



OUTLINE

- About MTM
- Objectives
- Methodology
- 1. Legislative developments
- 2. Migration Inflow
 - 2.1 Overview
 - 2.2 Temporary Residence Permits

- 2.3 Permanent Residence Permits
- 2.4 Labour Migration
- 2.5 Presence of Migrants
- 3. Migration outflow
- 5. Remittances
- 6. Training
- Conclusion

ABOUT MIGRATION TRACKING MATRIX

Migration Tracking Matrix (MTM) is a system based on the IOMs Global Displacement tracking matrix – DTM (<https://dtm.iom.int/>), which is aimed at tracking and monitoring displacement and population mobility, providing critical information to decision-makers and responders during crises and contributing to a better understanding of migration flows. DTM was first conceptualized in 2004 to monitor internal displacement in Iraq and has since been adapted for implementation in over 120 countries.

OBJECTIVES

Migration reports provide governments with policy-relevant information on migration trends, including migration flow estimates and historical data. Coordinated data activities can inform relevant actors about patterns related to fragility, mobility solutions, etc.

This quarterly report is dedicated to the first quarter of 2023. It is designed to offer an update on the most recent migration patterns in Kazakhstan, including migration flow, number of residence permits and remittance, as well as the regional distribution of migrants.

METHODOLOGY

The compilation report on migration in Kazakhstan is developed by collating secondary data obtained from various sources such as government agencies, international organizations, non-profit organizations, and other entities. The compilation report for the first quarter of 2023 was sourced from organizations such as the National Statistics Committee, Border Service, Ministry of Internal Affairs, National Bank, and the Bureau of National Statistics. The data were gathered through a combination of published sources and direct requests to the government.

1. LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS

- Amendments to the Rules for the Entry and Stay of Immigrants In and Out of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Rules for Migration Control were introduced through a government decree. The amendments limit visa-free travel to 90 days for citizens of EEU. In the meantime, the new regulations for issuing temporary residence permits allows individuals to work and study in Kazakhstan up to three years. Previously, maximum period of stay was granted for one year.¹
- In April 2023 Kazakhstan adopted the new Social code, which regulates social protection and support of citizens and includes labour migration issues.²
- Another important legislative innovation will be the adoption of a law on human trafficking which was presented by the Ministry of foreign affairs and IOM Kazakhstan on May 11, 2023.³

¹ On Approval of the Rules of entry and stay of immigrants in the Republic of Kazakhstan, the departure and the Rules of migration control and registration of foreigners and stateless persons illegally crossing the state border, illegally staying on the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as persons who are prohibited to enter the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Decree No. 148/2012.

² Social Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 20th of April, 2023

³ IOM Kazakhstan, 2023



2. MIGRATION INFLOW

2.1 Overview

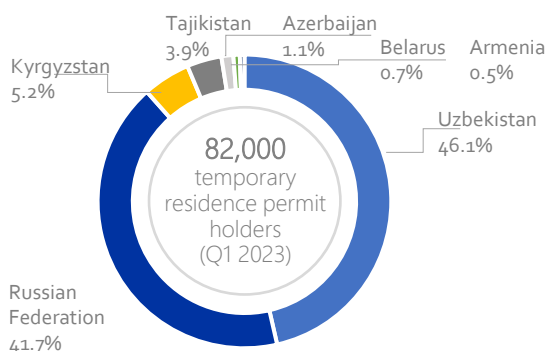
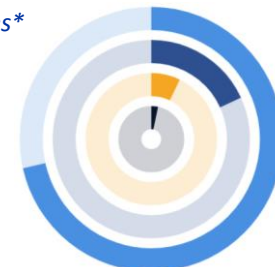
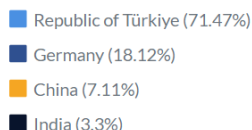
The Border Service of Kazakhstan recorded a total of 2.7 million migrant arrivals in the first quarter of 2023. Majority of total arrivals (2.2 million) accounted for CIS member states - Uzbekistan (42.5%), the Russian Federation (26.3%), Kyrgyzstan (23.1%), and Tajikistan (8%), 36.4 thousand arrivals accounted for non-CIS countries of origin: Republic of Türkiye (71.4%), Germany (18.1%), China (7.1%), and India (3.3%).

