



Central Asia Executive Summary Series

TAJIKISTAN COUNTRY PROFILE

The Program for Culture & Conflict Studies

Naval Postgraduate School

Monterey, CA

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REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

(*Jumhurii Tojikiston* in Tajik)

Short Form: Tajikistan (Tojikiston)

State Emblem:



National Flag:



Source: Lonely Planet, <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/maps/asia/uzbekistan/>

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TAJIKISTAN

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| LOCATION | 5 |
| CAPITAL..... | 5 |
| INDEPENDENCE FROM THE USSR..... | 5 |
| TERRITORY | 7 |
| SIGNIFICANT TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES | 7 |
| TRANSPORTATION..... | 7 |
| WEATHER..... | 10 |
| PUBLIC HOLIDAYS..... | 11 |
| LANGUAGES | 11 |
| LITERACY..... | 12 |
| OCCUPATION OF POPULATION..... | 13 |
| HEALTH FACILITIES | 14 |
| POPULATION/DEMOGRAPHIC DATA..... | 15 |
| RELIGION/SECTS..... | 20 |
| ADMINISTRATIVE SETUP | 22 |
| POLITICAL LANDSCAPE | 24 |
| CLAN NETWORKS | 32 |
| FOREIGN MILITARY BASES | 32 |
| SECURITY SITUATION..... | 33 |
| APPENDIX I | 37 |

LOCATION

Tajikistan is a landlocked country located in Central Asia, north of Afghanistan, east of Uzbekistan, west of China, and south of Kyrgyzstan. It is located in the eastern region of Turkestan. Tajikistan means a land of Tajiks (*Stan – land*) and has the smallest physical area of any country in Turkestan.

CAPITAL

Dushanbe (in Tajik means Monday) was the marketplace village during the rule of Bukhara Amir. In 1924 the Bolsheviks transformed the village located between the Varzob and Kofarnikhon rivers bringing the Slav population and developing its infrastructure into the capital of the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Tajikistan. In 1929 the name of the capital was changed to Stalinabad¹ and in 1961 the city obtained its original name. The number of residents of the capital is estimated at nearly 778,500.² The city is situated on the confluence of two local rivers.

Similar to many of the other cities and regions in Turkestan, the Soviets transformed the political and economic landscape. For example, the Soviets changed ethnic makeup of the region by relocating tens of thousands of people from Russia and other regions of Turkestan to Dushanbe. Dushanbe eventually became a center for cotton and silk production.

INDEPENDENCE FROM THE USSR

September 9, 1991 is celebrated as Independence Day. Present day Tajikistan was formed by the Bolsheviks in 1924, first as Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and in 1929 was given a status of full-fledged republic.

¹ After the chairman of the Communist party and leader of the USSR Josef Stalin.

² "Biggest Cities In Tajikistan," *World Atlas*, accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/biggest-cities-in-tajikistan.html>.

TERRITORY

Total: 143,100 sq km (slightly smaller than Wisconsin) Water: 400 sq km

Land: 142,700 sq km

Border length with China: 430km

Border length with Uzbekistan: 910 km

Border length with Kyrgyzstan: 630 km

Border length with Afghanistan: 1030 km

SIGNIFICANT TOPOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Tajikistan is the land of low and high mountains with multiple rivers and lakes, and even some desert areas. Central Asia's highest mountains include the Tian Shan and Pamir Mountains, which take up 93 percent of the country's area. The Samani Peak (7,495 meters above the sea level) is the world's 50th highest peak located in the Pamir Mountains, which covers the southwestern part of Tajikistan. The Zarafshon, Hisor, Turkmenian and Oloy mountains envelop the central and northwest regions of the country. Vakhsh, Hisor and the famous Ferghana valleys are a great change of scenery after a long travel down from the mountains. The country is rich in glaciers with the Fedchenko Glacier (11,000 square km) as the largest one in the world (excluding the Northern and Southern poles); glaciers make up nearly 6 percent of the country's area and are a source of water for the Aral Sea. The country, half of which is 3000 meters above sea level, is blessed with an abundance of rivers and lakes which are very crucial for the region because water is a strategic asset. The major rivers are Panj, Vakhsh, Zerafshan, Kofarnihon, Gund, Amu Darya and Syr Darya - they provide water for drinking and irrigation and have a great potential for developing hydro-electric stations. Tajikistan is well known for its cold and hot springs some of which were health resorts during the Soviet times.

TRANSPORTATION

Tajikistan's inconvenient high altitude location, poor transport infrastructure, uneasy relations with Uzbekistan and instability in Afghanistan all present a challenge for this landlocked country to export its rich natural resources. It is also difficult to import goods and market tourism in this otherwise, picturesque land. Amid the closure of the U.S. base in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan allowed the United States/NATO to transport non-military cargo (with the volume of 250 trucks a day) through the Tajik territory using automobile and railroad links to Afghanistan.

PRIMARY ROADS

Automobile transportation carries 94 percent of total passenger and cargo annual volume within the country. The total length of all roads is about 30,000 km.

EXTERNAL ROADS

Tajikistan—Kyrgyzstan

- Khorog (capital of Gorno - Badakhshan Autonomous Province) – Osh, capital of southern Osh province in Kyrgyzstan; Difficult mountainous terrain of Pamir, particularly dangerous during winter.
- Isfara – Batken. The road in the Fergana Valley goes through the Uzbek enclave which requires travelers to possess Uzbek visa.

