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Kyrgyz Elections Set for Oct. 10

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BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan — Acting Kyrgyz leader Roza Otunbayeva has ordered elections to be held on Oct. 10 to create the first parliamentary democracy in Central Asia, the interim government said Tuesday.

Otunbayeva also asked the interim government to take measures to uphold law and order and protect citizens ahead of the elections in Kyrgyzstan, where more than 350 people were killed in ethnic clashes in June.

Kyrgyzstan, which hosts U.S. and Russian military air bases, has been in turmoil since a popular revolt overthrew President Kurmanbek Bakiyev in April. The interim government has struggled to impose its authority since taking over.

Security forces said they foiled an attempted coup on Thursday after troops fired tear gas and blank rounds to block supporters of opposition politician Urmat Baryktabasov who were trying to join mass protests outside the parliament in the capital, Bishkek.

More than 90 percent of voters in a June 27 referendum supported constitutional reforms proposed by Otunbayeva that pave the way for Kyrgyzstan to become a parliamentary

democracy in a region otherwise ruled by authoritarian presidents.

Under the new charter, Otunbayeva — a former ambassador to the United States and Britain — will be acting president until Dec. 31, 2011, and will not be entitled to run for the more powerful position of prime minister.

Parliamentary elections will be held every five years, and no political party will be allowed more than 65 of the 120 seats in the parliament.

In a separate decree, the interim government also lifted a curfew starting Tuesday that had applied to the southern cities of Osh, Jalal-Abad and Uzgen, as well as some surrounding regions. The curfew had been in place since violence erupted in June.

Thousands were forced from their homes during several days of clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, the worst bloodshed in Kyrgyzstan's modern history.

International donors last month pledged $1.1 billion in grants and favorable loans to help the country rebuild and revive its economy, which the interim government forecasts will shrink by 5 percent this year.

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