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АКЫЙКАТ КАРЕГИ

НАЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ СЕТЬ ГРАЖДАНСКОГО ОБЩЕСТВА ПО МОНИТОРИНГУ СЕКТОРА ПРАВОСУДИЯ

СПРАВЕДЛИВОСТЬ

REPORT ON THE RESULTS OF MONITORING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SECTOR OF THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC -SUMMARY

Area 5: Legal Aid

Bishkek, 2025

This analytical report is based on monitoring conducted by members of the Akyikat Karegi Civil Society Network for Justice Sector Monitoring in Kyrgyzstan, including the Jalal-Abad regional human rights organisation "Spravedlivost" ("Justice'') in the framework of a project implemented by International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) and Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR) with support from the European Union.

The report covers Area 5 (Legal aid) of a comprehensive Methodology for Monitoring the Criminal Justice Sector developed by recognised international and national experts under the project.[1] It is part of a series of analytical reports prepared based on monitoring conducted by members of the Akyikat Karegi Civil Society Network, using the new methodology with support from project experts.

This document has been prepared with financial support from the European Union. The contents are the sole responsibility of IPHR and LHR and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

[1] The methodology (in Russian and Kyrgyz) is available at: https://iphronline.org/articles/new-methodology-for-monitoring-the-criminal-justice-sector-developed/

INTRODUCTION

The right to defence is a fundamental right, and ensuring effective defence is incumbent on States under Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.[2] The principle of providing legal aid at the state's expense was enshrined in the 1993 Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic.[3] Following the adoption of the Law 'On State Guaranteed Legal Aid' of 17 July 2009,[4] mechanisms for funding qualified legal aid from the State budget were defined.[5] Later, in connection with new reforms in the criminal justice sector, the system of state guaranteed legal aid was further reformed. The adoption of a new, revised Law 'On State Guaranteed Legal Aid' on 10 August 2022,[6] aimed at ensuring the rights of access to justice and a fair trial and creating a more efficient, just and accountable justice system based on the rule of law and human rights standards.

The system of the state guaranteed legal aid in the Kyrgyz Republic has undergone a number of significant improvements in recent years due to legislative reforms and new initiatives in human rights and jurisprudence. However, despite these legislative achievements, many aspects of criminal justice still require deeper analysis and evaluation in practice. The relevance of legal aid monitoring has become particularly important as public attention to the rights of the accused and their treatment during investigation and trials has increased. Monitoring, especially in the framework of international standards and practices, is an important tool for identifying weaknesses in the justice system and recommending improvements.

According to information published on the website of the government's Legal Aid Service on 25 September 2020,[7] a draft Methodology for Monitoring the Provision of qualified legal aid in criminal and misdemeanour cases had been elaborated together with the National Network of NGOs for the Development of the State Guaranteed Legal Aid System. This initiative aimed to implement the Law "On State Guaranteed Legal Aid"[8] and the 2019-2020 Action Plan for Judicial and Legal Reform. The notice also stated that a unified analytical report with recommendations to improve the quality and accessibility of legal aid would be prepared based on the monitoring results.

However, our research indicates that the draft Methodology has not been finalised nor accepted for use by the State Guaranteed Legal Aid Coordination Centre. This emphasises the need to complete and implement a more effective and sustainable monitoring system.

The effective functioning and development of state guaranteed legal aid are essential for ensuring the right to a fair trial and fulfilling the State's obligation to prevent torture. The National Network of NGOs, which was involved in developing the draft Methodology, also tested it, but the State Guaranteed Legal Aid Coordination Centre has not, to date, implemented a sustainable system of

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[2] See para. 15 of General Comment No. 31 [80]. 'The Nature of the General Legal Obligation Imposed on States Parties to the Covenant', CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, 26 May 2004. Adopted 29 March 2004 (2187th meeting). URL: https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g04/419/58/pdf/g0441958.pdf

[3] Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic of 5 May 1993, Articles 40 and 88. Establishes the right of everyone to receive qualified legal assistance. URL: cbd.minjust.gov.kg/1/edition/989125/ru

[4] Law of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On State Guaranteed Legal Aid' dated 17 July 2009 No. 277. URL: https://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/203186/edition/759786/ru

[5] Citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, foreign citizens, stateless persons and refugees have the right to receive legal counselling. Clause 3 of Article 1 and Clause 3 of Article 4 of the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On State Guaranteed Legal Aid'. 3, Article 4, Clause 3 of the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On State Guaranteed Legal Aid'.

[6] Law of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On State Guaranteed Legal Aid' dated 10 August 2022 No. 91 URL: https://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/112412/edition/3556/ru

[7] URL: https://ukuk-jardam.gov.kg/ru/news/127

[8] Law of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On State Guaranteed Legal Aid' dated 16 December 2016 No. 201. URL: https://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/111480/edition/1180025/ru

monitoring the legal aid system in Kyrgyzstan. Assessing the effectiveness of state guaranteed legal aid requires an independent approach with active participation of civil society. The fact that the previous attempt at joint state-civil society monitoring in this area did not yield the expected results highlights the need for permanent monitoring and response mechanisms based on interaction with civil society.

Legal aid is an essential element of a fair, humane and effective criminal justice system based on the rule of law. Legal aid forms the basis for the realisation of other rights, including the right to a fair trial, as defined in article 11, paragraph 1, of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[9] A human rights-based approach to the establishment and implementation of a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the legal aid system is therefore an important part of criminal justice reforms.

The main purpose of our monitoring was to assess the effectiveness of state guaranteed legal aid and, additionally, evaluate its access and quality in local communities, taking into account compliance with international human rights standards.

The research had the following objectives:

1. Assess the effectiveness of the state guaranteed legal aid system, including the work of the Legal Aid Service under the Ministry of Justice, the Bar and other providers of primary and qualified legal aid.

2. Analyse the observance of the rights of the accused, victims and other vulnerable groups, including access to legal aid and compliance with the norms stipulated by national laws and international standards.

3. Identify problems and gaps in the provision of legal aid and suggest ways to improve legislation and procedures related to the development of the legal aid system.

The monitoring was conducted using a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods. Interviews were held with key stakeholders, including judges, staff from the Legal Aid Service under the Ministry of Justice, lawyers, law enforcement officials, detainees, legal aid recipients and others. We also analysed public data on legal aid, case statistics, information on human rights violations, as well as the results of surveys among people involved in the state guaranteed legal aid system.

