцена, юрты, музыкальная аппаратура и новогодняя ёлка на центральной площади.

Для восстановления порядка в Жанаозен стянуты дополнительные подразделения внутренних войск и полиции, оснащенные вооружением и специальной техникой. Все основные объекты жизнеобеспечения города взяты под усиленную охрану. В целях задержания лиц, участвовавших в мародерстве, с 17 часов 30 минут 16 декабря 2011 года специальными подразделениями начата операция по точечной зачистке территории. К настоящему времени задержано 70 участников массовых беспорядков и мародеров. Установлены личности наиболее активных участников беспорядков, принимаются меры к их задержанию.

Правоохранительными органами принимаются все необходимые меры по пресечению преступных действий, выявлению и наказанию организаторов и наиболее активных участников беспорядков, полному восстановлению общественной безопасности в городе. При установлении новых обстоятельств происшедшего, которые можно будет обнародовать без ущерба интересам следствия, они сразу же будут доведены до общественности.

В свою очередь, Генеральная прокуратура Республики Казахстан призывает жителей города Жанаозена и близлежащих районов соблюдать законность и не поддаваться на дезинформацию, распускаемую отдельными лицами в провокационных целях".

APPENDIX D: WHO IS LEADING PROTESTERS?

Все активисты забастовки в Жанаозене покинули город накануне Дня независимости РК.

Представитель Генеральной прокуратуры Суиндиков Нурдаулет, рассказывая журналистам о кровавых событиях в Жанаозене, отметил, что полицейские в городе до последнего верили, что конфликт может быть погашен путем увещаний, и даже когда на них набросились с дубинами и обрезками арматуры, вели себя лояльно:

"Следует особо подчеркнуть, что подвергшиеся нападению сотрудники полиции даже при таких обстоятельствах не стали применять оружие на поражение и специальные средства и во избежание кровавых столкновений и неоправданных жертв отошли в распоряжение УВД города, ограничились выстрелами в воздух.

Таким образом, появившиеся в СМИ сведения о том, что конфликт был спровоцирован правоохранительными органами, что ими в целях принуждения хулиганов к порядку применялись оружие, дымовые шашки и другие спецсредства, а также информация о том, что полицейский УАЗ целенаправленно врезался в толпу митингующих нефтяников, не соответствуют действительности и являются явной дезинформацией".

Кстати, это очень хорошо видно на видео, распространенном в Интернете. УАЗ стоял на месте.

Теперь немного о тех людях, которые в течение 8 месяцев обещали бастующим нефтяникам поддержку оппозиционных функционеров, а также иностранных правозащитников.

Казахский информационно-аналитический портал "Республика", который ведет хронику событий в Жанаозене, ссылаясь на данные очевидца – активистки Народного фронта Айжангуль Амировой, рассказывает, что более полутора тысяч человек до сих пор стоят на площади. По ее словам, ночью протестующих обстреляли из боевого оружия. Подъехал черный джип, и оттуда начали стрелять боевыми патронами, десять нефтяников увезли с ранениями, такое же повторилось и под утро, сообщает активистка Народного фронта.

В редакцию "Республики" поступают звонки от очевидцев ночных событий. Напуганные люди рассказывают, что "от пуль умирали матери, которые пришли за своими детьми, бабушки, дедушки", что их "отстреливали, как куропаток", сообщает "Республика".

У наших журналистов, которые работают на месте событий в отличие от корреспондентов "Республики", работающих из офиса в Алматы, несколько иные сведения и соображения.

Возникает ряд вопросов. И первый: каким образом "Республика" связалась с госпожой Амировой? Во-первых, в Жанаозене сразу же после событий была отключена связь.

Во-вторых, в акимате и полиции Жанаозена нас заверили, что за сутки до кровавых событий активисты забастовочного движения, в том числе и осужденный условно Акеджан Аминов и Айжангуль Амирова, покинули Жанаозен.

По сведениям ГОВД Жанаозена, госпожа Амирова находилась в это время в Алматы по приглашению Народного фронта, а Акиджан Аминов – у родственников в Актау. То есть все события произошли без их непосредственного участия.

