

Bishkek's Overcrowded Hostels

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The cost of housing in Bishkek is so high that if you have any connection with a university there, you might try to get a place in a student hostel.

At 700 or 800 soms a month, or 18 to 20 US dollars, student dormitories are among of the cheapest places to live, although conditions there are not the best.

As well as students, lecturers and other university staff have moved into the overcrowded facilities.

Aynura, a technician at the Kyrgyz National University, has moved into one room at its hostel together with her family. They occupy part of a typical three-room unit which now houses four entire families – one in each room plus one living in the kitchen area, which the others obviously cannot use.

She pays 970 soms a month, and says that together with food, clothes and public transport costs, that leaves the family with little change from a monthly income of 5,000 soms.

Even without others moving in, there are not nearly enough places for students, who can ill afford to rent a flat in the capital. The Kyrgyz National University, for example, has just under 1,800 hostel places for the 20,000 students who study there.

A student at a different university in Bishkek said the competition to get a place in a hostel made the people who lived there pliable.

“If administrators, rectors or [hostel] leaders give the order, then student activists from the hostel will go and carry it out,” he said. “They’ll definitely go, because it’s an order. Students will turn out for local, district and housing association elections.”

Topic: [Kyrgyzstan](#)

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