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Excerpts from the article by Valeri Mamchenko and Tamara Merezha

“Is there justice in Kazakhstan?”

In the past the newspaper was discussing the sad conclusions of the investigation of the corruption problem conducted by the Association of sociologists of Kazakhstan. According to the study, the “greediest” in the field of corruption are courts. However, the most troublesome is that the population has effectively accepted this reality.

Information from the Public Anti-Corruption Council “Nur Otan”:

During the third quarter of 2008 six out of ten citizens of Kazakhstan (61.6% of the respondents) at least once were involved in corruption (giving or accepting bribes). This figure grew by 2.3% comparing with the second quarter of 2008. During the third quarter of 2008 the pressure on the population forcing citizens to participate in corruption shows 20% increase comparing with the second quarter.

Distribution of bribes in the third quarter of 2008:

1. Courts (average bribe \$2092)
2. Purchase of land parcels (average bribe \$1320)
3. Career advancement (average bribe \$1050)
4. Military drafts (average bribe \$820)
5. Purchase of apartment (\$764)

The “greediest” courts are in Almaty and Astana where average bribe exceeds \$3000. 9 out of 16 regions of Kazakhstan showed that the willingness of population to offer a bribe grew by 4.9% during the summer of 2008. In the third quarter of 2008 the anti-corruption notion among the population fell by 10% comparing with the second quarter. The conclusion is made that the population of Kazakhstan generally accepts bribery as a necessary part of life.

An Anticorruption Centre of Kazakhstan exists 6 months. During this time it received over 500 voluntary reports on instances of bribery: 13% of these reports are in connection with courts, 24% in connection with education, and 13% in connection with private property rights.

All judges are appointed directly by the President of Kazakhstan Nazarbaev. Official information about dismissal and prosecution of corrupted judges is unavailable.

Opinion of the known in Kazakhstan human right activist E. Zhovtis: a system of judicial bribery has already been established, everyone within this system must follow already existing rules that include bribery. Those who refuse are discarded by the system.

Polling 52 randomly chosen residents of Karaganda aged from 18 to 69 yielded these results:

60% are personally familiar with cases of judicial wrongdoing

78% do not believe that all citizens are equally treated by the law and courts

98% never heard about someone who got compensation for the damage caused by wrongdoing of courts and judges

84% believe that courts would work better if judges be honest and objective, instead of getting a better salary

75% do not believe in honesty and objectiveness of judges

(From page 5 of the newspaper)