На пресс-конференции в Жанаозене аким Мангистауской области отметил, что без участия третьей силы эти события не могли бы иметь место. По словам акима, с вопросом, кто и какую роль сыграл в этом конфликте, будут разбираться органы безопасности, и каждому воздастся по делам его.

На месторождении Узень сохраняется стабильность. Суточная добыча поддерживается на уровне предыдущих дней. На всех производственных объектах ПФ "Озенмунайгаз" обеспечена безопасность. Компания испытывает определенные трудности с доставкой работников утренней смены на промыслы, что связано в первую очередь с опасением водителей автобусов за свою безопасность. Организована доставка технического персонала на месторождение альтернативным транспортом. Необходимо отметить, что в выходные и праздничные дни численность производственного персонала, работающего на месторождении, значительно меньше по сравнению с будними днями.

Таким образом, принимаемые меры позволяют обеспечить поддержание нормального режима производства.

APPENDIX E: BLOODY FRIDAY

Нет, не такой славы хотелось бы Казахстану. Но именно степному городку на западе страны удалось то, чего не добились Астана ни саммитом ОБСЕ, ни съездами мировых религий, ни Азиадой: всю неделю главные полосы зарубежной прессы – в первую очередь российской – отданы кровавым событиям в Жанаозене. Но ничего хорошего Акорда там про себя не прочитает.

«Власти сделали все, чтобы можно было поверить самым страшным слухам», – написала российская газета «Коммерсантъ» в репортаже с места трагедии. Двое из российских журналистов, срочно прилетевших в Жанаозен, даже попали под раздачу – пришлось поднимать шум, чтобы их выпустили из участка. Вернувшись в Россию, они описали, что видели и слышали, – мы не можем удержаться от ссылки на эти репортажи. К сожалению, наш корреспондент смог вылететь в Актау только вечером 17-го, то есть спустя сутки после трагедии.

Жанаозен глазами российских СМИ

Начнем с того, что нашим коллегам из «Коммерсанта» удалось пробраться в здание УВД и морг. Картины оттуда не нуждались в комментариях. Вот цитата из «Коммерсанта»:

« – Мя-а-а-асо! – улыбаясь во весь белозубый рот, нараспев произнес человек в штатском. Штатский стоял на крыльце управления внутренних дел Жанаозена, выделяясь на фоне одетых во все черное спецназовцев, и провожал взглядом вереницу проходивших мимо людей. Их лиц было не разглядеть. Они семенили на полусогнутых ногах, ссутулившись и заложив руки за голову, – кто мешкал, тут же получал от спецназовца пинок или крепкий тычок кулаком в бок. Это была очередная партия задержанных за участие в пятничных беспорядках на центральной городской площади. Это их называли «мясом».

Запах мяса витал и в коридорах УВД, стены и полы которого местами были забрызганы кровью. На вопрос, почему на стенах кровь, сотрудник УВД с добродушным славянским лицом не моргнув глазом ответил: «Барана зарезали. Праздник же был».

В репортажах были и подробная предыстория трагедии, и разные версии причин конфликта, но детали, обрывки разговоров, подсмотренные сценки рисовали картину более яркими красками. Вот как объяснили корреспонденту «Коммерсанта», почему началась вспышка. «Власти поставили на площади юрты и стали праздновать. Готовили и ели бешбармак. А потом кто-то из пировавших со

словами «поешьте, голодные же» швырнул нефтяникам кости. Вот тут людей и прорвало, – рассказывает монтажник Куат».

Что происходило потом – достоверно не знает никто. В том числе «благодаря» властям, которые оперативно вырубili телефонную связь и Интернет. Поэтому не стоит удивляться, что слухи преувеличивали и потери, и разрушения, и количество жертв. Но свидетельства, которые удалось добыть сотруднице «Новой газеты», почему-то тоже расходятся с официальными данными.

«В нашей больнице три операционных, – рассказала журналисту хирург-реаниматолог. – Так вот, мы поставили туда еще обычные деревянные столы, и в каждой комнате шло по 4 операции одновременно. Мертвых везли сразу в морг, и я не знаю, сколько раненых в больнице, – я не отходила от стола. Но в первый день лично мне не удалось спасти 22 человека. Мы оперировали их, доставали пули, но они умирали. Сейчас людей, которых я не спасла, 23. Будет 24 – один в реанимации очень тяжелый, не выживет».