* The information on nationality provided in this report is based on the nationality declared by migrants as reported by the Kazakhstan authorities

Migrants from CIS member states*



Migrants from non-CIS states*

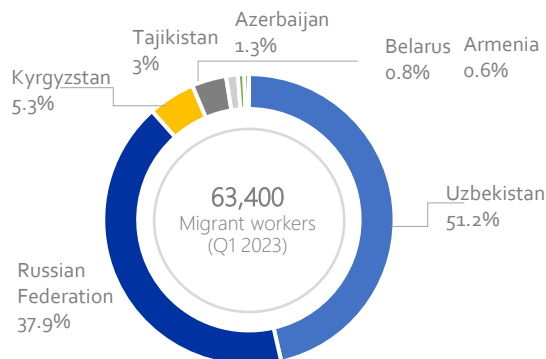
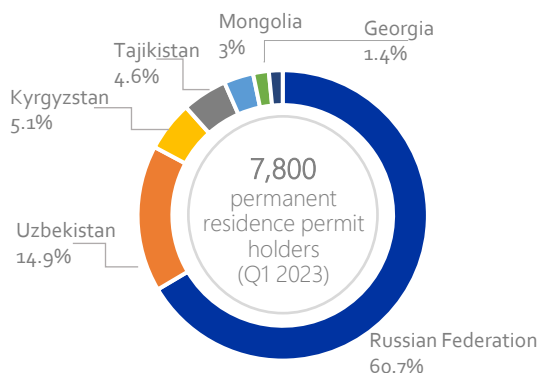


2.2 Temporary residence permits

Eighty-two thousand individuals received temporary residence permits in the country in the first quarter of 2023. The majority of them were nationals of Uzbekistan (46.1%), Russian Federation (41.7%), Kyrgyzstan (5.2%), Tajikistan (3.8%), Azerbaijan (1.3%), Belarus (0.7%), and Armenia (0.5%).⁵

2.3 Permanent residence permits

Seven thousand and eight hundred migrants received permanent residence permits in the first quarter of 2023. The majority of permanent residence holders were nationals of Russian Federation (60.7%), Uzbekistan (14.9%), Kyrgyzstan (5.1%), Tajikistan (4.6%), Mongolia (3%), Georgia (1.6%), Republic of Türkiye (1.4%), China (1.2%), Azerbaijan (1.2%), Ukraine (1.1%), Afghanistan (0.8%), and other.⁶



2.4 Labour Migration

In the first quarter of 2023, 63.4 thousand migrants were officially registered as migrant workers. They were nationals of CIS member states with the following countries of origin - Uzbekistan (51.2%), Russian Federation (37.9%), Kyrgyzstan (5.3%), Tajikistan (3%), Azerbaijan (1.3%), Belarus (0.8%), and Armenia (0.6%).⁷

