



British Embassy  
Astana

## British Embassy Astana

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Overview of projects and activities funded  
by the British Government in Kazakhstan 2011 – 2015

Astana 2014



Presidential elections in Kazakhstan, 3 April 2011. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.

## Foreword: Carolyn Browne, Her Majesty's Ambassador in Kazakhstan

I'm delighted to welcome you to the second edition of this publication. Our aim, as before, is to provide an overview of the various projects and activities in Kazakhstan which the British Government funds. All these various projects and activities have a shared objective – to help support the efforts of Kazakhstani citizens and Kazakhstani institutions to build a better future for all. All successful societies in today's globalised world are underpinned by three characteristics – respect for human rights, for democracy and for good governance. That's true for Kazakhstan just as it is true for other countries. It's worth reminding ourselves that Kazakhstan, as an independent country, is exactly 23 years old. In that time Kazakhstan has gone from the economic and political chaos of the collapse of the Soviet

Union in late 1991 to today's country which is towards the top of the World Bank's "middle income" bracket for global economies and poised on the brink of joining the World Trade Organisation. So a great deal has happened in those short 23 years. Of course it takes more than one generation to build the sort of society which both Kazakhstan and its friends want to see created. That's why we welcome the fact that, as the national income grows, the Kazakhstani Government nevertheless continues to work closely with leading international social and economic development bodies such as the UN Development Programme, the Organisation for Cooperation in Europe (which started out as the "Helsinki process"), and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.



So the projects set out in this brochure are a summary of what, in tangible and practical ways, the British Government is doing to support that journey which Kazakhstan itself has chosen. These projects range widely across many sectors of activity. Some continue activities started some time ago and which continue to evolve, just as the circumstances on the ground in Kazakhstan continue to evolve. Other projects – such as business and human rights – are new lines of activity both for us and for our Kazakhstani implementing partners. We're proud of this work – and we hope that you, dear reader, will understand why as you read this brochure and consider how you, too, might help Kazakhstan in the work which lies before it.



Photo credit: Press Office of the Administration of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

## Overall UK priorities in Kazakhstan

### Mission:

The role of the British Embassy in Kazakhstan is to promote a prosperous UK-Kazakhstan relationship and the positive development of Kazakhstan in support of UK priorities. We will do this through partnership and cooperation; working together for the benefit of both our countries.

Numerous projects have been implemented since the UK Embassy in Kazakhstan was established in 1992. Programmes have included the Bilateral Programme Budget (BPB) as well as the Human Rights and Democracy Programme (HRDP). The HRDP is the FCO's dedicated fund supporting human rights and democracy work overseas. The Programme aims to make a difference to people's lives, helping build the capacity of governments and civil society

to promote and protect human rights. The Bilateral Programme allows for smaller projects on various themes. During the period of 2011-2015 the British Embassy in Astana has committed about £1.2 million (some 350m KZT) to such projects. Defence cooperation has a separate funding and during the period of 2008 – 2015 over £2.8 million (some 820m KZT) was spent.

The main priority areas for projects funded by the British Embassy are:

- Freedom of expression;
- Torture prevention;
- Abolition of the death penalty;
- Prison reform;
- Freedom of religion or belief;
- Women's rights;
- Corporate responsibility;
- Human Rights awareness;
- Democracy, transparency and accountability;
- Investment climate;
- Economic rights;
- Defence cooperation.

## Freedom of expression

### Projects 2011 – 2014

#### **“Strengthening expertise of media lawyers and media NGOs to protect and advocate mass-media interests in Kazakhstan”:**

Strengthened the expertise of media NGOs, journalists and media lawyers to be able to more effectively defend the rights of journalists, and contribute to a safe operating environment and a greater freedom of expression for legitimate viewpoints.

#### **Round Table: “Reforming the system of public financing of mass media for the development of a competitive media market in Kazakhstan”**

Aimed to contribute to a more transparent system of governmental financing of mass media to allow a strong,

independent and competitive media space with clear and objective tender and bidding processes.

#### **“Supporting Independent Media: Creating partnerships for inclusive and sustainable democratic governance between human rights NGOs, media and government”**

Brought together reporters and human rights activists to improve the quality of public human rights campaigns whilst motivating journalists to do a better, more thorough job of reporting on a variety of human rights issues.