Увидели иностранцы и «гуманное» отношение к задержанным жанаозенцам – уже после беспорядков.

«Владелец продуктового магазина Абдурасул Абделкаримов приехал в Жанаозен из Актау в воскресенье, чтобы защитить бизнес от мародеров – закрыть окна железными щитами. За этим занятием и был задержан, провел в ангаре семь часов. «Мы приехали вас, адайцев, гасить с севера на запад, комендантский час на все сутки!» – этими словами, говорит Абделкаримов, сопровождалось его задержание. Пока он это рассказывает, с крыльца отделения полиции спускаются двое отпущенных на свободу. Мужчина лет 40 со следами ботинок на одежде держится за голову и что-то мычит, его поддерживает за локоть более молодой спутник с опухшим от кровоподтеков лицом. Женщины начинают причитать по-казахски, освобожденных подталкивают к выходу с территории ОВД полицейские. Им навстречу движется колонна с новыми задержанными», – это пишет «Газета.ру».

«Мы снова оказались в городе, где не работает мобильная связь, нет Интернета и спокойствия. Зато висят огромные баннеры с улыбающимся Нурсултаном Назарбаевым и лозунгами «Мир и стабильность – наше главное достояние», – так закончил свой репортаж отпущенный на свободу из полицейского участка журналист «Коммерсанта».

Как все начиналось

Наверняка наши читатели – равнодушные люди – следили в эти холодные дни за событиями – в Twitter, пока он работал, по новостям «К-плюс», на портале «Республика», где информация обновлялась каждые два-три часа. Здесь же, спустя неделю, мы постараемся суммировать информацию о тех трех днях декабря.

На площади Ынтымак в Жанаозене произошли беспорядки, пострадавших нет – таким было первое сообщение. Со слов представителей акимата, инцидент произошел на городской площади во время установки юрт для празднования Дня независимости – таким образом уволенные нефтяники хотели испортить праздник.

Однако почти в это же время на лентах информагентств появились совсем другие заголовки – со ссылкой на актауское издание «Лада», телеканал «К-плюс» и портал «Республика». Из скупых сообщений рисуется другая картина: власти заставили детей и молодежь пройти с флажками по площади – пройти именно там, где стоят рабочие, нефтяники их остановили, и произошло первое столкновение.

Дальше пошло по нарастающей. Схватка разгоралась не только на месте событий, но и на информационном пространстве. Власти закидывали агентства своими сводками, гражданские активисты старались не отставать. Однако вторым становилось все труднее давать объективную картину. В Жанаозене отключили Интернет, сотовую связь, а потом и электричество – на площади и прилегающих районах. Заблокировали Twitter и YouTube, не говоря уже о портале «Республика» (точнее, его канадском домене) и ряде других сайтов.

Приходилось «давать в эфир» такие вести: «Мы пытаемся выяснить, что происходит сегодня в Жанаозене. По последней информации, горят здания акимата, ПФ «Озенмунайгаз» и гостиницы. Слышны выстрелы».

Свидетельства очевидцев, с огромным трудом переданные в Алматы, сражали наповал: «Как сообщила Айжангуль Амирова (активистка «Халык Майданы»), которая до последнего момента держала связь с бастующими, на площади Ынтымак появилась группа неизвестных нефтяникам людей в возрасте 20-25 лет.

– Наши ребята увидели нескольких молодых парней, с бутылками, из которых что-то торчало, и они стали вокруг поджигать. Когда подросла полиция, они находились возле нефтяников. Потом произошло столкновение, применили газ, в этой потасовке смешались нефтяники. Есть погибшие. Сейчас в городе хаос...

По словам Айжан, это была «провокация в чистом виде», рабочие к погрому не имеют никакого отношения».

Возможность увидеть своими глазами то, что творится в городе, смог дать только телеканал «К-плюс». Именно кадры, отснятые телеоператорами «К-плюс» на месте событий, попали в поле зрения сразу трех крупных европейских информационных агентств – AFP, Reuters и BBC, которые предложили их к показу в ночь с пятницы на субботу, сопроводив скупыми комментариями. Впрочем, съемки говорили сами за себя – клубы газа, горящие автомобили, вооруженные полицейские в бронежилетах...