Tajikistan-Afghanistan

The border has three checkpoints for cross-border communication:

1. south of Tajikistan, at the village of Nizhniy Pyandzh; On Afghanistan's side the road leads to Kunduz, and on Tajikistan's side of the border there are 3 directions: to Dushanbe (155 km); to Qurgonteppa (70 km) and to Kulob (150 km); This border point is currently used by the U.S./NATO as a non-military supply route to northern Afghanistan.
2. Ishkashim on the border of Tajik Gorno – Badakhshan Autonomous Province and Afghan Badakhshan.
3. The bridges recently built crossing the Pamji and Amu Darya Rivers (see below).

The initial bridge built into Tajikistan was built July, 2004, at a cost of \$500,000 by the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). The United States and Norway also supported the building of the bridge. This bridge was built between Tajikistan and Afghanistan by the AKDN along the Panj River. The Amu Darya begins at the junction of the Panj River and Vakhsh River. The bridge is a major entrance point from Afghanistan into Tajikistan. On February 6, 2009 President Emomali Rahmon and U.S. Ambassador Tracey Jacobson discussed the possibility of a new route to Afghanistan: construction of a bridge across the Panj River in Farkhor district of Khatlon province.³ This bridge was designed to help U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and the region as a whole. The bridge cost \$26 million and was financed by the United States and opened in 2007.

Tajikistan—China

Murgab – Kulma - Karakoram road leads to Xinjiang Province in China and also gives access to Karakoram Highway that provides links to Pakistan's sea ports. This international highway has strategic importance for Tajikistan's economic growth due to the access it provides to Pakistan, Afghanistan and China. Geographic isolation and underdeveloped transport infrastructure undermines hidden potential for Tajikistan's industrial development, natural resources and energy export and trade of goods and services.

³ Embassy of Tajikistan to the United States, 'Tajik president, US ambassador note the necessity of construction of new bridge joining Tajikistan and Afghanistan' February 6, 2009. Available at: <http://www.tjus.org/President-US%20Ambassador.htm>

Map of Karakoram Highway



Source: http://www.johnthemap.co.uk/pages/kkh_page1.html

Tajikistan—Uzbekistan

- Highway A-376: Tashkent (Uzbekistan) – Khujand– Konibodom –Qoqon (Uzbekistan)
- Highway A377: Samarqand (Uzbekistan) - Panjikent
- Dushanbe – Ayni - Istaravshan – Khujand- Buston – Chanaq (Uzbekistan)
- Termez – Dushanbe

INTERNAL ROADS

- Dushanbe – Ayni - Istaravshan – Khujand; Completion of 5 km Anzob highway tunnel was one of the great strategic achievements for Tajikistan as it established a year-round connection between the north and the south that would be interrupted during the winter period
- Dushanbe -Kalaikhumb – Khorog
Note: As a legacy from the Soviet times, the special permit is required for foreigners to enter the border region of Gorno - Badakhshan Autonomous Province. The permit with list of certain towns or all locations can be obtained along with Tajik visa in Tajik embassies abroad or upon arrival in Dushanbe from Foreign Ministry of the Passport and registration department of Internal Affairs Ministry (OVIR – abbreviation in Russian).
- Kulab – Kalaikhumb

- Dushanbe – Nurobod – Dzhirgital - Saritosh
- Dushanbe – Qurgonteppa – Dangara – Kulob

National Civil Aviation and Airport Infrastructure

The country has 40 airports 17 of which are paved runway airports. Dushanbe and Khujand airports are major hubs with long runways (more than 3 km) and international connections. Tajik Air is the major airline company that operates internally and offers international destinations.⁴

Pipelines

Tajikistan is not a producer/exporter of energy resources although it has oil and natural gas reserves. The country has a pipeline importing natural gas from Uzbekistan. The country also imports gas from Uzbekistan. The total length of gas pipeline is 549 km and 38 km of oil pipelines.

Railroads

Due to mountainous terrain, neither the Soviet nor current governments invested into the railroad system which has total length of 480 km.

Major railroad links:

1. Dushanbe - Qurgonteppa - Shaartuz – Termez (in Uzbekistan)
2. Dushanbe - Qurgonteppa - Tugul (the Tajik- Afghan border);
3. Samarkand (in Uzbekistan) - Khujand - Andijan (in Uzbekistan);
4. Kulob – Kurgan

In March of 2009, the Tajik government began constructing the 146 km railroad link from Dushanbe to the Afghan border – the new route for NATO supplies, which go to Afghanistan via Tajik territory. The cost of the project is \$131 million and Dushanbe sought help of foreign investors to support the project which will assist in revitalizing Tajikistan’s poor infrastructure.

Sea Ports

Tajikistan is a landlocked country and has no links to sea.

WEATHER

The climate is sharply continental, from subtropical to semi-arid and varies depending on the location as country’s altitudes range from 300 to 7,495 meters above sea level. The lowlands valleys have a mild climate with warm winters and dry, hot summers (average +25°C in Sughd province and + 35°C in Khatlon province). Winter temperatures run in and around the -1°C

⁴ The official web site of Tajik Air is <http://www.tajikair.tj/eng/>

temperature range with precipitation of rain and snow of about 50 inches annually. The high mountains in the upland face severe winters ranging from -20°C to -55°C depending on altitude, with short summers normally not exceeding $+15^{\circ}\text{C}$ and as little as 2-3 inches of precipitation.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

| | |
|-------------|---|
| January 1 | New Year |
| March 8 | International Women's Day |
| March 21-24 | Navrus (comes from ancient Zoroastrian tradition which many Central Asians mistakenly take for an Islamic New Year) |
| May 1 | International Solidarity Day |
| May 9 | Victory Day (until recently was celebrated as the Victory Day over Nazi Germany in WWII) |
| June 27 | National Unity Day (end of Civil War) |
| September 9 | Independence Day (from the USSR) |
| November 6 | Constitution Day |

The dates of two Islamic holidays, Idi Ramazon (*Eid al-Fitr* in Arabic, the feast of End of Ramadan) and Idi Qurbon (*Eid al-Adha* in Arabic, the feast of the Sacrifice). change annually depending on the Islamic calendar.