#### **“Supporting competent media coverage of human rights in Kazakhstan by journalists”**

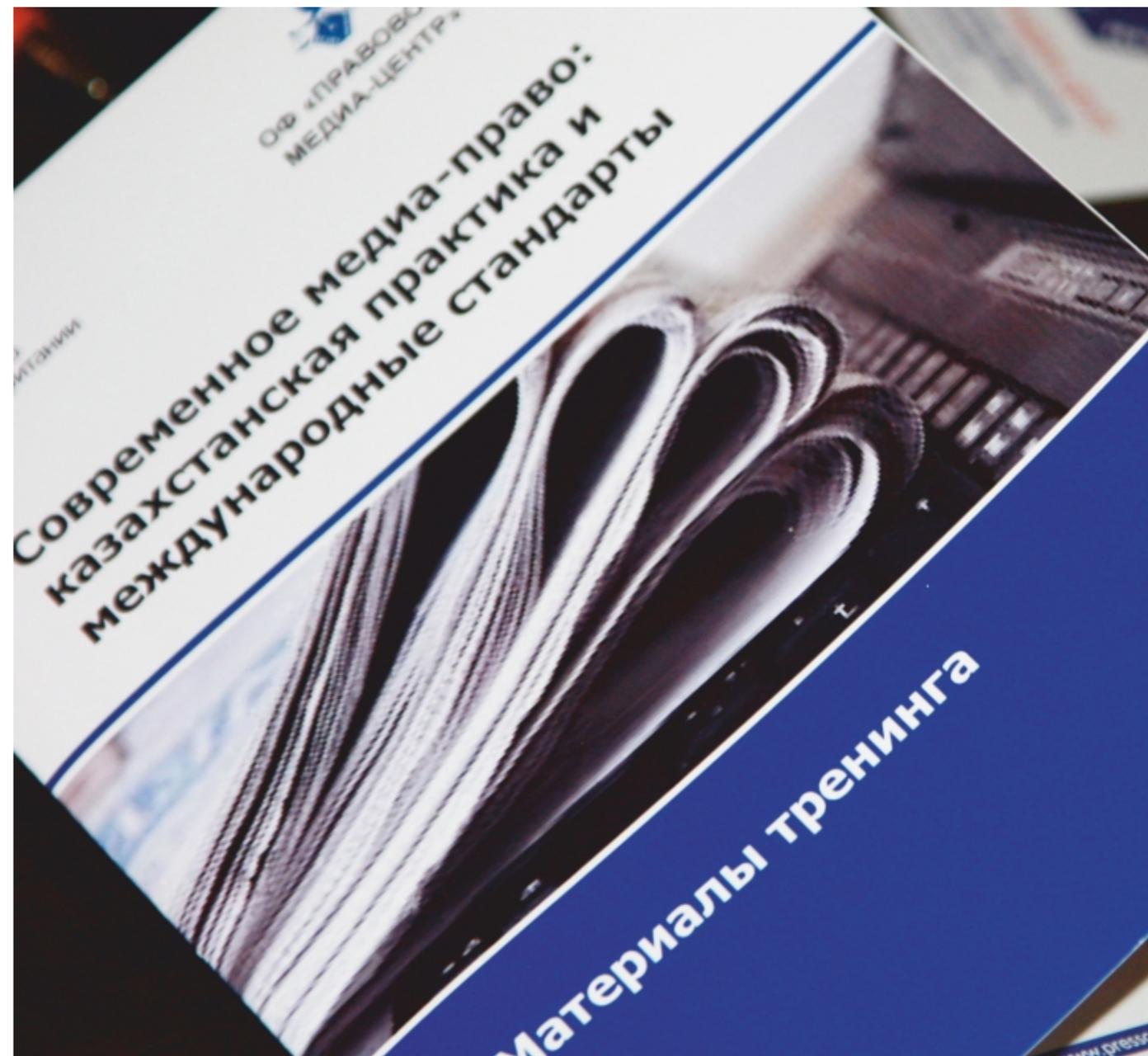
Promoted human rights standards amongst the

journalistic network to further boost coverage of human rights issues and violations in the mass media in Kazakhstan.

#### **“Supporting the reform of the system of public financing of mass media for the development of a competitive media market in Kazakhstan”**

Aimed to increase transparency of the system of governmental financing of mass media to allow a strong, independent and competitive media space with clear and objective tender and bidding processes.

#### **Project implementers in 2011 – 14: (North Kazakhstan) Legal Media Centre and Institute for War and Peace Reporting.**



Training for media-activists, Astana session, 24 December 2013. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.