National legislation was analysed for compliance with international standards and obligations. National policy documents were reviewed for compliance with the seven key indicators set out in the Methodology for Monitoring the Criminal Justice Sector. Material and statistical data collection, desk research and responses to official enquiries were also conducted.

The monitoring covered six centres providing free legal aid to the population under the following territorial justice departments: Pervomaisky and Sverdlovsk districts of Bishkek city, Osh city, Kara-Sum, and Nookat and Uzgen districts of Osh oblast. Five free legal aid centres in Jalal-Abad oblast were also included: Jalal-Abad, Bazar-Korgan, Chatkal, Kerben and Ala-Buka.

An important element of the research involved co-operation with local state human rights institutions, as well as with state authorities, which helped ensure a multidimensional perspective.

The report consists of key findings and recommendations, analyses of key issues, system assessments and conclusions. The methodology section details the research methods and data collected. The key evaluation questions section presents the results of the analysis of each indicator and benchmarks

[9] See Article 11(1) of the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948 URL: https://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/declarations/declhr.shtml.

set out in the Methodology for Monitoring the Criminal Justice Sector.[10] This section also provides an analysis of the current legal framework and the current state of the State Guaranteed Legal Aid System, the problems and gaps identified in practice, and recommendations for improving the system of legal aid provision, including proposals for reforming legislation and strengthening monitoring of the rights of vulnerable groups such as children, women and people with disabilities.

The study aims to provide a foundation for continued monitoring of state guaranteed legal aid centred on human rights and freedoms. The importance of ensuring the realization of ongoing and sustainable monitoring is underscored by the need to assess the efficiency of new regulations adopted in 2023-2024 to optimise the provision of state guaranteed legal aid. This includes provisions regulating para-lawyers, new payment tariffs, and procedures for interaction between relevant actors involved in the provision of state guaranteed legal aid.

Monitoring the realisation of the right to effective legal defence highlights the need for a flexible and inclusive approach to the development of the system for state guaranteed legal aid, involving all relevant stakeholders. The research team is confident that this monitoring report lays the foundation for a sustainable, independent monitoring and coordination system. The monitoring results are important for improving criminal justice practices in Kyrgyzstan. Recommendations based on the analysis will help state and local authorities, as well as civil society organisations, to more effectively address problems in the legal system and promote better respect for human rights in the criminal justice process.

Despite a comprehensive approach and the use of a wide variety of data sources, the researchers faced difficulties in accessing complete and reliable information, as well as lack of transparency, including due to the government's failure to fully comply with its commitments under the Open Government Partnership[11]. The quality of the analysis could have been further improved if we had had access to more extensive and reliable data and different stakeholders involved in the criminal justice process would have participated more actively in interviews.

These challenges require special attention in planning the next legal aid monitoring programme and developing strategies to address them.

The research team would like to express special thanks to all participants in the research, including experts, human rights organisations, the Legal Aid Service under the Ministry of Justice, and international experts T. Zinovich and V. Zakharia, whose contributions helped ensure the quality and objectivity of this report. We also thank International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) and Lawyers for Human Rights for their support, and the European Union for funding the monitoring.

[10] Developed by International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) and Lawyers for Human Rights, 2023. It is a universal monitoring and evaluation tool based on generally recognised international standards and recommendations of experts in the field of criminal justice, developed under the project 'Establishment and operationalisation of a national monitoring, coordination and civil society response mechanism to promote justice sector reform in Kyrgyzstan', supported by the European Union.

[11] Available at https://www.ogp.el.kg/ru

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY FINDINGS

Area 5 -Legal Aid - contains 7 indicators (14 benchmarks), which were examined for compliance with international standards. As a result of the study, the group of experts formulated the following conclusions:

● There are significant regional disparities in access to free legal aid and the quality of its provision, especially in remote areas, indicating the need for more even distribution of resources and raising public awareness about the services available.

The lack of a clear state-approved framework for monitoring and evaluating the quality of legal aid has led to uneven service delivery practices, negatively impacting the overall level of trust in the justice system.

● The findings indicate that many people are not sufficiently informed of the opportunities to receive free legal aid, which reduces the effectiveness of the system as well as the access to justice.

● Limited access to lawyers and violations of the rights of suspects and defendants remain important problems. This calls for stricter monitoring of the observance of human rights in criminal cases.

● Lack of coordination between the authorities responsible for providing legal aid leads to an inefficient system, a problem which is particularly acute in complex criminal cases.

The overall performance score for Area 5 (Legal Aid) is 7 out of a possible 14 points under the Methodology for Monitoring the Criminal Justice Sector.

Accessibility of State Guaranteed Legal Aid

Status and Challenges

Indicator 1.1. National legislative guarantees the right of citizens, foreign citizens and stateless persons to receive legal counselling (primary) assistance from state bodies. However, the law does not oblige lawyers to provide legal counselling.

Branch offices of the Legal Aid Service under the Ministry of Justice are conveniently located for visitors, although there is uneven territorial coverage, lack of state guaranteed legal aid lawyers in the regions and limited physical accessibility for vulnerable groups, especially persons with disabilities.

Access to information about the offices of the Legal Aid Service and state guaranteed legal aid lawyers is higher in urban areas than in remote and border regions, especially in mountainous

Recommendations

Indicator 1.1. It is recommended that the Ministry of Justice (MoJ): 1) consider increasing the number of Free Legal Aid Centres in rural and remote regions by regularly updating data on the interactive map and/or developing remote methods using new technologies to expand coverage and accessibility; 2) Establish a feedback system for legal aid recipients to assess their satisfaction with services; 3) regulate issues of private partnership in public contracting of free legal aid, including funding and organisational support for NGOs.

The Central Office of the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Justice needs to: 1) introduce uniform standards for the provision of primary legal aid and establish regular monitoring of its quality; 2) develop and approve guidelines for providing legal aid to vulnerable groups,

areas where it is insufficient. This limits access to primary legal aid for those in need.

The development of e-services or remote methods to expand the reach of legal aid services remains at an early stage.

Despite significant changes in the legislation and practice of providing primary legal aid, its availability in Jalal-Abad region remains limited. Information about legal aid is not available to a wide audience, and in practice there are still cases where it is not granted.