LANGUAGES

- Official language is Tajik, a dialect of Persian language which also includes many Arabic words.
- Russian is widely used in Dushanbe and major cities among intelligentsia, political and business elites. It serves as the language of communication between various ethnic groups.
- Uzbek (a Turkic language) is used by ethnic Uzbeks in primarily northern Sughd province.
- The Shughni, the largest Pamiri people, speak Shughni spoken in Khorog, capital of Gorno - Badakshan Autonomous Province.
- Another distinct language is Yagnobi spoken by the Yagnobis in mountainous areas of the Sughd Province.

- English is in high demand, particularly among the youth. The major reasons are educational and professional opportunities abroad and access to information.

LITERACY

According to UNESCO, 99.7% of adults and 99.9% of youth are literate; the government's total expenditure for education is 16 percent; public expenditure on education is 5.2 percent of GDP.⁵ As for 2007-08 academic year, 99,400 teachers in total of 3,810 educational facilities provided schooling from elementary to high school levels to 1,692,100 students.⁶ The government built 170 schools and supplied 37 titles of text books with total volume of 3 million in 2008 and the total of 22,000 computer sets have been provided to schools up to the end of 2008.⁷ Despite the government's efforts to improve the quality and quantity of the educational system facilities, the 1992-97 civil war had a devastating long-term impact on the education system. General public education, as well as higher education, suffers from a lack of funding and professional cadres. More than 100,000 highly qualified school and university teachers left the country during the war. Poverty forces many children to abandon school and work to support their family, particularly in rural areas. According to the March 2009 IMF report on Tajikistan, approximately 2.7% of all children between the ages of 12 and 14 work full-time.⁸ 230 schools still do not have buildings but use private homes and train passenger cars as classrooms.⁹

NUMBER OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Higher education institutes/universities: There were 33 institutions of higher education including regional branches in 2007-08 academic year with a total of 154,200 students out of which 28 percent were women.¹⁰ Tajik – Russian Modern University, Tajik – Slav University and University of Central Asia are the only international schools offering higher education of internationally accepted quality.

US Government funded organizations such as ACCELS¹¹ and IREX¹², and other private

⁵ <http://uis.unesco.org/country/TJ>

⁶ Statistics Committee of Tajikistan, Table on general educational institutions in 1997-2007 in Russian:

http://www.stat.tj/russian_database/socio-demographic_sector/general_education.xls

⁷ '170 shkol bylo postroeno v Tadjikistane v 2008' (170 schools were built in Tajikistan in 2008), Khovar news agency, available at:

http://www.khovar.tj/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5353&Itemid=

⁸ IMF: poverty Reduction Strategy in Republic of Tajikistan for 2007-2009, p.11, available at:

<http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2009/cr0982.pdf>

⁹ '170 shkol bylo postroeno v Tadjikistane v 2008' (170 schools were built in Tajikistan in 2008), Khovar news agency, available at: http://www.khovar.tj/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=5353&Itemid=

¹⁰ Statistics Committee of Tajikistan, Table on higher educational institutions in 1997-2007 in Russian:

http://www.stat.tj/russian_database/socio-demographic_sector/higher_education.xls

¹¹ Official web site of ACCELS: <http://www.americancouncils.org/>

foundations like Open Society Institute of Soros Foundation which provide educational opportunities for Tajik citizens to study in the United States.¹³ According to the Institute of International Education of the U.S. Department of State, 364 Tajikistani students were enrolled in American colleges in 2007-08 academic year.¹⁴

OCCUPATION OF POPULATION

As a legacy of the Soviet economic policy Tajikistan had been heavily involved in cotton production for Soviet light industry and therefore was largely an agricultural support base for the economy. Aluminum and uranium production and processing were the major sectors in heavy industry. According to the official data, in 2007 Tajikistan's active labor force was estimated at 2,150,000 out of which 66.5 percent worked for agricultural sector: processing of agricultural products (primarily cotton, fruits and vegetables). Industry provides work for only 5.3 of population; 17 percent are engaged in "non-production sector": government, health care, education, science and research, and other occupations.¹⁵

As suggested above, many Tajik men, but significantly less women, labor primarily in Russia and Kazakhstan. The Deputy Chief of Immigration Services of the Tajik Interior Ministry claims that 500,000 Tajiks worked in Russia in 2007 by official estimates and more than a million by unofficial.¹⁶ Remittances to Tajikistan are estimated, according to some sources, between US\$400 million and US\$1 billion annually, or between 20 and 50 percent of Tajikistan's total GDP and are mostly coming from Russia.¹⁷ Most of Tajiks work in construction, catering, farming, manufacturing, and other sectors. There are an unregistered number of females traveling to United Arab Emirates as tourists, yet working as prostitutes. Once in the UAE, women become part of the prostitution networks which ensure their continued stay in the country.¹⁸

¹² Official web site of IREX: <http://www.irex.org/>

¹³ See Educational programs page of the U.S. Embassy in Dushanbe for more information: http://dushanbe.usembassy.gov/exchange_programs.html