## Torture prevention

### Projects 2011 – 2015

#### **“Effective implementation of the National Preventive Mechanism in Kazakhstan”**

Assisted with effective work of the NPM in Kazakhstan focussing on pre-trial detention and police. Increasing awareness of the work on NPM. Members of NPM are equipped to monitor pre-trial detention facilities across the country.

#### **“Establishing a National Preventive Mechanism in Kazakhstan”**

Assisted in establishing a working and effective NPM in Kazakhstan based on a partnership of Ombudsman and civil society. This included electing and setting up the Coordination Council, raising public awareness, training NPM members and developing

procedural regulations of the NPM.

#### **“Strengthening the capacity of the Coordination Council of the Public Monitoring Commissions ”**

Aimed to improve the system of public monitoring of penitentiary institutions under the Ministry of Interior and the Penal Committee in 11 regions as part of the assistance in establishing the National Preventive Mechanism. This included providing methodological support for the PMCs by strengthening their capacity, developing rules and regulations for the CCPMCs and monitoring of closed institutions in 11 regions.

#### **“Establishing Coalitions of Public Monitoring Boards in Kazakhstan”**

This project helped to establish effective and nationwide coalitions of public monitoring boards specialising in the prevention of torture and ill-treatment within the criminal justice systems, with the aim of spreading best practice between the different regional PMCs.

#### **“Integrating safeguards against torture in the law and practice of Kazakhstan”**

Promoted implementation of the 2011 UN Human Rights Committee recommendation for Kazakhstan to put an end to torture through specific legislative, institutional and capacity building measures.

#### **“Strengthening institutions and building civil society capacity to combat torture in Kazakhstan and**



Conference “Practical Issues of National Preventive Mechanism's Implementation in Kazakhstan”, Astana, November 2013. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.

#### **Kyrgyzstan in follow up to the Recommendations of the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Special Rapporteur on Torture in Kazakhstan”**

Contribute to NPM implementation in Kazakhstan by establishing pilot systems of rehabilitation of victims of torture education on monitoring closed institutions.

#### **“Enhancing the public monitoring commission system”**

Aimed to establish/enhance respect for prisoners' rights by strengthening the public oversight system in prisons, pre-trial detentions centres and other temporary incarceration locations. The project provided expert support so as to enhance the

capacities of the existing PMC system, making their work more effective and sustainable.

#### **Project implementers in 2011 – 14: Penal Reform International Central Asia, Coordination Council for Public Monitoring Commissions and Legal Policy Research Centre**

## Abolition of death penalty

### Projects 2011 – 2014

#### **“Part abolitionism in Central Asia: how to move the process of death penalty abolition further”**

Advocated the process of death penalty abolition and improvement of life imprisonment system in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan by facilitating the conference “Partly abolitionism of Central Asia: how to move the process of death penalty abolition further”.

#### **“Ensuring the legal status of persons convicted of the death penalty is in compliance with international norms and standards following the 2004 moratorium”**

Aimed to resolve legislative problems regarding the use of life and long-term sentences

and achieve improvement in conditions and observation of human rights for such prisoners.

#### **“Promote progressive abolition of the death penalty and alternatives that respect international human rights standards”**

Supported human rights observance development in Kazakhstan through lobbying for progressive abolition of the death penalty and advocating for alternatives to life sentences.

#### **“Engaging parliamentarians in the fight against the death penalty”**

Built capacity and provided support to parliamentarians to undertake legal and policy reforms aimed at progressive abolition of the death penalty



World Day Against the Death Penalty, Astana, Kazakhstan, 10 October 2011. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.

in Kazakhstan

### **Project implementers in 2011 – 14: Penal Reform International and Charter for Human Rights**

## Prison reform

### Projects 2012 – 2015

#### **“Second Prison Forum”**

Touched upon the issues of employment of inmates as a part of re-socialisation work. “100 professions for the prisoners” guidelines presented and a set of recommendations on establishing full – fledged employment system.

#### **“Study visit on probation”**

Raised awareness of key stakeholders on opportunities of probation services within the penitentiary system. Exposing relevant criminal justice stakeholders in Kazakhstan to policy and practice on probation in the UK and Europe.

### **Round table on the drafts of the Criminal and Criminal Procedural Codes**



Regional Conference “Development of Prison Legislation in Central Asia”, 14 March 2014. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.

Discussed the new drafts of the Criminal and Criminal- Procedural Codes with participation of state officials, international experts and international organisations.

#### **“A criminal justice and prison reform initiative: re-integration of ex-prisoners through employment and the probation service”**

Enhanced capacity of state officials to promote an effective re-socialisation programme via effective probation services including employment of ex-prisoners in Kazakhstan as part of the

Criminal Code reform.