Кровь на снегу

–Беспорядки начались с действий группы хулиганствующих молодых лиц, – озвучил уже вечером «версию свыше» представитель Генпрокуратуры Суиндигов, – а также поддавшихся их влиянию уволенных нефтяников, которые начали активно воспрепятствовать проведению на площади праздничных мероприятий.

Расклад сил, по его словам, был не в пользу стражей правопорядка.

–На тот момент на площади уже находилось порядка 800 агрессивно настроенных лиц, а общественный порядок обеспечивался всего 120 невооруженными полицейскими. Оружие имел лишь их командир. Несмотря на явные признаки противоправных действий и провокации со стороны хулиганствующей группы, какие-либо меры принуждения полицией не применялись, – подчеркнул он.

Тут же, как заявил Суиндигов, когда ситуация была практически взята под контроль, один из хулиганов, невзирая на присутствие сотрудников полиции, «нанес неустановленным предметом удар по автомашине УАЗ с продуктами питания для праздничных угощений, стоявшей рядом с отцеплением». (Именно об этой машине бастующие говорили как о «врезавшейся в толпу бастующих».) Полицейские вмешались, вспыхнула драка, отцепление оказалось прорвано...

–Хулиганствующие лица напали на полицейских, перевернули новогоднюю елку, разрушили расставленные по случаю праздника юрты и сцену и подожгли полицейский автобус, – рассказал представитель прокуратуры. – Возникшие таким образом массовые беспорядки были продолжены зачинщиками, которые стали избивать мирное население и разбивать припаркованные рядом с площадью автомобили.

При этом официальный представитель Генеральной прокуратуры особо подчеркнул, что полиция не применяла спецсредств для разгона толпы и не стреляла на поражение. Так ведь, по его же словам, стрелять было нечем! Спешно прибывший сводный отряд полиции был также встречен камнями и бутылками.

–Полицейские были вынуждены применить табельное оружие, – признал представитель надзорного органа. – В результате активным участникам беспорядков причинены ранения. Несмотря на принятые меры, организаторы и участники массовых беспорядков продолжили противозаконные действия, в городе ими были начаты погромы и мародерство.

В город двинули внутренние войска, спецназ, бронетехнику, сотни полицейских из столицы и областных центров. Прилетел министр внутренних дел Калмуханбет Касымов. Пока силовики давили остатки «праздника», по стране распространялись слухи один страшнее другого – ведь все каналы, до которых смогли дотянуться, перекрыли. «Соцсопр» кричал о 70 погибших и сотнях раненых, об уличных боях и всеобщей забастовке нефтяников. Власти невозмутимо заявляли о «взятии ситуации под контроль» и отсутствии «правонарушений».

Вечером того же бесконечного дня на пресс-конференцию вышел лидер регистрируемой партии «Алга» Владимир Козлов с одной целью: донести до общества, что беспорядки в Жанаозене меньше всего выгодны бастующим нефтяникам. Встреча с журналистами началась с опозданием: в офис партии «Алга», где проходило мероприятие, заявился зампрокурора Алмалинского района Алматы. Целый час он пытался доказать Владимиру Козлову, что общение с прессой может быть расценено как... попытка разжигания социальной розни! Тем не менее прокурорское предписание политик не подписал и бдительному господину пришлось удалиться.

Группа активистов «Народного фронта» во главе с Владимиром Козловым собралась наутро вылететь в Актау, чтобы на месте разобраться, что происходит и как можно помочь. Однако рейс отложили с 7 утра сначала на 19.00, а потом на полвторого ночи на воскресенье. Зарегистрировали активистов только после долгих разбирательств, но им все же удалось добраться в горячую точку.

Скажите спасибо «лидеру нации»

Тем временем в Жанаозене наводили порядок «частым гребнем» – проверяя чуть ли не каждую машину (причем иногда пассажиров сначала укладывали лицом в снег, а потом уже спрашивали документы) и задерживая всех подряд, включая иностранных журналистов. Счет задержанным перевалил за сотню. Официально было объявлено о 13 погибших (потом их станет больше).

