

Power Struggles in North Kyrgyzstan

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The mayor of Karabalta in northern Kyrgyzstan wants to take over control of the local power station despite concerns that his municipal administration would not be able to run it any more efficiently than the state does now.

Without direct control of the power station, says Mayor Omat Kazakbaev, the town will end up with no electricity, no central heating and not even mains water as it will be impossible to pump it.

Kazakbaev believes that the coal-fired power station's present management – which is in the hands of central government – is incapable of running it efficiently, and that his administration could do a better job of attracting investment to make the plant more energy-efficient.

An engineer with the power station's current operator says that whoever runs it is going to need subsidies from central government, and that since Karabalta has already got a fixed budget, it is unlikely to get any more from the state.

There have been concerns that if the municipal authorities won control of the plant and made up any shortfall by charging customers more for electricity and heating. But this option would not be open to them since the government has blocked rises in utility prices because of the ongoing economic crisis in Kyrgyzstan.

The audio programme, in Russian and Kyrgyz, went out on national radio stations in Kyrgyzstan, as part of IWPR project work funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Location: [Kyrgyzstan](#)

Topic: [Economy](#)

Focus: [Central Asia Radio](#)

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