¹⁴ 'V uchebnyx zavedeniyx SShA uvelichilos kolichestvo studentov iz Tadzhikistana' (In educational institutions of the U.S. the number of students from Tajikistan increased), Khovar news agency, available at: http://www.khovar.tj/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=3446&Itemid=

¹⁵ Table 'Zanatost v razbivke po sektoram ekonomiki, 1985-2007' in Russian (Employment in sectors of economy). Available at: http://www.stat.tj/russian_tables/table_16.xls

¹⁶ 'Army of labor immigrants from Tajikistan is swelling in numbers, and nothing can stop the process,' Ferghan.ru news agency, December 26, 2007, available at: <http://enews.ferghana.ru/article.php?id=2303>

¹⁷ 'Tajikistan: From Refugee Sender to Labor Exporter,' Aaron Erlich, Migration Policy Institute, July 2006, available at: <http://www.migrationinformation.org/Profiles/display.cfm?ID=411>

¹⁸ 'Tajik labor migration and its consequences for women,' Sergey Medrea, December 10, 2008 issue of the CACI Analyst, available at: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5004>

It is also important to note that near half of the labor base works abroad. This labor base that works abroad send remittances back to their families for economic support and provides important contributions to country's GNP.

HEALTH FACILITIES

Hospitals: 439

Hospital beds: 46.4 bed per 10,000 residents (2014).

Doctors: 20.8 per 10,000 residents (2014).¹⁹

With the aftermath of the civil war, the near collapsed state of economy does not allow the country to invest enough resources into building an adequate number of health care facilities. Tajikistan is among the poorer countries of the world much like Sierra Leone and Kenya which actually have the lowest health expenditures: Tajikistan's total health expenditure per capita for 2014 was \$76.39²⁰ According to The World Bank, the total spending on health care represents approximately 1.98% of GDP.²¹

The most problematic aspect of the health care system reconstruction is the shortage of professional medical personnel. During the civil war thousands of highly experienced doctors and teachers of medical schools left the country.

The country faces many health related challenges: epidemic, cardiovascular and infectious diseases, respiratory disorders, drug addiction and HIV. The infant and maternal mortality rate is the highest of the former Soviet republics. Drug trafficking from Afghanistan to and via Tajikistan increases the number of drug addicts. Most of those identified as HIV/AIDS positive are people who consume narcotics, the rates of both drug addicts and HIV/AIDS positive cases are increasing. A significant regional health and environmental problem for the northern part of the country is the leaking of 55 million tons of radioactive waste into the soil and local water supplies. The two remaining sites in the towns of Taboshar and Dehmoi is the legacy of the Vostokredmet plant in Chkalovsk, the small city with a population of slightly more than 20,000 in Sughd province, used to process uranium for the Soviet atomic bombs but were closed in 1992. The powder from nuclear residue was simply dumped unsealed and during intense rainfalls and powerful winds this radioactive waste is spread throughout the area and into the water.²²

¹⁹ <http://www.stat.tj/en/analytical-tables/socio-demographic-sector/>

²⁰ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.PCAP?locations=TJ-1W>

²¹ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SH.XPD.PUBL.ZS?locations=TJ-1W>

²² 'Tajikistan's Former Soviet Nuclear Sites Pose Threat To Nearby Villages,' RFE/RL, April 15, 2009. Available at http://www.rferl.org/content/Tajikistans_Former_Soviet_Nuclear_Sites_Pose_Threat_To_Nearby_Villages/1604737.html

POPULATION/DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

POPULATION

Most recently in January 1, 2016 the government cited the population of Tajikistan to be 8.547 million.²³ In 2015, The World Bank reported the urban population as 26.8 percent of the total population, or about 2,290,596 million people. This leaves the rural population at 6,256,404. Females make up 49.4 percent of the population. The annual population growth rate is maintained at 2.2 percent despite poverty and labor migration.²⁴ A quarter of the population lives in urban areas and a third of the population is younger than 15 years of age.

Population by Province from Census Results and Official Estimates²⁵

| <u>Province</u> | <u>Population as of 2010 Census</u> | <u>Population from 2015 Estimate</u> |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Khatlon | 2,677,251 | 2,971,500 |
| Dushanbe | 724,844 | 788,700 |
| Gorno-Badakhshan | 205,949 | 214,300 |
| Karotegin | 1,722,908 | 1,922,000 |
| Sughd | 2,233,550 | 2,455,500 |
| <i>Tajikistan Total</i> | <i>7,564,502</i> | <i>8,352,000</i> |

Ethnic Composition²⁶

| <u>Ethnic Group</u> | <u>Total Population</u> | | | <u>Percent of Total Population</u> | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <i>1989</i> | <i>2000</i> | <i>2010</i> | <i>1989</i> | <i>2000</i> | <i>2010</i> |
| <i>Tajikistan</i> | 5,092,603 | 6,127,493 | 7,564,502 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Tajiks | 3,172,420 | 4,898,382 | 6,373,834 | 62.3 | 79.9 | 84.3 |
| Uzbeks | 1,197,841 | 936,703 | 926,344 | 23.5 | 15.3 | 12.2 |
| Russians | 388,481 | 68,171 | 34,838 | 7.6 | 1.1 | 0.5 |

²³ Agency On Statistics Under President of the Republic of Tajikistan, <http://www.stat.tj/en/>

²⁴ The World Bank, <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators>

²⁵ City Population, <http://www.citypopulation.de/Tajikistan.html>

²⁶ ҲАЙАТИ МИЛЛӢ, ДУНИСТАНИ,
http://www.stat.tj/en/img/526b8592e834fcaaccec26a22965ea2b_1355502192.pdf