⁴ Border Service of National Security Committee, 2023

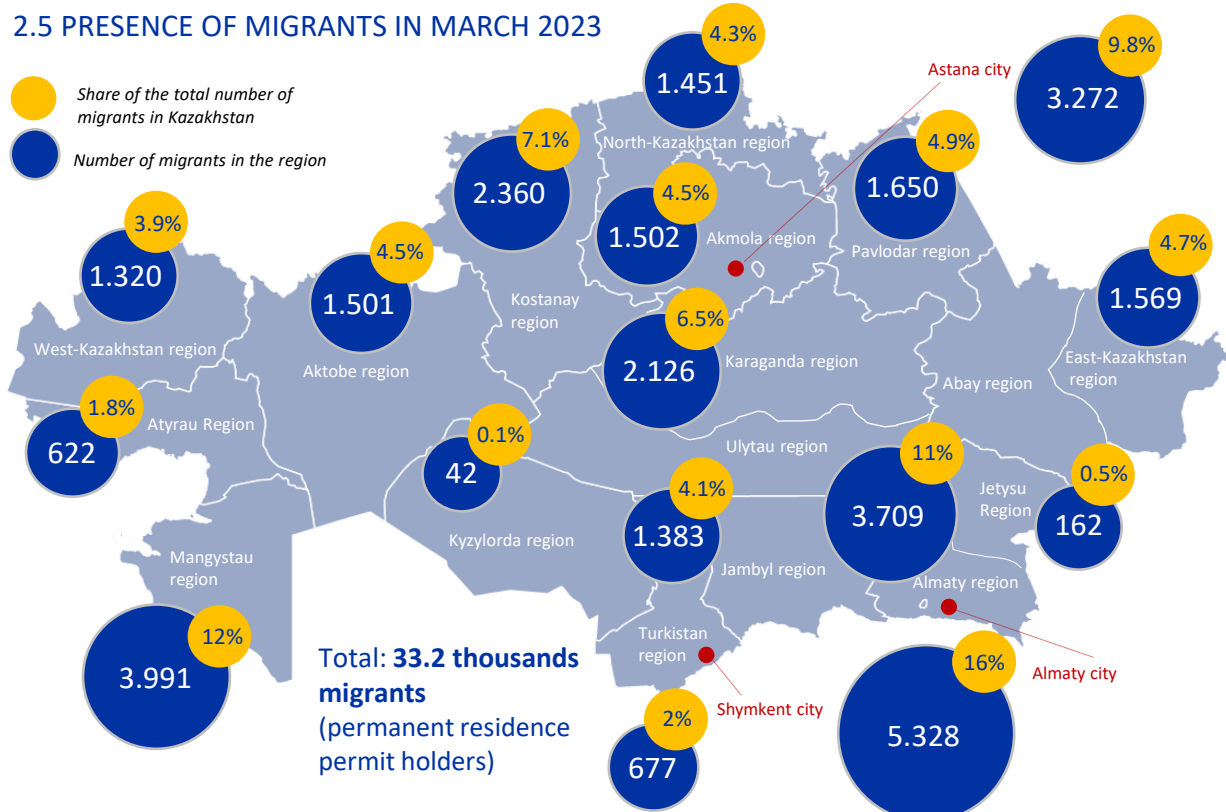
⁵ Migration Service Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2023

⁶ Migration Service Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2023

⁷ Migration Service Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2023



2.5 PRESENCE OF MIGRANTS IN MARCH 2023



Disclaimer: This map is for illustration purposes only. The depiction and use of boundaries, geographic names, and related data shown on maps and included in this report are not warranted to be free of error, nor do they imply a judgment on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries by IOM.

This data shows the number of migrants living in the regions of Kazakhstan under the permanent residence permit as of 31 March 2023, including 7,8 thousand who received residence permits in the first quarter of 2023. The biggest share of migrant workers was located in Almaty city (16%), the Mangystau region (12%), Almaty region (11%), and in the capital - Astana (9.8%). The smallest share of migrant workers was residing in the Kyzylorda region (0.1%), Jetysu region (0.5%), and Atyrau region (1.8%). There are no registered migrants in Abay and Ulytau regions.⁸

3. MIGRATION OUTFLOW

In Kazakhstan, there is a problem of the accounting of its nationals who have gone abroad for the purpose of employment. Often Kazakhstani citizens do not indicate the real purpose of their trip when crossing the border and do not register with the consular authorities upon arrival in the country of stay. Therefore, the country does not have clear data on Kazakhstani migrant workers. Nevertheless, some observations show that Kazakhstani migrant workers usually choose Russian Federation, Germany, Poland, USA, and Republic of Korea as the main destination for their employment.

In the first quarter of 2023, 35 thousand of Kazakhstani migrant workers came to the Russian Federation, which outnumbers the indicators of the last year with 23 thousand migrant workers.⁹

