

Lawmakers Sacrifice Rams

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BISHKEK, Kyrgyzstan — Kyrgyz lawmakers have slaughtered seven rams before a morning session in a sacrifice they hope will banish "evil spirits" disrupting their work.

"We decided to resort to popular customs in order for this building not to see bloodshed anymore," lawmaker Myktybek Abdyldayev said after the rams were sacrificed on a green lawn in front of the government headquarters. "We acted like those who light candles or fumigate their homes in order to banish an evil spirit from their conscience."

Besides hosting the legislature, the white-marble building is the official seat of the president and government. Two presidents fled this building to escape violent popular uprisings in 2005 and 2010.

But lawmaker Ondorush Toktonasyrov, a leader of last year's uprising, scoffed at Thursday's ritual as "a sign of backward mentality." "This is an official building where the president works, and the parliament slaughters rams!" he said.

(Reuters)

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