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Kyrgyz | 63,832 | 65,515 | 60,715 | 1.3 | 1.1 | 0.8 |
| Ukrainians | 41,375 | 3,787 | 1,090 | 0.8 | 0.1 | 0.0 |
| Turks | 20,487 | 20,270 | 15,171 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.2 |
| Kazakhs | 11,376 | 936 | 595 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Jews | 9,701 | 182 | 34 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Afghans | 2,088 | 4,702 | 3,675 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 |
| Turks (Ottoman) | 768 | 672 | 1,360 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Persians (Iranians) | 388 | 306 | 473 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Arabs | 276 | 14,450 | 4,184 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.1 |
| Kurds | 56 | 17 | 7 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Americans | 3 | 24 | 62 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Chinese | 58 | 24 | 801 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Peoples of India and Pakistan | 15 | 245 | 262 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |

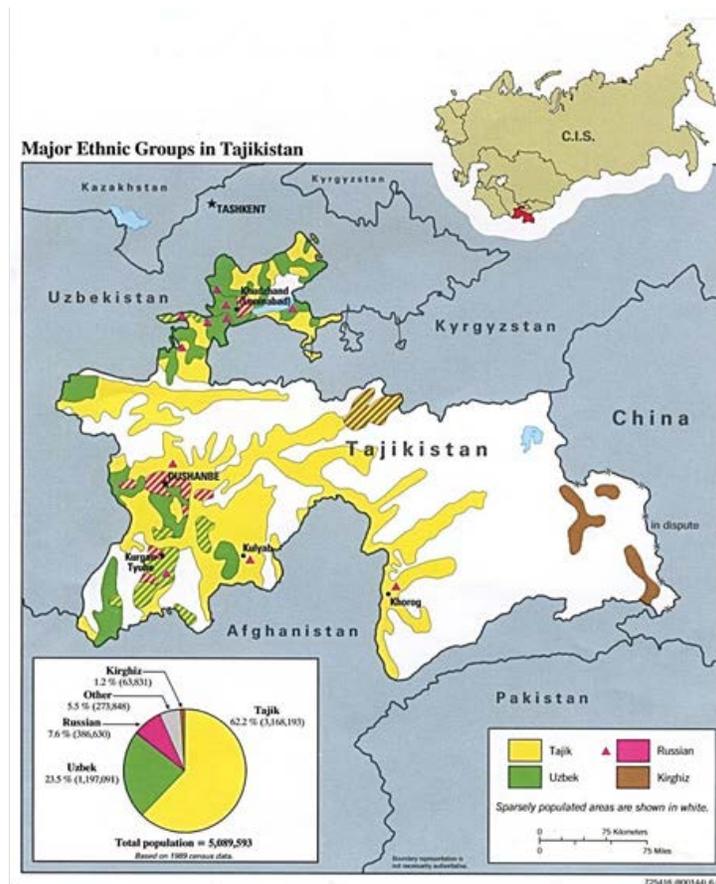
| | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|--------|--------|-----|-----|-----|
| Crimean Tatars | 7,214 | 138 | 18 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Lakaie | -- | 51,001 | 65,555 | -- | 0.8 | 0.9 |
| Kongrat | -- | 15,102 | 38,078 | -- | 0.2 | 0.5 |

The 2010 census of ethnic data estimated ethnic Tajiks constitute 84.3 percent of total population which is a 4.4 percent increase since 2000, and a 22 percent increase since 1989 (1989 Soviet census results). Many local and international experts argue the government included Pamiri peoples and Yagnobs as ethnic Tajiks but the Shughnis, Rushanis, Wakhis, Bartangis, Yazgulyamis, Khufis, Ishkashimis and Yagnobis identify themselves as separate groups residing primarily in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province²⁷ and in Yagnobis Sughd province. Although they had been called Pamiri Tajiks during the Soviet period, the Pamiris, with some exceptions, have different origins like Ismaili Shias (in comparison with Sunni Tajiks) and speak native languages. Because of this, the percentage of ethnic Tajiks may be less than what is reported by the government.

In an attempt to disintegrate entire ethnic groups such as Koreans, Volga Germans, and Chechens Josef Stalin held mass deportations from the regions of their settlement to Central Asia, including Tajikistan. In late 1980s with Gorbachov's policy on liberalization of political and economic system many non- indigenous ethnic groups left the country either to their country of origin (like Germans, Jews and Chechens) or Russia (as many Tatars and Koreans did). The Slav, Korean and Jewish and in general non-Tajik populations have constantly decreased primarily for economic reasons.

Although currently the percentage of ethnic groups changed since 1989 the figure below accurately shows the locations of major ethnic groups:

²⁷ Most frequently used abbreviation for Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province is GBAO from Russian: Gorno-Badakshanskaya avtonomnaya Oblast.



Source: UN Tajikistan Information Platform http://www.untj.org/files/maps/tajikistan_ethnic_92.jpeg

The conclusion of the civil war between the regional clans was accompanied by strong anti-Russian and anti-Uzbek sentiments all over Tajikistan, particularly in the south. Harassment and sometimes violence against ethnic Russians (and Slavs in general) and Uzbeks in the early 1990s led to the exodus of these ethnic minorities to their “homeland” which had been demanded from them by ethnic Tajik nationalists. The civil war served as a major factor of mass emigration of non-Tajiks along with thousands of ethnic Tajiks as well.