⁸ Migration Service Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2023

⁹ Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, 2023

4. REMITTANCES

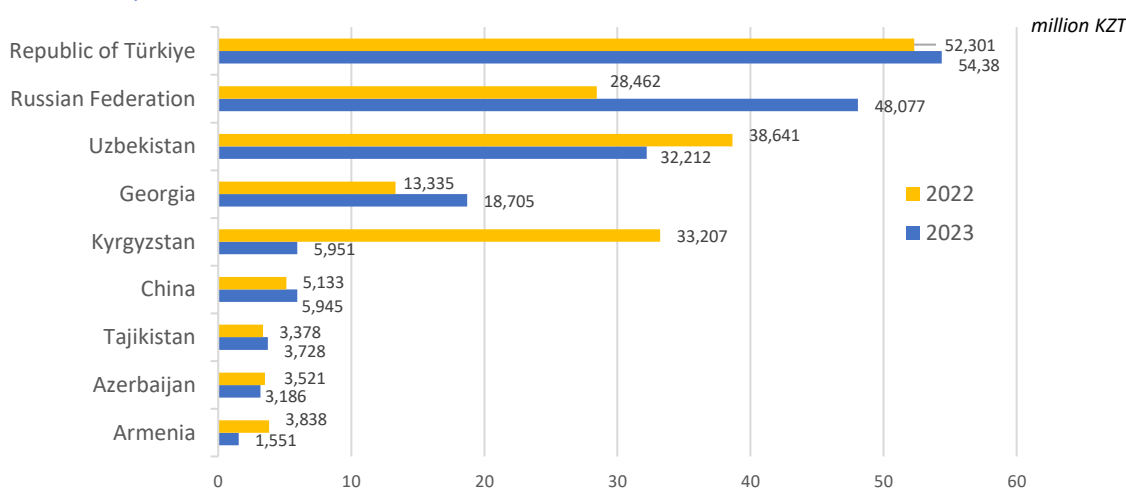
The volume of remittances sent from Kazakhstan is estimated to be over 182.9 billion KZT or 401 million USD (considering the average currency for Jan-March 2023 - 1 USD = 455.05 KZT) in the first quarter of 2023.¹⁰

In January 2023 – 49.2 billion KZT (108.1 million USD), in February 2023 – 59.5 billion KZT (132.2 million USD); and in March 2023 – 74,2 billion KZT (166.3 million USD).¹¹

The average volume of remittances for the first quarter of 2023 was 60.96 billion KZT (130.7 million USD) which is 28.98 percent less than the average volume of remittances in the previous quarter (85.84 billion KZT) and 20 percent more than in the same quarter of 2022 (47.97 billion KZT).¹²

The highest amount of transfers was wired to the Republic of Türkiye - 54.3 billion KZT (119.1 million USD) (share of the total amount – 29.7%), followed by 48 billion KZT (105.4 million USD) (share – 26.3%) transferred to the Russian Federation and 32.2 billion KZT (70.7 million USD) (share – 17.6%) transferred to Uzbekistan. Other countries that received remittances from Kazakhstan include Georgia – 18.7 billion KZT (41 million USD), Kyrgyzstan 5.9 billion KZT (12.9 million USD), and China – 5.9 billion KZT (12.9 million USD).¹³

The comparison of remittances transferred from Kazakhstan in Q1 2023 and 2022



The comparison analysis demonstrates the following tendencies. The overall volume of remittances sent abroad is still high and exceeds the numbers for the same period in 2022. The remittances sent to the Russian Federation increased by 69 percent in the first quarter of 2023 compared with the same period in the previous year.¹⁴ One of the main reasons for this is the relocation of its citizens to Kazakhstan which started in the spring of 2022 with the unfolding of the Ukraine crisis and the announcement of partial mobilization. The Republic of Türkiye, Georgia, China, and Tajikistan showed a slight increase, whereas Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Armenia decreased the volume of remittances. Especially Kyrgyzstan, with a five-quarter reduction in remittances compared to the same period in 2022. This decrease started in May 2022 and continued throughout the year. One of the reasons might be temporary legal changes in Kyrgyzstan currency transfers adopted by the National Bank in April 2022 due to the sharp increase in the volume of money transfers, which come in US dollars from the Russian Federation and the Republic of Kazakhstan. As the National Bank of Kyrgyzstan stated, the customers asked to issue the transfer in the currency of the transfer, i.e., in cash US dollars. Since April 2022, the issuance of remittances under the international money transfer system in Kyrgyzstan to the recipient can only be in the sender's country's currency or national currency.¹⁵

¹⁰ The National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan, International Money Transfer System Report, January-March 2023.

¹¹ The National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan, International Money Transfer System Report, January-March 2023.

¹² The National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan, International Money Transfer System Report, January-March 2022, 2023.

¹³ The National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan, International Money Transfer System Report, January-March 2023.

¹⁴ The National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan, International Money Transfer System Report, January-March 2022.