#### **“Promoting EU best practices on legal conditions for modern criminal execution (Strengthening criminal justice system of Kazakhstan through establishing criminal legislative system with respect to human rights)”**

Promoted the use of probation alternatives in contemporary criminal justice in Kazakhstan.

### **Project implementer in 2012 - 15: Penal Reform International Central Asia**

## Freedom of religion or belief

**Projects 2012 – 2014**

### **“Strengthening religious freedom in Kazakhstan”**

Aimed to improve the legal framework for religious

freedom in Kazakhstan and to increase public tolerance and awareness regarding religious freedom and its international standards.

Raised awareness among civil servants and youth groups in

Kazakhstan on the freedom of religion.

**Project implementer in 2012 – 14: Astana Centre Consulting**



Meeting of Baroness Warsi with Supreme Mufti of Kazakhstan, Astana, 25 February 2010. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.

## Women's rights

**Projects 2011 – 2015**

### **“Presentation of the report on women offenders”**

Promoted women's rights and addressing the structural cause and discriminatory laws against women. Identifying a need for gender-specific policies that respond to the needs of women in prison and to enable an identification of the key areas to be addressed as a matter of priority.

### **“Supporting Kazakhstan's human rights commitments on women's discrimination and democratic participation”**

Supported implementation of Kazakhstan's human rights commitments on women's discrimination and democratic participation.

### **“Supporting the National**



Conference “The Women's Movement in Central Asia & Contemporary Challenges”, Astana, 23-24 February 2010. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.

### **Commission of Family-Demographic Policy and Women's Affairs under the President of Kazakhstan in its efforts to further improve gender equality in the Republic of Kazakhstan”**

Assisted central and local partners to cooperate in a more effective and efficient manner to follow up on UPR recommendations on gender equality and domestic violence, to ensure timely and adequate service provision, justice and access to information to survivors of

violence and as a result a more coordinated response between different social actors involved in order to end violence against women in Kazakhstan.

**Project implementers and subgrant implementers in 2011 – 15: Penal Reform International Central Asia, International NGO Training and Research Centre, UNDP Kazakhstan and NGO “Centr Razvitiya Prava”, NGO “Female rural network”, Public fund “Umit”, “Souz zhenshin Priuralya”, and NGO “Centre prava”.**

## Corporate responsibility



Conference on business and human rights, organised by the Legal Policy Research Centre with support of the British Embassy in Kazakhstan, Almaty, 21 February 2013. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.

### Projects 2012 – 2015

#### **“Integrating the United Nations “Protect, Respect and Remedy” Framework in policy and business practice in Kazakhstan”**

Aims to improve compliance with and application of international human rights standards in the security and justice sectors, and aims at

reducing the number, coverage and seriousness of conflicts and security problems affecting the governments and citizens of Central Asian states.

#### **“Promoting the UN guiding principles on business and human rights in Kazakhstan”**

Promoted implementation of the UN Guiding Principles on

Business and Human Rights in Kazakhstan through public awareness campaign, research and advocacy.

#### **Project implementer in 2012 – 15: Legal Policy Research Centre**

## Human Rights Awareness

### Projects 2011 – 2015

#### **“UN Human Rights Day student debates 2014”**

Increased human rights awareness by conducting student debates and disseminating information on the British Embassy project activities among government stakeholders, international organisations and wider public in order to stimulate discussions on human rights issues in Kazakhstan.

#### **“World Press Photo exhibition 2014”**

Brought a unique travelling exhibition to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to mark International Human Rights Day. The exhibition is co-funded by the Embassy of Netherlands, the Delegation of the European Union and the Embassy of Canada.

#### **Round table “Advocacy activities of government bodies and civil society in human rights protection”**

Promoted awareness on human rights among government stakeholders, international organisations and wider public in the light of UPR (Universal Periodic Review) and Human Rights Day.

#### **“National Human Rights Report 2012”**

Promoted public awareness of the situation with human rights in Kazakhstan in 2012. This included publication of the Report in three languages: Kazakh, Russian and English and presenting it at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2013.

#### **“National Human Rights Day Dedicated to the 65th Anniversary of the**

#### **Universal Declaration of Human Rights”**

Promoted human rights awareness among government stakeholders, international organisations and civil society.

#### **“National Human Rights Report 2011”**

Promoted further implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan and UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations by raising public awareness of the situation with human rights in Kazakhstan in 2011.