Tajiks

By the end of the first decade of Tajikistan’s independence the country had become more ethnically homogeneous with ethnic Tajiks constituting 84.3 percent in 2010 while the 2000 census counted 79.9 percent of the total population Tajik, and the 1989 census counted 62.3 percent. In 2013 the Tajiks made up 80 percent of the population. Titular nation,²⁸ ethnic Tajiks,

²⁸ This term is used for dominant ethnic group of the country: for instance Uzbeks are titular nation of Uzbekistan; Kyrgyz are titular nation in Kyrgyzstan. The national passports of former Soviet republics indicate person’s ethnic origin to give a special status to the dominant ethnic group.

are followed by two major ethnic groups: Uzbeks and Lakaie.

Uzbeks

Ethnic Uzbeks lived in northern Tajikistan as an indigenous ethnic group since the region had been a part of Uzbek Quqon Khanate, but under the Bolshevik's rule became a province of Tajikistan. By 2010, the Uzbek population decreased to 12.2 percent mainly due to immigration to Uzbekistan and other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. In 2013 the Uzbeks represented 15 percent of the county's population, while their numbers are about 13.8 percent as of July 2016.²⁹

Russians

Historically, ethnic Russians gradually immigrated to Tajikistan in several waves to support the first Tsarist's regime and later the Soviet Communist Party's administration. They forcibly relocated in Tajikistan during Josef Stalin's purges during the so-called "raskulachivanie"³⁰ campaign against wealthy farmers. Relocation of industrial facilities during World War II and the development of sectors of the economy in 1960s brought new waves of Russian and Slav ethnic groups. In 2013 Russians represented 1 percent of the population.

ETHNIC TAJIKS RESIDING ABROAD

Uzbekistan

Tajiks mainly reside in the city of Samarqand and Bukhara, also a border area of Uzbek Surkhandarya province and some districts of the Ferghana Valley. Tajiks constitute the second largest ethnic group after Russians and a major indigenous ethnic group that lived in the area as long as the Uzbeks had, while Russians started gradually immigrating to the region after 1864. Late 1980s and early 1990s was a period of strong nationalist and separatist aspiration among Tajiks of Samarqand and Bukhara. Former President Karimov's repressive policy against the Tajik nationalist movement and the 1992-97 Civil War in Tajikistan pacified the ambitions of Tajiks to re-unite with fellow Tajiks in Uzbekistan. Although officially, ethnic Tajiks make up only about 5% of total population, some Tajiks claim the number is 2-3 times higher. They claim a discrepancy between the two figures as forceful "Uzbekization" took place. As early as 1926, many Tajiks were forced to write their nationality as Uzbek during the national censuses. Certainly some grievances among Tajiks of Uzbekistan exist but have not manifested into political or military opposition that could threaten the country's stability.

Many Uzbeks believe former President Karimov was an ethnic Tajik (explaining that his formal nationality had been changed by Soviets to suit the requirements) and are angry that he brought many members of Samarqand regional clan (mainly ethnic Tajiks) into power in Tashkent. Most of Tajikistanis and ethnic Tajiks of Uzbekistan despised Karimov for his unfriendly relations

²⁹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ti.html>

³⁰ Read "Dekulakization" in Wikipedia for explanation of the term "raskulachivanie" at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dekulakization>

with Tajikistan and for suppressing cultural and/or political ambitions of Samarqandi and Bukhara Tajiks. The well-known ethnic Tajiks serving/having served in former administration of Karimov: Prosecutor General Buritosh Mustafoev, chairman of the Central Bank Fayzullo Mullojonov, Minister of Justice A. Polvonzoda, Minister of Finance Mamarizo Nurmurodov, Governor of Samarqand province Alisher Mardiev. There are also Ironiy (Persians) who are often confused with Tajiks in Samarqand and Bukhara regions. Most of them are Shia. The most famous representative of Ironiy is the former Communist Party apparatchik, the ‘godfather’ of former President Karimov and head of Samarqand clan Ismail Zhorabekov whose nickname was ‘grey cardinal.’

Afghanistan

Approximately 8 million ethnic Tajiks (nearly thirty percent of total population) live in Afghanistan, primarily in northern and western provinces constituting a majority in cities such as Kabul, Mazari - Sharif, and Herat. In comparison with Pashtuns, who identify themselves by tribal distinction, Tajik identity originates from one’s place of birth, which is in most cases the place of residence (since people do not normally migrate).

RELIGION/SECTS

MUSLIMS

About 97 percent of total population is Muslim: 93 percent – Sunni Muslims of Hanafi school of jurisprudence; approximately 4 percent – Ismaili Shias; Majority of Shias are Pamiris in the Gorno Badakshan Autonomous Province (GBAP) and in some districts of Khatlon Province and in Dushanbe. There are nearly 3,930 registered mosques for daily prayers,³¹ only 40 are large Sunni Friday prayer mosques.³²

Local Traditions and Superstitions

Similar to other countries of the Muslim world, Islam in Tajikistan intermixed with pre-Islamic local traditions. Wearing amulets, praying to spirits of holy men at their graves, asking for luck, fortune or children, and even asking about the future from witches is still practiced today, particularly among rural residents.

Sufism

Naqshbandiya branch of Sufism originated in the city of Bukhara has been traditionally practiced by a small number of practicing Muslims, particularly in GBAP.