The lack of a unified approach to service provision, difficulties in tracking the assistance provided, the absence of a feedback mechanism among the various actors involved in the provision of state guaranteed legal aid, poor co-operation between them, as well as a frequent turnover of legal counselling experts lead to violations of the rights to primary legal aid.

Indicator 2.1. The legal analysis showed that national legislation provides all detainees with early access to legal aid, ensuring that a state guaranteed legal aid lawyer is provided to every detainee in criminal cases and legal offences from an early stage. However, compared against international standards, national legislation fails to guarantee the right to legal aid at all stages of the criminal process to every person detained, arrested, suspected or prosecuted for a criminal offence punishable by imprisonment or the death penalty.

According to the Law on State guaranteed Legal Aid, qualified legal aid without consideration of income is provided only to suspects and to those accused of committing particularly serious offences. However, imprisonment under the Criminal Code is also handed down for less serious offences. Thus, the national legislation does not comply with international standards in this regard.

Monitoring has shown that investigators often engage state guaranteed legal aid lawyers without taking into account the duty schedules, which relate to the statutory limitations on the time limits for providing defence. This leads to an overload of work on individual defence

including people with disabilities, with the active participation of NGOs; 3) ensure that information on legal aid is made available in an easy, relevant, accessible and understandable form. Use media, public places, court premises, law enforcement agencies, municipal institutions and libraries to maximise the dissemination of information on state guaranteed legal aid; 4) develop electronic and remote services for the provision of legal aid to simplify access to consultations and increase their effectiveness; 5) actively cooperate with courts, law enforcement agencies and community centres to disseminate information on GBV and ensure its accessibility to all citizens in need. Support and develop cooperation with non-governmental organisations and civil society representatives providing legal aid and consultations.

It is important for donors and international partners to support NGOs, crisis centres and legal clinics to provide free legal aid to vulnerable groups.

Indicator 2.1. To improve the efficiency of the work of lawyers, the Central Office of the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Justice should strengthen control over the observance of duty schedules and implement a system to ensure that priorities for state guaranteed legal aid are respected.

1) It is important to develop quality standards for the provision of legal aid by state guaranteed legal aid lawyers and to regularly monitor and evaluate their work. 2) There should be a balanced distribution of the workload amongst state guaranteed legal aid lawyers.

It is important for the Bar Association to strengthen its work with lawyers on the active application of the right to confidential meetings for the preparation of the defence.

The prosecutor's office should strengthen supervision over the strict and rigorous compliance with the norms of the CPC on the mandatory participation of state guaranteed legal aid lawyers, as well as the presence of

lawyers and causes problems with uneven workload distribution. Some respondents, who were recipients of qualified legal aid expressed complaints about the quality of services provided.

Indicator 2.2. In Kyrgyzstan, despite legislative guarantees, access to qualified legal aid remains limited, especially for vulnerable groups such as women, children and detainees. Problems are particularly evident in the early stages of criminal proceedings and in remote, rural areas. The existing systems of state guaranteed legal aid and the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Justice do not always provide quality legal aid in a swift manner. Insufficient coordination between state bodies, local authorities and the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Justice leads to a lack of information about the procedure for obtaining free legal aid, and co-operation between local authorities and Ministry of Justices' Legal Aid Service is often merely a formal arrangement which is not implemented in practice. In remote regions, lawyers lack the necessary infrastructure to effectively fulfil their duties, which negatively affects the availability and quality of legal aid. There is also a problem of compliance with legal requirements in the appointment of lawyers, when police investigators often engage 'their' lawyers, thus limiting suspects and defendants' rights to a quality legal defence, especially in cases where lawyers are appointed without the approval of the Legal Aid Service coordinators.

The legal requirement for the accused to submit a written application to access a lawyer through the state guaranteed legal aid system creates practical challenges. This issue needs to be addressed through legislative measures to ensure that the relevant procedures align with the law and uphold the principles of fairness and adversarial proceedings.

National legislation does not fully comply with international requirements regarding access to databases for verifying the income of individuals seeking state guaranteed legal aid. Currently, to confirm a person's eligibility for qualified legal aid, the Legal Aid Service coordinator must

representatives of social protection bodies during the interrogation of minors.

It is recommended that the *Jogorku Kenesh* (Supreme Council, parliament) amend legislation on the state guaranteed legal aid to ensure its compliance with international standards, including the UN Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems (A/RES/67/187), in particular guideline 11 (nationwide legal aid system) and guideline 12 (funding of a nationwide legal aid system). These changes should ensure that legal aid is provided not only to suspects and defendants accused of particularly serious offences, but also in cases of serious and less serious offences punishable by imprisonment, ensuring compliance with international standards and protecting the rights of vulnerable groups of citizens.

Indicator 2.2. It is important for the Ministry of Interior to: 1) take measures to stop the negative practice of investigators inviting state guaranteed legal aid lawyers at their discretion in violation of the Schedule of Duty of state guaranteed legal aid lawyers; 2) introduce an electronic registry system for the appointment of lawyers in order to render the process more transparent and minimize and or eliminate the influence of investigators' personal preferences.

The Supreme Court is recommended to review cases involving state guaranteed legal aid lawyers when the court considers a preventive measure and the replacement of probation supervision with deprivation of liberty, in order to promote a unified judicial law enforcement approach and ensure the implementation of the principles of justice, equality of all before the law and adversarial nature of the parties.

