

Wedding Pictures Controversy

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Reporter Nurlan Abdaliev investigates why the wedding photo business in Bishkek has become an effective monopoly.

For the last year, only one studio has been allowed to take wedding pictures inside Bishkek's main civil registration office.

Other photographers can take group pictures outside, but they are not allowed to near enough to take formal close-up shots of the civil ceremony itself – the exchanging of rings and the signing of the register.

The owner of the officially-designated firm says it has a contract which gives it exclusive rights, and cites a justice ministry ruling that no one can cross certain marked-out lines in the registry office except those who have prior authorisation. The ministry ruling says this is in the interests of maintaining public order.

Other photographers who are prevented from making a living from wedding photos say this is an unfair monopoly.

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