#### **“Human Rights Day - International and National Mechanisms of Protecting Human Rights”**

Promoted human rights awareness among government stakeholders, international



Human rights report presentation, Astana, Kazakhstan, 23 September 2010. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.

organisations and civil society.

### **“National Human Rights Report 2010”**

Promoted further implementation of the National Human Rights Action

Plan 2009/2012 and UN Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations by raising awareness on the human rights situation in Kazakhstan in 2010.

**Project implementers in**

**2011 - 15: Human Rights Commission under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Public Fund “International Association for Human Development “El Daryn”, and British Embassy Astana**

## **Democracy, transparency and accountability**

### **Projects 2011 – 2015**

#### **“Raising awareness about EITI (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative) implementation in Kazakhstan”**

Follow up on “Going beyond EITI” project which focused on Atyrau and West Kazakhstan regions. New project is aimed at increasing awareness of the public on a national level. Raised awareness on EITI and its implementation to make National Stakeholders Council (NSC) work more effective.

#### **“Going beyond EITI (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative): assistance and establishment of the institution for interaction of the regional authorities, business and civil society at the local level”**

Aimed to create and promote the public councils for social investments in two oil-

producing regions of Kazakhstan for the purpose of ensuring transparency of extractive companies, accountability of the local state bodies and activation of civil society, based on the experience of the UK councils.

#### **“Make decisions together!”**

Increased participation of rural population in a decision-making process on a local level by disseminating relevant information. Stimulating interaction between population and local authorities to develop self-governance.

#### **“Promoting Criminal Justice Reform in Kazakhstan”**

Strengthened the due process of law on the elimination stage of the criminal case, the development of judicial review, the regulation of detention and preventive measures, as

well as enhancing the status of lawyers to further impact the development of criminal and procedural legislation of Kazakhstan.

#### **“Monitoring of elections of Akims”**

Observed elections of Akims in Kazakhstan and assisted elections authorities with recommendations aimed at bringing the elections process in line with the international democratic standards.

#### **“Transparency of mechanisms on measuring costs of public services”**

Raised public awareness and civil engagement in specifying the costs of public services as a right to participate in local governance and public budget transparency.

#### **“Strengthening social sector platforms for rights and services at local level in Kazakhstan”**

Supported vulnerable groups and civil society organisations representing them in lobbying for rights and services at oblast (regional) level in Kazakhstan.

**“Public / Social Monitoring/Oversight Law”**

Assisted the Government of Kazakhstan in drafting legislation on Public Monitoring to take into account the views of the civil society.

**“Elections & Democracy”**

Supported introduction of necessary amendments to the election law of the Republic of Kazakhstan to bring the law in line with democratic standards through initiation of a wide public discussion.

**“Supporting Local Civil Society Mobile Observation of Parliamentary Elections in Kazakhstan”**

Aimed at raising the long term effectiveness of domestic observation efforts for this and future elections by improving methodologies and the



**OSCE High-level Conference on Tolerance and Non-discrimination, Astana, Kazakhstan, June 2010. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.**

interaction between different groups of observers.

**“An Alternative Civil Society Report on implementation of the ICCPR by Kazakhstan”**

Raised awareness of Kazakhstan's compliance with its commitments under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights through a briefing for diplomatic missions in Astana and a round table discussion between civil society and governmental bodies aimed at recommending further steps needed to ensure full

implementation.

**Project implementers in 2011 – 14: Independent Generation of Kazakhstan, Public Foundation ECHO, Social Corporative Foundation “ZUBR”, International NGO Training and Research Centre, NGO “Shyrak”, NGO “ARGO”, Legal Policy Research Centre, Charter for Human Rights and Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law**

**Investment climate**

**Projects 2011 – 2015**

**“Training for Kazakhstani financial and legal practitioners on Islamic Finance”**

Shared UK expertise and practice in Islamic Finance regulation and incorporation into conventional finance and promoting UK as a centre of expertise in this area.

**“Promotion of open renewable energy market in Kazakhstan”**

Provided technical assistance with establishing technical standards for renewable energy projects in Kazakhstan following the adoption of legislation on supporting the development of renewable energy sector in 2013. Promoting UK “green” standards and contributing to reducing emissions through a



**Islamic Finance Project. Delegation from Kazakhstan in London, 26-28 February 2014. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.**

market study.

**“Improvement of the investment climate”**

Developed proposals regarding investment legislation in Kazakhstan, in order to eliminate administrative barriers for foreign investors.

**“Developing partnership between UK and Kazakhstan in the sector of Islamic Finance”**

Established links between UK and Kazakh financial and governmental institutions promoted the UK as a global centre for Islamic Finance.

