Kazakhstan appoints Elvira Azimova new Human Rights Commissioner

The Kazakh Senate unanimously approved Sept. 2 former Deputy Minister of Justice Elvira Azimova as the new Human Rights Commissioner of Kazakhstan.

The rights commissioner, which carries the title of Ombudsperson in Kazakhstan, is a government official appointed by the President and approved by the Senate. The Human Rights Ombudsperson coordinates requests for visits to prisons and detention centres by members of the National Preventive Mechanism (NPM), and the Coordinating Council, led by the Ombudsperson, elects NPM members.

Azimova was born in 1973 and graduated from the Ahmet Yassawi University with a degree in international law in 1996. From 1996 to 1999, she worked as a leading chief consultant at the Office of International Legal Support. From 1999 to 2005, she worked as deputy head and then head of Departments of Legislation, International Law and Protocol. From 2005 to 2010, she held the positions as head of the Departments of By-Laws and International Law, of Protection of State Property Rights, and of Contracts and Claims. From 2010 to 2013, she worked as the director of the Department of Examination of International Treaties at the Ministry of Justice.

Azimova has been the Kazakh Deputy Minister of Justice since 2013.

President Tokayev met with Azimova Sept. 2 to establish the scope of her work. Tokayev instructed Azimova to strengthen the interaction with the parliament, the government and international organisations regarding human rights protections.

Askar Shakirov, who had been the Human Rights Commissioner for 12 years before Azimova, was appointed Deputy of the Senate by Tokayev’s decree on Aug. 12 and was elected Deputy Chairman of the Chamber on Sept. 2.

International human rights organisations had previously called on Nur-Sultan to modify the ombudsperson institution in line with the Parisian Principles regarding the stance of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in relation to reviewing laws on rallies and trade unions.