The Cabinet of Ministers and the Jogorku Kenesh (parliament) should address the legislative contradictions on state guaranteed legal aid, especially when a case is considered in absentia and amend the law to include a norm providing for a state guaranteed legal aid lawyer through a court order without a written application from the accused.

request information from social assistance bodies, tax authorities, and other institutions. Thus, the Legal Aid Service lacks direct access to the relevant databases. Granting it direct access would reduce the time required to provide access to legal aid and ensure quicker appointments of lawyers. The monitoring revealed a number of serious problems regarding the provision of legal aid by state guaranteed legal aid lawyers: (1) insufficient access to lawyers from the moment of detention or indictment, which significantly limits detainees' ability to obtain state guaranteed legal aid at critical times; (2) the problematic practice of state appointed legal aid lawyers signing procedural case documents retroactively, which may affect the legality of procedural actions;(3) inefficient systems for determining individuals' income to establish their eligibility for free legal aid which require updating,; (4) the need to ensure a fair and efficient mechanism for identifying those most in need of legal aid; (5) excessive delays in court proceedings due to irresponsible attitudes of state guaranteed legal aid lawyers which have a serious negative impact on the efficiency and fairness of the legal system. Indicator 3.1. Legal analysis has shown that the Law on State guaranteed Legal Aid uses different terminology to the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) to define victims of family violence or trafficking. The Law on State guaranteed Legal Aid refers to 'survivor of family violence' and 'survivor of trafficking in human beings', whilst the whereas the CPC does not contain the concept of survivor, which subsequently causes difficulties in recognising the status of victims. The process of recognition as a victim involves administrative procedures, which limit access to legal aid at the early stages of the criminal process. This is a problem for victims of family violence, who cannot be officially recognised as victims before criminal proceedings are initiated. Information on state guaranteed legal aid remains limited and many people are unaware of their rights in this regard.	The Central Office of the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Justice should, in order to attract state guaranteed legal aid lawyers to work in remote mountainous and border areas, consider incentive-based fees or other compensatory and motivational measures to ensure that there is wide access to qualified legal aid for those in need. Procedures A mechanism to ensure the availability of legal aid lawyers and outsource lawyers for legal aid should be developed. It is recommended that Central Office of the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Justice and the Bar Association: 1) develop and introduce a monitoring mechanism to assess the quality of work of lawyers appointed through the state guaranteed legal aid with regular reports; 2) introduce mandatory training for these lawyers included in the register of state guaranteed legal aid, with a focus on compliance with ethical standards and improvement of professional skills; 3) cases where legal aid lawyers have signed procedural case documents retroactively should lead to criminal proceedings against the lawyers in question and, additionally, relevant law enforcement agencies should bring the investigators responsible to justice; 4) to set up a mechanism to ensure that the schedule of legal aid by defence lawyers is respected and that the Bar Association takes appropriate measures to combat the phenomenon of state appointed lawyers who do not represent their client's interests properly – known as 'pocket lawyers'. Indicator 3.1. The Cabinet of Ministers and the Zhogorku Kenesh are recommended to: 1) reform legislation to simplify recognition of victim status, especially in cases of domestic violence, in order to ensure that legal assistance is provided at an early stage. Supplement Part 4 of Article 13 of the Law "On State guaranteed Legal Aid" with the following phrase: "a victim of sexual violence" in order to comply with international recommendations to ensure the rights of women who have become victims of sexual violence and provide them with a qualified lawyer; 2) Bring the terms in the Law on State Guaranteed Legal Aid into line with the

Monitoring has shown a low level of public confidence in state guaranteed legal aid lawyers, with victims mostly not turning to them, and if they do, preferring to hire private lawyers in case of need for defence. Annual reports by the Ombudsman and the National Centre for the Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment point to the problem of mistrust in the system and limited access to quality legal aid, especially for victims of violence.

Monitoring has shown that victims are not routinely informed that they can access to legal advice and legal defence. Open sources often lack relevant and reader-friendly materials, including in the media and on independent platforms. Public awareness of state guaranteed legal aid and referral procedures differ significantly depending on the geographical region. In some districts, such as Toktogul and Chatkal, no state guaranteed legal aid is provided, which may indicate a lack of outreach and awareness.

The public assistance system also suffers from a lack of qualified professionals and often does not provide an adequate standard of legal defence.

Kyrgyzstani legislation guarantees children the right to receive free qualified legal assistance in criminal proceedings, regardless of their procedural status. The principles of legal aid in Kyrgyzstan are generally in line with international standards, including prioritising the interests of the child and considering his or her age and social circumstances.

The mechanism for providing state guaranteed legal aid to children in Kyrgyzstan is implemented through the Centre for the Coordination of State Guaranteed Legal Aid under the Ministry of Justice. There is a need for systematic professional development for specialists involved in providing state guaranteed legal aid to child victims.

Indicator 4.1. The legal analysis has shown that national legislation defines and thus limits the categories of persons in need who are entitled

CPC. It is important for the Ministry of and the Central Asian Regional Legal Aid Centre to: 1) strengthen information for victims of crimes and offences about the right to a lawyer and legal aid and its importance, Particular attention should be paid to domestic violence cases , where victims often believe that they do not need the help of a lawyer, and instead rely on investigators and prosecutors; 2) take the necessary measures to increase public confidence in state guaranteed legal lawyers. Develop training programmes and conduct trainings for lawyers on providing legal assistance to victims of domestic and sexual violence. Distribute accessible materials about the state guaranteed legal aid, and publish them in the media, and on local platforms and social networks; 3) consider maintaining a list of specialized lawyers and conducting thematic training to involve them in specific cases for example, juvenile lawyers, lawyers for people with mental disorders, lawyers for migrants and refugees.

To ensure uniform observance of the rights of children-victims, the Centre for Coordination of State Guaranteed Legal Aid must systematically conduct advanced training for those involved in the provision of state guaranteed legal aid (coordinators, lawyers). Part 5 of Article 13 of the Law on State Guaranteed Legal Aid should be amended with the following wording: "*Child victims and witnesses are provided with qualified legal assistance in criminal cases by lawyers who have specialized in children's cases*."

Indicator 4.1. The Ministry of Justice and the Central Office of the Legal Aid Service should increase the number of lawyers on the Register who can provide qualified legal assistance in civil cases.