Наконец последовала реакция с олимпа – «лидер нации» (вернее сказать – ее стабилизатор) на заседании Совета безопасности объявил первое в своем многолетнем правлении чрезвычайное положение – до 5 января. Положение чрезвычайное – дальше некуда: кроме логичных ограничений свободы передвижения и досмотров машин и граждан, в городе нельзя использовать радио- и телепередающую аппаратуру, диктофоны, камеры и ксероксы, а громкоговорители и прочие звукоусиливающие средства изымаются.

В субботу бедный спецпредставитель Генпрокуратуры Суиндииков уже «путался в показаниях».

–Слухи о массовом кровопролитии не имеют под собой никаких оснований, являются явной дезинформацией и распространяются в провокационных целях. За последние сутки в городе Жанаозен ни одного факта применения органами правопорядка огнестрельного оружия не допущено! – заявлял он через несколько минут после того, как сообщил о попытке захвата суда и нападения на сотрудников правоохранительных органов.

Видимо, со всеми нападавшими стражи порядка управлялись исключительно добрым словом. С такими официальными представителями госорганов, противоречащими сами себе, никаких дезинформаторов и провокаторов уже было не надо.

Между тем утром в воскресенье лидер «Алги» Владимир Козлов, активистка «Народного фронта» Айжангуль Амирова и группа журналистов, в числе которых корреспондент «Республики» Жанар Касымбекова, прилетели в Актау. Всю дорогу из аэропорта до гостиницы за ними следовал черный джип. Побывав в ДВД области и городской прокуратуре, гости из Алматы направились на площадь.

–Здесь сейчас около 200 нефтяников и примерно 600-700 спецназовцев, – рассказала по телефону Жанар. – Причем постоянно прибывают новые автобусы с силовиками. На все вопросы они отвечают, что идут учения. А рабочие боятся, что их начнут расстреливать, как в Жанаозене.

Глава МВД Калмуханбет Касымов в интервью корреспонденту «Республики» заявил, что отдаст приказ открыть огонь по людям, если в Актау произойдут события, аналогичные жанаозенским.

–Министр описывал ситуацию 16 декабря, – рассказала Жанар Касымбекова. – Журналисты спросили, кто же первым открыл огонь по людям. Он ответил, что полицейские. «У них не было такого приказа, каждый сотрудник полиции принимал решение самостоятельно, исходя из соображений безопасности», – подчеркнул министр.

После этого журналисты, по словам Жанар, спросили, как будут действовать силовики в Актау. Ведь в областном центре, по словам очевидцев, тоже очень напряженная обстановка.

–Министр прямо ответил: «Если начнутся беспорядки, подобные тем, что были в Жанаозене, я отдам приказ стрелять», – продолжила Жанар.

Сейчас наш корреспондент находится в Актау. Ее попытка еще раз попасть в Жанаозен пока не увенчалась успехом, но редакция не теряет надежды.

Кто отдал приказ стрелять в народ?

Демсилы создали комиссию по расследованию событий в Жанаозене

Мурат Ауэзов, Зауреш Батталова, Габбас Кабышев, Газиз Алдамжаров, Рысбек Сарсенбаев, Нинель Фокина и еще десяток известных казахстанцев вошли в общественную комиссию по расследованию кровавых событий, которые произошли 16 декабря в Жанаозене. Главная цель, которую они поставили перед собой, – узнать, кто и зачем приказал расстреливать безоружных и почему не были применены другие – не смертоносные – средства?

–Этот вопрос задают сами нефтяники и не находят на него ответа, – рассказал лидер незарегистрированной партии «Алга» Владимир Козлов. – В распоряжении полиции есть те же самые брандспойты. Почему ими не воспользовались? Если из водометов хлестануть сейчас, при морозе по толпе, то толпы не останется через три минуты, потому что все побегут греться домой.

Кроме того, г-н Козлов сообщил, что сейчас в Актау в поддержку нефтяников выходят от 500 до 2500 человек, однако власти на них не реагируют. По словам политика, у них остаются два пути: отказаться от протеста и возвратиться на работу (на площадь вышли те, кто остановил работу на месторождениях Каламкас, Каражанбас) либо совершить активные действия, чтобы власть обратила внимание на мирный протест.

По мнению члена партии «Руханият» Мухтара Тайжана, в Жанаозене произошла национальная трагедия: впервые в Казахстане власть стреляла в собственный народ. Однако, как считает г-н Тайжан, эти жертвы не бесполезны, «они показали, что у народа исчезает рабская психология».