¹⁵ The National Bank of Kyrgyzstan, Information digest, April 2022.

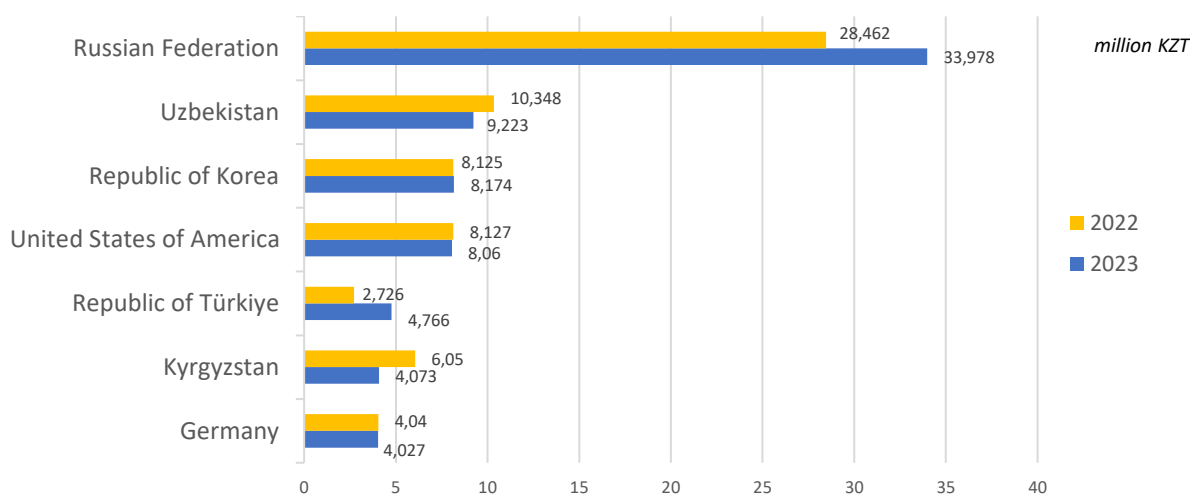


In the first quarter of 2023, 297.8 thousand transactions worth 83.3 billion KZT (183 million USD) were sent to Kazakhstan. In January 2023 – 27.6 billion KZT (60.6 million USD); in February 2023 – 25.8 KZT (56.7 million USD); and in March 2023 – 29.9 KZT (65.7 million USD).¹⁶

The average volume of remittances received from abroad for the first quarter of 2023 was 27.75 billion KZT (61 million USD) which is 53.11 percent less than the average volume of remittances received the previous quarter (59.18 billion KZT) and 47 percent more than in the same quarter of 2022 (18.96 billion KZT).¹⁷

The leaders in terms of money received from abroad were: the Russian Federation – 33.9 billion KZT (74.5 million USD) (share of the total amount – 40.7%), Uzbekistan – 9.2 billion KZT (20.2 million USD) (share – 11.1%), the Republic of Korea – 8.1 billion KZT (17.8 million USD) (share - 9.7%), the United States of America - 8 billion KZT (17.5 million USD) (share – 9.6%), the Republic of Türkiye - 4.7 billion KZT (10.3 million USD) (share of the total amount – 5.6%).¹⁸

The comparison of remittances received from abroad in Q1 2023 and 2022



Kazakhstan is facing an unprecedented volume of remittances from abroad. The remittance growth started in March 2022 and remains very high compared to previous years. During 2022, remittances from Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, the United States of America, the Republic of Türkiye, and Tajikistan were at an all-time high.

However, the main reason is the increase in remittances from the Russian Federation, which comes against the backdrop of the domestic situation, migration of the population, and sanctions restrictions. The peak of transfers was in June 2022 (66.9 billion KZT – 26 percent more than for all of 2021) and remained at extremely high levels until March 2023.¹⁹

A few days later, resident individuals introduced restrictions on transferring funds abroad (including electronic money transfers): no more than 5 thousand KZT per month (this threshold was raised several times later). Transfers to citizens of 43 countries outside the Russian Federation were also banned. In March 2022, the international payment systems Visa and Mastercard no longer worked. Foreign banks refuse to work with the Russian “Mir” payment system. These restrictions and large-scale relocation, have led to money transfers becoming one of the most popular ways of receiving funds abroad. In the second half of September 2022, these countries again faced a large influx of funds from Russia. This is also due to the new wave of relocation against the background of the start of mass mobilizations.²⁰

¹⁶ The National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan, International Money Transfer System Report, January-March 2023.