The Central Office of the Legal Aid Service and the Bar Association should: 1) strengthen quality standards of lawyers' work, as well as ensure their accessibility and promptness with the use of modern information and digital technology; 2) organise regular educational events for lawyers providing legal aid in civil cases.

to free legal services in civil cases. According to national legislation, qualified legal assistance in civil cases is provided only to citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic, while in criminal and administrative cases such assistance is also provided to foreign citizens and stateless persons. Therefore, there is a need to expand the list of vulnerable groups entitled to free services in civil cases. Some lawyers believe that qualified assistance in civil cases should be provided to all citizens of Kyrgyzstan, regardless of their financial circumstances. Currently, there is no approved Methodology for monitoring state guaranteed legal aid in civil cases in the country. Indicator 4.2. In Kyrgyzstan, access to qualified legal aid remains limited, especially in remote regions and for vulnerable groups such as victims of domestic violence. Legal aid legislation and procedures often complicate the process of obtaining support and require applicants to fulfil bureaucratic requirements, making it difficult to access assistance. The survey conducted under this monitoring revealed that many people do not apply for assistance due to various barriers and fears, such as bureaucratic difficulties, lack of trust in the quality of legal advice, inability to ensure confidentiality and lack of information. Geographical inequality in the distribution of lawyers and insufficient information available through administrative institutions and online resources reduces public awareness of the opportunities for legal aid. The survey data shows that the public is insufficiently informed about available legal services and their rights to free legal aid, which limits their ability to obtain the necessary support in complex legal matters. The monitoring results reflect the widespread recognition of the need for state support to ensure equal access to legal defence. The Legal Aid Service staff noted the need to expand the category of civil cases and to amend legislation accordingly. Indicator 5.1. Legal analysis has shown that national legislation largely complies with international standards. The system of qualified legal aid in administrative cases endeavours to	It is recommended that the Central Office of the Legal Aid Service should: 1) develop and approve a methodology for monitoring the provision of qualified legal aid and conduct monitoring on a regular basis; 2) revise and update the procedures for calculating individuals' income of citizens to determine their ability to pay and realise the right to free legal aid in civil cases. The methodology should provide a fair and effective mechanism to guarantee prompt access to free legal aid to those who really need it. Indicator 4.2. In order to expand legal assistance in civil cases, it is recommended that the Cabinet of Ministers and the Jogorku Kenesh conduct a study to assess the existing criteria for the provision of legal aid in civil cases and assess the need to revise them in accordance with existing standards and best practices. To improve the expertise of persons responsible for state guaranteed legal aid in state and local self-government bodies, the Central Office of the Legal Aid Service should regularly hold training events on the provision of primary legal aid to people in civil cases. It is important for the Central Office of the Legal Aid Service and the Bar Association to: 1) pay due attention to improving the quality of services provided by Legal Aid Service coordinators and state guaranteed legal aid lawyers in civil cases; 2) monitor the quality of work of coordinators and state guaranteed legal aid lawyers in civil cases, as well as their compliance with the Standards and the Code of Professional Ethics of Lawyers. Indicator 5.1. The Central Office of the Legal Aid Service should consider revising and updating the way in which individuals' income is calculated and their rights to qualified legal aid in administrative cases is assessed. Guidelines should be agreed which provides a unified, fair and efficient mechanism to guarantee prompt access to state guaranteed legal aid for those who really need it.

ensure access to justice for various categories of people, depending on their financial situation and social circumstances. However, the effectiveness of the implementation of these measures and the quality of services provided require continuous monitoring and evaluation. Indicator 5.2. National legislation does not fully comply with international standards regarding access to databases to verify the income of persons seeking legal aid in administrative cases. Administrative proceedings are relatively new in national legislation, which has affected the formation of practices and culture of applying for such cases among the actors. Some lawyers refuse to accept administrative cases due to their time-consuming nature and difficulties with gathering evidence. Access to qualified legal aid in administrative cases is also limited due to the uneven geographical distribution of legal professionals, which affect remote areas especially, as well as low public awareness of the availability of public assistance, and lack of accessible information from state institutions. Insufficient support for vulnerable people and lack of advice at the initial stages make it difficult to protect people's rights in administrative proceedings. There are also few qualified legal specialists who can represent individuals' interests in administrative cases. This creates a double challenge and exacerbates the problem of access to justice, especially for vulnerable groups. In addition, there is a lack of transparency of statistics on refusals of lawyers taking on admin legal aid cases, which makes it difficult to analyse the effectiveness of the public legal aid system and take appropriate decisions to improve the system.	Indicator 5.2. It is recommended for the Cabinet of Ministers to: 1) exclude from the list[12] of documents confirming the right to qualified legal assistance subparagraph 2 of paragraph 11, which requires a procedural act of an investigator or court to confirm the status of a victim of family violence. Similar changes are required in subparagraph 1 of paragraph 1; 2) a reference to administrative cases should be added to paragraph 15; 3) the requirements of paragraph 18, subparagraph 2 of the list should be clarified in relation to which document confirms the right to legal aid for a plaintiff in an administrative case. The Ministry of Justice and Central Office of the Legal Aid Service should: 1) take measures to ensure strict compliance of the state guaranteed legal aid coordinators with paragraphs 5 of Articles 14 and 15 of the Law on State Guaranteed Legal Aid before determining the status of the plaintiff, oblige them to conduct legal counselling and draft applications, complaints and other procedural documents for individuals entitled to legal assistance at the expense of the state; 2) carry out regular control, monitoring and analysis of the provision of state guaranteed legal aid during administrative court proceedings to identify and eliminate problematic aspects. It is recommended that the Central Office of the Legal Aid Service: 1) develop and approve a methodology for monitoring the provision of qualified legal aid in administrative cases and conduct monitoring on a regular basis; 2) consider expanding the network of state guaranteed legal aid, training state guaranteed legal aid staff and improving the quality of their services in administrative cases. It is recommended that the Central Office of the Legal Aid Service: 1) develops and approves the Methodology for monitoring the provision of state guaranteed legal aid and conducts monitoring on a regular basis; 2) consider the feasibility of expanding the state guaranteed

[12] Постановление Кабинета Министров Кыргызской Республики от 4 мая 2023 года № 241 "Об утверждении Порядка взаимодействия субъектов системы гарантированной государством юридической помощи и Перечня документов, подтверждающих право лица на получение квалифицированной юридической помощи".