Islamic Renaissance Party

In accordance with the agreements of the Peace Accord, Tajikistan is the only country in the

³¹ <http://www.rferl.org/a/tajikistan-unregistered-mosques-closed-homeless-family-extremism/27699145.html>

³² http://www.rferl.org/a/tajikistan_mosques_dushanbe/24327856.html

region to allow a religious party to function officially. It is registered by the Ministry of Justice. Some members of IRP cautiously admit that they are under pressure from the government.³³ As the only viable opposition party in Tajikistan it is feared by the ruling political elite. Since the government cannot ban the party due to the international reputation of IRP, President Rahmon uses other methods of preventing the party from effective political activities in order to secure his success at future presidential election.

Banned Hizb-ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation)

Hizb-ut-Tahrir is a pan-Islamic nonviolent party propagating re-creation of Islamic Caliphate through peaceful Islamization of Muslim societies converting them into Islamic states and joining them into one pan Islamic state.³⁴ Most of HT members are of ethnic Uzbek origin from Sughd province, according to the Tajik law enforcement.

HT is banned in most Muslim countries, Central Asia, China and recently was also de-legalized in Germany for anti-Jewish rhetoric. The success of HT among ethnic Uzbeks in Tajikistan is linked to a long history of experience with this party in Uzbekistan. Regional analysts connect ethnic grievances of Uzbeks in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to the popularity of HT among Uzbek ethnic Diaspora.

CHRISTIANS

In total, about 150,000, mostly ethnic Russians, are adherents of the Russian Orthodox Church. Other Christian denominations appeared in Tajikistan after the demise of the USSR by means of missionary organizations, mainly from the United States. There are up to 3,000 converts to Christianity and 0.01 percent of population is atheist, according to a U.S. State Department report on religious freedoms.³⁵

Other Christian Denominations

| <u>Name of Registered Religious Group</u> | <u>Number of Organizations</u> |
|---|--------------------------------|
| Baptists | 5 |
| Roman Catholics | 2 |
| Seventh-day Adventists | 1 |
| Jehovah’s Witnesses | 1 |
| Korean Protestants (<i>including the SunMin Church</i>) | 2 |

³³ Phone and email interviews with IRP members, October 2008- July 2009. Relations between the government and IRP is a sensitive topic and the interviewees prefer to stay anonymous to avoid problems with the government for themselves and for the party.

³⁴ The web site of the party is www.Hizb-ut-Tahrir.org

³⁵ Tajikistan: International Freedom Report 2008, U. S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Section I. Religious Demography, The report is available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108507.htm>

Lutherans

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OTHER RELIGIONS

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Number of Organizations</u> |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Baha'is | 4 |
| Zoroastrians | -- |
| Jews | 1 |

ADMINISTRATIVE SETUP

There are 4 administrative units which are divided into provincial/regional units, 17 cities and towns, 58 provincial districts (equivalent of counties in the U.S.) and 4 districts in Dushanbe, 54 villages and 367 village jamoats (local communities).³⁶

| Administrative Units (in sq. km.) | | |
|--|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Administrative Unit</u> | <u>Area (in sq. km.)</u> | <u>Capital City</u> |
| Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province (GBAO) | 64,200 | Khorough |
| Region of Republic Subordination (RRS) | 28,600 | Dushanbe |
| Sughd Province | 25,400 | Khujand |
| Khatlon Province | 24,800 | Qurghonteppa |

GORNO-BADAKHSHAN AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE (GBAP)

In 1895, the single region and people of Badakhshan were divided in two: present day GBAO fell under the jurisdiction of the Russian Empire and the south-eastern part was forced to accept British protectorate status. Until the Bolshevik forces invaded, the border existed only on the map. People crossed the border as one nation occupied by the Red Army. In 1920, the GBAP became an administrative unit under the Bolsheviks and in 1925, the people lost connection with relatives in Afghanistan. In 1992, the local government declared independence from Tajikistan and became a part of United Tajik Opposition, but later the region abandoned its independence demands. In the former USSR, GBAO was often called “the roof of the world” since Pamir’s highest point is located in this region called Ismail Samani Peak (former Communism Peak).

The Tajik Pamir’s language groups, - also called Pamiri Tajiiks, are distinct small language groups who speak Persian dialects different than ethnic Tajiks. They follow the Ismaili

³⁶ State Statistics Committee, ‘The number of administrative – territorial units as of January 2008’ in Russian. Available at: http://www.stat.tj/russian_database/socio-demographic_sector/administrative-area_units.xls

subdivision of Shia Islam (approximately 5 percent of all Muslims in Tajikistan) while ethnic Tajiks are Sunni Muslims of Hanafi School of jurisprudence. The autonomous province comprises almost half of the total geographical area but represents less than 5 percent of total population.

Besides “Tajik Pamiris” ethnic Kyrgyz live in the eastern part of the region, near the Murgab district. The region is situated in the high altitude Pamir Mountains making it hard to access the province by road (Dushanbe – Khorog road) most of the year. Another external link, that connected the region with the rest of the former Soviet Union to deliver necessary supplies, was Osh (southern Kyrgyzstan) – Khorog road. After the demise of the Soviet Union the Pamiris found themselves in a very difficult socio-economic situation. The civil war severely hit the economy of the country and particularly that of GBAO.

The Tajik government relies heavily on aid from bilateral country assistance, international financial institutions NGOs and government aid agencies. Among the major donors are the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Asian Development Bank, U.S., EU, Japan and the Agha Khan Development Network (AKDN) funded by Prince Karim Aga Khan IV, the 49th Ismaili Imam (leader) of the world’s Ismaili sect of Shia Muslims.³⁷ AKDN provides financial, educational, technical and humanitarian assistance to the GBAO region.

Important road links were built during independence that connected the region with other parts of country and with neighboring states.