Сопредседатель ОСДП «Азат» Булат Абилов также отметил, что «мы стали свидетелями того, что власть готова стрелять, готова воевать с собственным народом, но это недопустимо».

–Поэтому мы, общественность Казахстана, хотим знать правду. Чтобы через 20 лет мы не переживали: «Что же было в Жанаозене 16 декабря 2011 года?» – как мы до сих пор переживаем: «Что же было 17-18 декабря 1986 года?» Мы до сих пор не знаем правды, что произошло 25 лет назад, – сказал он.

Спикеры, конечно же, понимают, что будут пытаться делать практически невозможное, и тем не менее они намерены докопаться до истины.

APPENDIX F: INSTEAD OF PRESIDENT'S TRIUMPH – NEW TRAGEDY

События 16-18 декабря в Жанаозене потрясли не только казахстанцев. «Вы видели про нефтяной город в Казахстане?» – спросила меня девушка-продавец в кафе в Лондоне. – Ночью показывали новости по Би-би-си. Это было ужасно!» Страшные кадры с погромами и стрельбой показали новостные каналы Германии, Польши, Франции, России. А комментарии к видео в Интернете шокировали своей беспощадной правдой.

Символично, что случилось все это ровно через 25 лет после декабрьских событий в Алматы и во время празднования 20-летия независимости республики, которое Акорда попыталась превратить в триумф первого президента. Но вместо триумфа — еще одна трагедия, и теперь этот день войдет в историю как декабрьские события в Жанаозене.

К сожалению, информационная блокада, в том числе отключение Интернета и мобильной связи в Жанаозене, не дают возможности получить полную, объективную и четкую картину случившегося. До сих пор не ясно, сколько всего пострадало человек, кто выступил зачинщиком или спровоцировал трагедию.

Между информацией, которую передают из Мангистау журналисты независимых СМИ и активисты гражданского общества, и сообщениями официальных представителей государственных органов идет почти стопроцентное расхождение. При этом последние не только опаздывают с информированием, но и, не дожидаясь даже результатов собственного расследования, уже начали поиски «козлов отпущения». Ими уже объявлены, в частности, Мухтар Аблязов и Рахат Алиев, США, оппозиционные СМИ и некие деструктивные силы неизвестного происхождения.

Между тем, чтобы найти истинных виновников трагедии, власть имущим достаточно посмотреть в зеркало. Действительно, что мешало им пойти на диалог с бастующими нефтяниками Жанаозена и решить проблему? Ничего. Для этого нужно было всего лишь послать в Мангистаускую область делегацию во главе с одним из вице-премьеров, дав ему соответствующие полномочия и поручение обеспечить разрешение социального конфликта. Понятно, что при этом властям пришлось бы дать задний ход и освободить Наталью Соколову, но это позволило бы избежать сегодняшней трагедии.

Нам снова и снова будут говорить, что государство не имело права вмешиваться в трудовой конфликт. Но, во-первых, оно уже вмешалось в него, сфальсифицировав уголовные дела против активистов забастовочного движения и тем самым откровенно встав на сторону работодателя. Во-вторых, это обязанность государства — быть арбитром и не допускать эскалации конфликта. В-

третьих, Акорда имела все возможности надавить на работодателя и заставить его пойти на разумный компромисс.

Но ничего подобного сделано не было. Вместо этого правительство принимало «историческое» решение о присвоении елбасы звания «Народный герой», Администрация президента организовывала «самороспуск» Мажилиса и досрочные парламентские выборы, Сенат придумывал знак «Елбасы» и праздник первого президента. В общем, все были сильно заняты «лидером нации», а также готовились «ловить» награды и звания в связи с праздником.

Тогда как в Жанаозене около двух тысяч казахстанцев, не считая членов их семей, седьмой месяц выживали без зарплат только благодаря помощи родственников. В этих условиях даже малейшего повода было достаточно для социального взрыва. Именно об этом буквально кричали представители гражданского общества, требуя от Астаны срочного вмешательства.