	legal aid network and ensures wide access to existing centres, 3) ensures that the staff of the state guaranteed legal aid are trained and the quality of their services in administrative cases is improved. It is important for the Bar Association to: 1) monitor the quality of work of lawyers of state guaranteed legal aid in administrative cases, their compliance with the Quality Standards and the Code of Professional Ethics of Lawyers; 2) conduct regular trainings for lawyers providing legal aid in order to ensure that legal assistance meets the requirements of the Standard on the Quality of Lawyer's Services in Administrative Cases.
Financing of the State Guaranteed Legal Aid System	
Status and Challenges	**Recommendations**
Indicator 6.1. The system of state guaranteed legal aid fails to meet real needs, which negatively affects the availability and quality of services. Funding has not increased despite the increase lawyers' fees, nor does it take into account inflation and rising costs, thus making it more difficult to improve the quality of legal aid. Funding problems also lead to staff shortages and organisational difficulties, such as delays in processing payments and difficulties in the reporting system, which causes dissatisfaction among lawyers and affects their readiness to participate in state guaranteed legal aid. Funding for legal aid in Kyrgyzstan remains significantly lower than in many European countries, which particularly limits access to quality assistance for vulnerable groups.	Indicator 6.1. The Ministry of Finance is recommended to: 1) increase the budget for state guaranteed legal aid, taking into account the increase in tariffs and the real needs of the system to ensure affordable and quality legal aid; 2) divide the Legal Aid Service budget expenditures into three items: a). Legal Aid Service apparatus; b). Legal counselling expenses (paralegals, private partnership, pro bono counsel); c). Qualified legal aid expenses (for lawyers); 3) update the data of state guaranteed legal aid in the automated system for providing information on revenues and expenditures of republican and local budgets 'Open Budget' www.budget.okmot.kg and make regular updates in order to ensure the relevance and reliability of the information. The Cabinet of Ministers should: 1) revise and set realistic tariffs for lawyers at a level corresponding to the complexity and volume of work and ensure timely payment for services; 2) include a separate payment for defence lawyers in order to incite them to provide prompt assistance to those in need. It is important for the Legal Aid Centre and the Ministry of Justice to: 1) simplify and standardize the reporting process for lawyers

	through the Automated Information System (AIS) , and increase the number of staff for efficient processing of applications; 2) require compliance with the procedure for payment for qualified legal assistance provided by a lawyer within the framework of legal assistance guaranteed by the state, approved by Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 387 of 4 August 2023. See: www.cbd.minjust.gov.kg/7-22322/edition/1279574/ru; 3) change the system of payment for lawyers from fees to fixed salaries to increase stability and boost motivation. The Jogorku Kenesh and the Chamber of Accounts should monitor the effectiveness of budget spending on state guaranteed legal aid, and amend legislation as necessary to increase transparency and financial accountability. The Legal Aid Centre should include payment for initial consultations to ensure fair compensation for legal assistance provided.
Quality of State Guaranteed Legal Aid	
Status and Challenges	**Recommendations**
Indicator 7.1. The Criteria for the Selection of Lawyers of qualified legal aid have been developed and approved. In order to provide state guaranteed legal aid, a lawyer should undergo relevant training, including thematic trainings based on the specifics of the lawyer's work and join the relevant Register of Lawyers of state guaranteed legal aid. However, there is no open and clear procedure for the selection of lawyers, which limits their professional participation, as information on the criteria is not always available. There is no feedback mechanism for unsuccessful candidates to the selection committee, the selection process and results are not published, and there is no independent monitoring of the selection procedures for the Register. Most lawyers recognise the existence of clear and objective selection criteria. However, some believe that the criteria need to be thoroughly analysed and updated. The	Indicator 7.1. The Ministry of Justice is recommended to: 1) develop and implement a transparent and accessible procedure for the selection of lawyers, with regular competitions and updated information on official websites; 2) strengthen control over compliance using approved criteria; 3) provide the public and the legal community with access to information on the selection process through accessible platforms, including the Legal Aid Centre's website; 4) establish mechanisms to ensure that all lawyers included in the registers regularly upgrade their relevant professional training, taking into account their knowledge of the rights and needs of women, children and groups with special needs and the specificities of defending their interests ; 5) introduce norms and put into practice a feedback mechanism for candidates who participated in the selection process so that they can receive explanations

monitoring revealed problems of poor quality of legal assistance related to insufficiently high remuneration for a lawyer's work, leading to lawyers with minimal work experience and insufficient qualifications joining the Register of state guaranteed legal aid as a way of gaining experience.

In several cases, the quality of defence provided by lawyers on the Register of state guaranteed legal aid failed to meet expectations, indicating insufficient control by the Legal Aid Centre and the Bar over compliance with the established criteria. The practice of appointing 'pocket' lawyers undermines confidence in the system and negatively affects the quality of legal aid provided.

Indicator 7.2. Lawyers on the Register undergo training and education based on the specifics of the cases in which they provide qualified legal assistance. However, the existing methodologies and trainings are not yet fully oriented to meet the needs of the recipients of state guaranteed legal aid.

The monitoring showed that many providers of state guaranteed legal aid are not aware of the methodological support provided by the Legal Aid Centre, and the support provided by the Legal Aid Centre is not systematic enough. Training events by the Bar are organised sporadically and usually on a paid basis, which forces lawyers to develop their expertise at their own expense and through international projects.

Most of the surveyed lawyers of the State Bar Association on the Register point to the need for regular and free professional development to keep their professional knowledge up to date and to comply with legislative changes. Lawyers express interest in offline training, as online training is perceived as less effective and as relevant.

The lack of regular interaction between the Legal Aid Centre and the Lawyers' Training Centre hinders the effective training of new specialists, and bureaucratic requirements and recommendations on how to improve their chances of being selected in the future.

The Bar should: 1) improve the transparency and accessibility of the selection criteria by posting full information on the Advocacy website and other publicly accessible platforms; 2) provide training for lawyers on the criteria, including regular refresher courses on state guaranteed legal aid standards; 3) develop and approve clear mechanisms for monitoring compliance with the criteria and promptly respond to complaints and cases of non-compliance.

Indicator 7.2. The Ministry of Justice and the Bar are recommended to: 1) Develop and adopt documents related to improving professional expertise of lawyers, including those providing state guaranteed legal aid; 2) develop measures to improve knowledge, professional skills, cultural and educational education and increase experience in working with vulnerable groups. It is also important to develop human rights knowledge, gender sensitivity and communication skills, taking into account the specificities of different categories of citizens, such as victims of gender and sexual violence, elderly people, minorities, persons with disabilities, persons with mental disorders, HIV-positive and persons with other serious infectious diseases, drug users, stateless persons, asylum seekers, foreign citizens, migrants, migrant workers and refugees.

The Legal Aid Centre needs to provide methodological support to the Bar Association and state guaranteed legal aid lawyers in the fulfilment of legislative requirements of the legislation, including using the latest modern digital developments and approaches.