¹⁷ The National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan, International Money Transfer System Report, January-March 2023.

¹⁸ The National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan, International Money Transfer System Report, January-March 2023.

¹⁹ The National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan, International Money Transfer System Report, June 2022 and January-March 2023.

²⁰ European Commission, 2023



6. TRAINING

On 14 January, IOM organized a one-day Roundtable on “Challenges associated with safeguarding the rights and freedoms of migrant workers, with specific emphasis on registering migrants by law enforcement and specialized bodies.” The event aimed to support the implementation of the sixth deliverable of the ‘Labour Migration Programme - Central Asia.’ 14 police officials from migration and local police departments of 12 regions and 14 representatives from the non-governmental sector participated in the training. Another event aimed at “Enhancing labor migration governance and effectively implementing the Migration Policy Concept in Kazakhstan” was conducted in February 2023. The training brought together 21 representatives of the municipal bodies’ social protection and migration units from 12 regions.

The following findings were outlined as the result of the event by the participants:

1. The divergence of databases in governmental agencies on migrants raises the need to integrate them in a single mode.
2. Broader information campaigns on migrant rights, obligations, and opportunities on a country level will support their integration into local society.
3. The problem of tracking Kazakhstani migrant workers via consular registration hinders the ability of the government to protect their rights abroad and prevent them from becoming victims of human trafficking.
4. Unethical recruitment of migrant workers, which violates their rights urges the government to create mechanisms for regulating employers.

CONCLUSION

The Quarterly Compilation Report on the migration situation in Kazakhstan shows the continuation of the following trends:



The migrant flow in Kazakhstan is mainly concentrated between the country and other CIS members. The leading countries remain as of 2022 - Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation. Citizens of the Russian Federation tend to receive more permanent residence permits than other migrants.



The significant proportion of the labour migration flows comes from Uzbekistan with a total number of 32,460 migrant workers. From non-CIS countries, the Republic of Türkiye outnumbers other countries in migration flows as in previous years. Most migrant workers locate in Almaty City, as well as Almaty and Mangystau regions.



Economic sanctions on the Russian Federation will continue to increase all migration flows between Kazakhstan and Central Asian states. Kazakhstan, as the receiving country, will face the inflow of labor migrants from the neighboring countries in search of income as the Russian labour market continues to shrink due to the sanctions.



Kazakhstan citizens migrating to another countries in search of the job opportunities rarely indicate the real purpose of the departure when crossing the board and usually do not register with the consular authorities upon arrival in the country of stay. This heavily limits the government ability to count Kazakhstani migrant workers and protect their rights.



The backdrop of the Ukraine crisis, migration of the population from the Russian Federation, and sanctions restrictions, which started in 2022, still influence the increase in remittances from and to Kazakhstan. The high probability that this tendency will continue in 2023.

The mentioned trends need to be addressed by the government of Kazakhstan in a very short time in order to integrate increased migrant inflows into Kazakhstani society and create better living conditions for migrants and their families.

The opinions expressed in the report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The designations employed and the presentation of material throughout the report do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of IOM concerning legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an intergovernmental organization, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to: assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration; advance understanding of migration issues; encourage social and economic development through migration; and uphold the human dignity and well-being of migrants. This publication was made possible through support provided by the Swiss Agency For Development And Cooperation (SDC) under the terms of the Initiative “Labour Migration Programme – Central Asia”. The opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of IOM or SDC.

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International Organization for Migration (IOM) / UN Migration Agency,
Subregional Coordination Office for Central Asia in the Republic of Kazakhstan:

IOM Astana

14, Mambetov Street, UN building, 010000, Astana,
Tel .: +7 7172 696553
Email: iomastana@iom.int

IOM Almaty

303, Baizakov Street, UN building, 050040, Almaty,
Tel .: +7 727 2582643
Email: iomalmaty@iom.int
Website: kazakhstan.iom.int

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