И если тот же Европарламент пытался реагировать, доказательством чему запросы евродепутатов комиссару ЕС по внешним связям госпоже Эштон, то ответом Астаны было равнодушное молчание. При этом президента возили по стране, показывая ему достижения регионов. Премьер делал вид, что трудовой конфликт в Мангистау давно закончился, а проблема трудоустройства уволенных нефтяников — это дело акима области и Минтруда. Глава же ФНБ «Самрук-Казына» занимался чем угодно, только не социальным конфликтом в «дочке».

В результате — десятки погибших, сотни раненых и пострадавших, большие материальные потери, психологический срыв и у тех, в кого стреляли, и у тех, кто стрелял. И самое страшное, что еще ничего не закончилось — беспредел в регионе продолжается. Читайте об этом в материалах номера.

APPENDIX G: ZHANAOKEN: HOW MYTH ABOUT STABILITY HAS BURNT DOWN

16 декабря 2011 года войдет в историю как день кровавых расправ

Наш журналист Владимир Родионов был одним из первых, кому удалось прорваться сквозь полицейские кордоны и очутиться в Жанаозене, опаленном, окропленном кровью, погруженном в страх и недоумение. За что в нас стреляли? Почему погибли старики и женщины? Эти вопросы задавали нашему журналисту отчаявшиеся люди, которые просто хотели, чтобы власть увидела в них граждан. Но в них увидели лишь пушечное мясо. Увидели те, кто семь месяцев ничего не делал, чтобы забастовка прекратилась. Те, кто организовал беспорядки. Те, кто отдал приказ стрелять. Те, кто стрелял.

APPENDIX H: BLOODY FRIDAY

Расстрел рабочих 9 января 1905 года был неким переломным моментом, показавшим, что самодержавие себя изжило как форма правления. Пятница 16 декабря 2011 года обозначила начало последней, завершающей стадии авторитаризма Назарбаева.

Общество разделилось на два лагеря — в одном те, кто поддерживает право шахтеров на забастовку и требование выполнения социальных обязательств, в другом — те, кто считает этих парней зажавшимися подонками, организовавшими беспорядки. И те, и другие будут доказывать свою правоту и, наверное, имеют право. До тех пор, пока не польется кровь.

Но кровь полилась сразу же. И пролили ее не террористы, не молодчики с обрезками труб, устроившие беспорядки, о которых нам твердила Генпрокуратура. Пролили ее старики, женщины, подростки и все те же нефтяники, которых, как бешеных собак, на глазах у жен и матерей отстреливали полицейские.

Во имя чего пролилась кровь? Во благо какой высокой идеи? Семь месяцев эти ребята стояли на площади, но за это время власть не нашла способа урегулировать конфликт. Семь месяцев этих ребят провоцировали на беспорядки. Семь месяцев они держались в надежде, что смогут добиться человеческого отношения к себе — сесть за стол переговоров и начать искать консенсус.

Но 16 декабря, словно в память о тех ребятах, что пролили кровь 25 лет назад, политический режим отдает приказ стрелять в людей. Нам всем показали, что эта власть завалит трупами любую площадь, лишь бы сохранить свое дальнейшее право на существование.

Нам показали, что власть не хочет договариваться, не хочет видеть в людях граждан, а хочет видеть безмолвный скот, который, взбунтовавшись, должен быть, как бешеный, остановлен градом пуль. Мы увидели, что многие радетели за народ, за язык, за свободу, равенство и братство оказались просто банальными трусами, словоблудами и политиканами.

Мы увидели огромную пропасть между сытыми жителями Алматы, Астаны и более-менее благополучных областных центров, которым, видите ли, какие-то подонки испортили праздник, и отдаленными окраинами страны, где работяги просто пытаются выжить.

Мы увидели, что за 20 лет в стране сформировалось целое поколение, которое называет стабильностью и миром несменяемую власть одного человека, держащуюся на распродаже сырья и полицейских дубинках. Мы увидели,

общество превращается в инертную жующую массу, готовую под страхом быть отлученной от корыта осуждать и проклинать тех, кто просто пытается сказать власти: «Я имею право на достойную жизнь!»

Впереди выборы. Честные выборы, и право требовать проведения честных выборов — сегодня единственная гарантия сохранения стабильности и мира в Казахстане. Сегодня каждый из нас просто обязан задать себе вопрос: тварь я дрожащая или право имею?



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