It is necessary to develop and approve by-laws to implement Part 2, Article 457 of the CPC, which provide for the mandatory participation of a specialised prosecutor, investigator, judge and child lawyer in cases involving children in conflict with the law, victims and witnesses. The comprehensive implementation of this norm requires effective interdepartmental cooperation between the prosecutor's offices,

create barriers for lawyers, reducing their motivation to participate in the system. Kyrgyz legislation requires the participation of specialised investigators, prosecutors, judges and lawyers in criminal proceedings involving children, including child victims, witnesses and those in conflict with the law. However, the practical implementation of this requirement faces significant challenges. A significant number of lawyers, investigators and other specialists working with children have not had the necessary specialised training. The CPC does not contain a special requirement for specialisation of staff from the Family and Child Protection Authority and juvenile affairs officers, as their expertise in working with children is presumed. However, survey data, as well as statistics provided by the General Prosecutor indicate the need to take comprehensive measures to improve the effectiveness of the professional development system for specialists, to approve the mandatory annual minimum hours of professional development, and to work on the professional development plan. Methodological materials on working with children are very rarely used. There is a high demand among lawyers and investigators for the development and dissemination of such manuals to improve their professional expertise. Training for professionals working with children within the justice system remains insufficient. Most professionals, including child welfare officers and probation officers, have either not had access to specialised training or have only partially had access. The principle of specialisation of officials working with children in probation agencies is implemented in a fragmented manner and often depends on the individual level of training of staff rather than on a systematic approach. Indicator 7.3. In Jalal-Abad oblast state authorities and local governments fail to comply with the legal counselling standards, and there are insufficient people responsible, registers and reporting systems in place.	the courts, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Bar of the Kyrgyz Republic. Authorised bodies should develop and introduce mandatory training programmes for all professionals working with children in criminal proceedings, including investigators, prosecutors, lawyers, judges, inspectors and probation officers. It is important to introduce regular monitoring of professionals working with children in order to identify gaps in training and develop additional educational programmes. It is important to establish a system of certification of specialists in children's affairs, ensuring their compliance with juvenile justice standards, and to establish mandatory advanced training courses with a minimum number of hours for all categories of specialists, aimed at developing practical skills in working with children, including interdisciplinary approaches. It is recommended to develop and approve methodological materials for lawyers, investigators, judges, probation officers, psychologists and other specialists and to disseminate the manuals among practitioners, ensuring their accessibility through professional organisations and educational centres. The Ministry of Justice should consider establishing specialised units for working with children in the probation system and provide them with the necessary resources, and include modules on social support for children, as well as general information on legal aid needs through training probation officers. Indicator 7.3. It is recommended that the Bar establishes control over the implementation of legal aid standards in state bodies and local self-government structures, including the appointment of persons responsible and and the maintenance of registration logs. The Legal Aid Centre is recommended to: 1) develop and implement an automated and simplified system for filing applications and appointing lawyers through digital platforms, recording fees and keeping reports to reduce

Paralegals, although they have the legal basis for their work, are at the initial stage, and their work standards need to be approved and developed.

There is also a lack of open data on the standards of legal counselling in the state guaranteed legal aid bodies, which makes it difficult to monitor transparency and effectiveness.

Lawyers point to problems with insufficient qualifications in administrative matters, which requires specialised knowledge and skills.

The referral mechanism does not work properly and feedback, analysis of statistical data between state bodies is not provided, which makes it impossible to predict data collection to increase public access to state guaranteed legal aid.

Indicator 7.4. National legislation complies with international standards, providing for a mechanism for filing complaints about the quality of legal aid. The complaints mechanism operates through an independent body, the Ethics Commission of the Bar Association. A committee also represents the lawyer before the Ethics Commission. Decisions of the Ethics Commission may be appealed in court.

The work of the Bar Association Ethics Commission is not sufficiently transparent or independent, raising questions about the fairness of the consideration of complaints.

The monitoring showed that there is an urgent need to ensure the independence of the complaints body, - a key factor in maintaining confidence in the legal aid system and the fair handling of all complaints received. Respondents from among judges, investigators and lawyers noted the importance of establishing an independent body and maintaining real independence of the processes from external influence, which would contribute to a more objective review of complaints and increase confidence in the institution of the Bar and the entire system of state guaranteed legal aid.

Despite the existence of an independent appeals mechanism, there are problems with dependence on coordinators and make the process more transparent and convenient for clients; 2) establish closer cooperation with the Lawyers Training Centre to improve the lawyers' qualifications, especially on issues of administrative proceedings; 3) develop qualified legal aid standards based on social partnership principles, ensure uniform standards for legal aid, ensure open access to qualified legal aid quality standards used by the Legal Aid Centre authorities and organise mechanisms to verify compliance with them.

It is important for local authorities to: 1) appoint persons responsible for maintaining the qualified legal aid standards, ensure the availability of registers and regular reporting; 2) train staff on qualified legal aid standards in order to improve the quality of primary legal aid.

It would be advisable for the Paralegal Association to centrally: 1) speed up approving quality standards for paralegals and ensure their mandatory implementation; 2) develop a training and professional development program for paralegals.

It is important for public and private partners to: 1) promote the development of the institutuion of paralegals and support paralegal training initiatives; and 2) develop and implement an internship program for young lawyers and paralegals to improve their skills and knowledge in administrative cases.

It is also recommended that the Legal Aid Centre: 1) organise a systematised feedback mechanism between public bodies, including regular exchange of statistical data on referrals and outcomes; 2) introduce a unified (possibly digital) referral monitoring tool to assess the effectiveness of the mechanism and forecast the need for state guaranteed legal aid.

Indicator 7.4. The Bar Association should: 1) amend the Regulation on the Ethics Commission of the Bar (approved by the Council of the Bar on 21 January 2021, as amended on 28 October 2021) to include a procedure for coordinating with the Legal Aid Centre under

feedback and responding to complaints in a timely manner. The timeframes for consideration of appeals and complaints are not immediate and can stretch to up to four months.