**“Promoting British 'green' economy expertise in Kazakhstan”**

Showcased the UK's strengths

and expertise in the 'green' area, linking with Kazakh energy contacts to develop co-operation in the area that could potentially lead to forming up partnerships with Kazakh companies.

**“Investing in the Caspian Region's energy future: enhancing the energy investment climate through transparency and good governance”**

Improved the investment climate in the energy sector of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan by promoting transparency and good governance.

**Project implementers in 2011 – 14: British Embassy Astana and the Kazakhstan Chamber of Industry**

## Economic rights

### Projects 2012 – 2013

**“Supporting implementation of International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and Kazakhstan on a local level, in Mangystau region”**

Supported the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights in the Mangystau region through cooperation with local authorities and the Public Council of the Mangystau region.

**Project implementer in 2012 – 13: Charter for Human Rights**



Seminar “International investment in a Kazakhstan Joint Venture: Structuring the JV and resolving related disputes”, organised by the British Embassy Kazakhstan and the British-Kazakh Law Association, Astana, 15 May 2013. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.

## Defence Cooperation

Defence Cooperation has been a fundamental part of our relationship since 2001. It has increased significantly in recent years in recognition of the important role Kazakhstan has to play in the security of Central Asia after the conclusion of NATO's military operations in Afghanistan. There is an ongoing programme of high-level engagement by Ministers and senior military officials, which builds trust and develops the military relationship. During a previous visit of the Kazakh Defence Minister to London it was announced that 160 (Wales) Brigade would have an enduring responsibility for UK's Military Cooperation with the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The details of the Military Cooperation programme are agreed at annual Defence Staff Talks that are held alternately in Astana and in London. We also

support Kazakhstan's desire to deploy a company sized unit on UN Peacekeeping operations through military English Language training, tactical training courses and support to the annual military Exercise STEPPE EAGLE.

### **Programme of High Level Engagement between Ministers and senior military officials.**

An enhanced programme of Defence Cooperation was developed through the UK Secretary of State's visit to Astana in February 2012 and the Kazakh Defence Minister's visit to London in October 2013. These visits have been further supported by meetings between the UK Chief of Defence Staff and the Kazakh Chief of the General Staff in Kazakhstan and most recently during October 2014 in London. Through high level

engagement, trust and confidence has been enhanced, enabling closer cooperation at the working level.

### **Provision of assistance to the Kazakh Armed Forces with English Language Training**

Each year a number of Kazakh students have been attending Military English Language courses at the Defence Centre of Languages and Culture at Shrivenham in UK. There has also been assistance through the UK MOD funded British Council EL Peacekeeping Project which assists teachers through regular advice and support with materials. There is an annual seminar for EL teachers held each Autumn at the NATO Partnership for Peace Centre in Almaty.



BMATT Commander's visit to Kazakhstan, June 2012. Photo credit: British Embassy Astana.

**Provision of course training for Kazakh Armed Forces' students either in the UK or at the British Military Advisory Training Team in the Czech Republic.**

A small number of Kazakh students each year have been attending career courses in UK at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst, the Joint Command and Staff College or at the Royal College of Defence Studies. In addition a large number of Kazakh junior officers and sergeants attend leadership and tactical peacekeeping courses at BMATT (CZ) and over the last 10 years approximately 150 personnel have received this type of training.

**Assistance with tactical Peacekeeping training through participation in the annual regional Exercise STEPPE EAGLE.**

UK military personnel have been participating in Exercise STEPPE EAGLE since 2003. In

recent years UK training teams have deployed to Kazakhstan twice a year to provide mentors, trainers and advisors for KAZBRIG. The considerable experience the UK Armed Forces have gained on Peace Support Operations has been welcomed by Kazakhstan's Peacekeeping Brigade as it develops its own Peacekeeping capability. Exercise STEPPE EAGLE 2014 saw the deployment of KAZBRIG to a NATO exercise in Germany where they were certified as suitable for UN operations.

**Frequent exchange of information across a broad range of military topics of mutual interest to both Armed Forces.**

Each year through the medium of Defence Staff Talks either in Astana or London, a programme of activity is agreed which includes a series of exchanges of information. The topics vary but recently have included: the legislative requirements of Peacekeeping operations, Security in Central

Asia post 2014, issues relating to cyber security and the challenges of the Professionalisation of Armed Forces. It is expected that, following the recent visit of the Chief of the General Staff to London, that the level of such cooperation will increase.