

Nationalist Kyrgyz Leader Accused of Coup Bid

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BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan — Supporters of a firebrand nationalist leader rallied outside a courthouse Thursday in Kyrgyzstan where he is on trial accused of leading an attempted coup.

Kamchibek Tashiyev heads the Ata-Zhurt movement, which has a substantial following in southern regions of the politically and ethnically divided Central Asian country. Observers fear that mass protests could strain the country's fragile stability.

Tashiyev faces up to 20 years in prison if convicted. His backers and rights activists say the trial may be politically motivated, insisting that what he did should at most be viewed as a violation of public order.

He was arrested in October after leading a charge of dozens of people on a building housing parliament and government offices in the capital, Bishkek.

(AP)

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