Indicator 7.5. National legislation does not contain a provision on the need to monitor the quality of state guaranteed legal aid. The monitoring has shown that transparency and coverage of the results of monitoring and evaluation of the quality of work of lawyers of the state guaranteed legal aid in the professional environment is important for all respondents. State guaranteed legal aid lawyers emphasise the need for systematic monitoring to remove incompetent professionals who have received justified complaints or who do not follow ethical principles from the register. This will also help prevent the use of the legal profession for purely commercial purposes. Respondents from among judges, investigators and lawyers noted the importance and necessity for the authorised body to develop a monitoring methodology for state guaranteed legal aid, and to conduct systemic monitoring in strict compliance with this. The monitoring of state guaranteed legal aid system should include an assessment of client satisfaction.

Despite the partial existence of a legal framework for monitoring and evaluating the quality and accessibility of legal counselling and qualified legal aid, in practice these processes have not yet been properly implemented. The monitoring of the qualified legal aid conducted by the coordinator within the framework of the Practical Guide does not allow for a full assessment of the extent to which the assistance provided is in line with the stated objectives and requirements of the Law on State Guaranteed Legal Aid. Interaction between the Legal Aid Centre and the Bar around monitoring remains ineffective, and the current system does not allow for a full assessment of the compliance of assistance with the stated objectives and requirements of the Law on State Guaranteed Legal Aid. The current 'monitoring' system, in the absence of the participation of independent civil society representatives, essentially creates an employer-employee

the Ministry of Justice when reviewing complaints about a lawyer related to the qualified legal aid they provided.; 2) develop an ethical and professional standards assessment system for lawyers.

It is important for the Ministry of Justice to:

1) automate the process of filing complaints and reviewing appeals to increase transparency and efficiency of review; 2) create a system of regular monitoring of complaints and appeals to identify systemic problems in the provision of legal aid.

The Bar Council should conduct a critical analysis of the situation, study international and national experience and revise the Law on the Bar and the Regulation on the Ethics Commission in terms of appealing decisions of the Ethics Commission in order to bring them in line with the Law 'On the Fundamentals of Administrative Activity and Administrative Procedures'.

For the Legal Aid Centre, it is important:

1) to develop and implement a transparent mechanism for reviewing applications and complaints about qualified legal assistance. The mechanism should provide for the submission of complaints to the Ethics Commission of the Bar; 2) to increase the transparency of the review of complaints by means of regular public reporting on the outcomes and judgements.

It is important for the courts to ensure proper and impartial consideration of administrative appeals of decisions of the Ethics Commission or the Ministry of Justice based on complaints against lawyers.

Indicator 7.5. The Central Office of the Legal Aid Service of the Ministry of Justice needs to: 1) develop a methodology for monitoring and evaluation of the quality of legal counselling and qualified legal assistance, including records of client satisfaction (including online surveys on the website), frequency of complaints and results of internal inspections; this methodology needs to be approved in order to comply with legal requirements; 2) regularly publish the monitoring results , highlighting

vertical control relationship, which reduces the independence of lawyers and negatively affects the quality of assistance. It is important that the monitoring methodology considers the assessment of client satisfaction with the work of lawyers and state guaranteed legal aid coordinators.	areas of compliance with quality standards and ethical norms by state guaranteed legal aid lawyers; 3) to repeal paragraphs 13.1 and 20.1 of the Practical Guide for coordinators and lawyers involved in the provision of qualified legal assistance in criminal cases, approved by the order of the Director of the Centre for the Coordination of State Guaranteed Legal Aid under the Ministry of Justice No. 28 dated 3 December 2018; 4) together with the Paralegal Association, develop a methodology for monitoring and evaluating the performance of paralegals. It is recommended that the Bar should: 1) actively participate in the development of methodology and procedures for monitoring the quality of legal aid, setting standards that will be taken into account when assessing the work of lawyers; 2) create mechanisms for the Bar to participate in the development and implementation of standards for monitoring and evaluating the quality of legal aid.

CONCLUSION

The monitoring of the legal aid system identified key problems and reached significant conclusions that can serve as a basis for further improvements. An assessment of the availability and quality of legal aid showed that, despite the reforms undertaken, there are significant disparities in service provision depending on the geographical region and the population group. This points to the need to improve control over the evenness of resource allocation.

To summarise the main findings, the legal aid system needs to be standardised and clearly monitored. Insufficient public awareness about available legal services reduces the effectiveness of legal defence in remote regions. Lack of monitoring of primary legal aid, and lack of awareness of the key providers render local legal services ineffectual. The study also noted that violations of the rights of the accused and victims of crime, including limited access to a lawyer, remain a significant problem. The referral mechanism for effective qualified legal aid requires redesigning, into a unified and digitalized system. Problems of interaction between the authorised body and the Bar demonstrate that communication improvements are necessary. The study concluded that there is uneven distribution of resources and availability of legal aid, a lack of standardisation and monitoring of the legal aid system, poor public awareness of the available services, problems with access to lawyers and uneven quality of legal defence, and a need for better coordination between state bodies and the Bar.

The monitoring conducted has contributed to a better understanding of the current challenges involved in accessing legal aid in Kyrgyzstan. The results of the study can serve as a starting point for reform of the legal aid system and improving its accessibility. Moreover, the proposed recommendations can be used as a basis for the development of new policies aimed at improving justice and ensuring respect for human rights. In addition, the monitoring methodology will serve as a basis for further research and systemic change.

The study has shown the need for further research into the reasons for variations in access to legal aid in different regions of the country. This could include a detailed study of the social and economic factors affecting the quality of legal aid. It is also relevant to study the experience of other countries, especially in terms of monitoring legal aid and assessing its quality. It may be worth considering the introduction of ways in which to assess public satisfaction with the quality of legal services.

It should be noted that the study had its limitations. The main limitation is related to access to information in remote regions, which had the potential to affect the completeness of the data obtained. Despite the comprehensive approach and the use of a variety of data sources, the study faced challenges accessing complete information in some areas, as well as a lack of transparency and incomplete fulfilment of commitments under the Open Government Partnership.[13] Also, some data on the quality of legal aid was obtained on the basis of subjective assessments, which may have affected the overall picture. However, the data collection and analysis methods applied minimised these limitations and ensured the objectivity of the findings.

The study clearly demonstrated the need for further reforms in the criminal justice and legal aid system in Kyrgyzstan. These reforms should aim to improve access to legal aid for all citizens, regardless of their social or geographical location. Only through consistent and meaningful change can a fairer and more effective justice system be created that complies with international standards and protects the rights of every individual.

[13] https://www.ogp.el.kg/ru