Note: As a legacy from Soviet times, the special permit is still required for foreigners to enter the Gorno - Badakhshan Autonomous Province. The permit with list of certain cities or all locations can be obtained along with a visa in Tajik embassies abroad, or upon arrival in Dushanbe from the Foreign Ministry of the Passport and the registration department of Internal Affairs Ministry (OVIR - abbreviation in Russian).

³⁷ See AKDN in Tajikistan: <http://www.akdn.org/tajikistan>

POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

THE GOVERNMENT



Emomali Rakhmon
President of Republic of Tajikistan

LIST OF MEMBERS OF CABINET OF MINISTERS AND CHAIRPERSONS AS OF 2017



Qohir Rasulzoda
Prime Minister



Davlatali Said
First Deputy Prime Minister



Azim Ibrohim
Deputy Prime Minister



Mahmadtoir Zoir Zokirzoda
Deputy Prime Minister



Shohmurod Rustam
Minister of Justice



Ramazon Hamro Rahimzoda
Interior Minister



Sirojiddin Muhridinovich Aslov
Minister of Foreign Affairs



Nuriddin Said Said
Minister of Education and Science



Sumangul Said Taghoizoda
Minister of Labor, Migration and Employment



Abdusalom Karim Qurboniyon
Minister of Finance



Sherali Mirzo
Minister of Defense



Khudoyorzoda Khudoyor Zavqibek
Minister of Transport



Nematullo Hikmatullozoda
Minister of Economic Development and Trade



Nasim Khoja Olimzoda *Minister of Health and
Social Protection of the Population*



Shamsiddin Shodibek Orumbekzoda
Minister of Culture



Usmonali Yunusali Usmonzoda
Minister of Energy and Water Resources



Shavkat Bobozoda
Minister of Industry and New Technologies



Saymumin Sattorovich Yatimov
Chairman of State Committee for National Security



Fayziddin Sattor Qahhorzoda *Chairman of State
Committee for Investment and State Property
Management*

OFFICIAL POLITICAL PARTIES

Most Significant

- People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan [PDPT] (The party is headed by President RAHMON and has 49 percent of seats in the parliament)
- Islamic Revival Party [IRPT]
- Tajik Communist Party [CPT]³⁸

Less Significant

- Democratic Party of Tajikistan [DPT]
- Social Democratic Party [SDPT]
- Socialist Party of Tajikistan [SPT]
- Agrarian Party [APT]
- Party of Economic Reform [PERT]

The legislative branch of Tajik government is a recipient of favors from the executive office of President Rahmon who controls the parliament through his party - People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan [PDPT]. Only the Islamic Revival Party represents a genuine opposition party to PDPT and its ally CPT. Other registered parties have received official recognition by authorities thanks to their loyalty to Rahmon's policies.

SECULAR OPPOSITION PARTIES (DENIED REGISTRATION BY THE GOVERNMENT)

New observers on the political system in Tajikistan are often confused in that the official Democratic Party of Tajikistan and the Social Democratic Party and two opposition parties with the same name have been denied registration by the government. The government purposefully created the parties and named them as DPT and SDPT in order to provide a democratic façade to an increasingly authoritarian executive office of President Rahmon. Original DPT and SDPT disapproved of Rahmon's undemocratic methods of governing to artificially create new parties which would overshadow the opposition parties with the similar names and goals but would be

³⁸ Official web site: <http://www.kpt.freenet.tj/>

in no opposition to the current authorities.

Other new social-political entities also denied registration is Tarrakiot (Development); and Vahdat (Unity).

BANNED RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AND PARTIES

Hizb-ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation)

According to some experts the number of HT members in Tajikistan in early 2009 was estimated at over 5,000 most of whom are located in northern Sughd province.³⁹

The party's goal is rebuilding the single Islamic Kilafah State (Caliphate) through propagation and peaceful transformation of Muslim society to finally establishing the 'Islamic household.'⁴⁰ The radical party which is predominantly Sunni, with Islam as an ideology, does not employ violent means but Central Asian governments have accused HT in terrorism.

HT is anti-Western, anti-Semitic, anti-secular and considers democracy a Kufr (unbeliever) system that calls for the overthrow of Muslim governments which do not obey the party's vision of the Islamic governance; and according to them, the country is currently a 'Kufr household.'⁴¹ Hizb-ut-Tahrir members first appeared in Central Asia in the mid-1990s in Uzbekistan. The massive arrest campaign, launched by the government in the aftermath of the Tashkent February 1999 bombings, brought the party into the spotlight which has been mostly unknown to Central Asians.

The party's claims of peace have led some members to leave the party to join militant movements or create their own separate cells (not associated with HT) which openly use violence. The organization is banned in all Central Asian states. Hizb-ut-Tahrir, despite its popularity in the early stages of its appearance in Central Asia, it failed to become a popular movement due to highly secretive recruitment, heavy repressions, little interest among populace in political Islam and theological discrepancies with mainstream Islamic doctrine called Aqidah in Arabic. Differences in doctrine of Ahl as-Sunna wal-Jama'ah (majority of Muslims) and that of HT is a significant obstacle for broad public support and recruitment of new members, particularly among religiously educated Muslims. Regular members are more preoccupied with political work and believe the organization is more of a secular political party rather than a religious organization, despite the religious rhetoric. The frequency and quantity of leaflet distribution among the populace in the region has been decreasing and the number of arrests of

³⁹ "Ot chego rastut ryady religioznyx ekstemistov v Tadzshikistane (Why the number of religious extremists in Tajikistan grow), Behruz Isabaev, January 21, 2009, Centrasia.ru online news site. Available at <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1232537280>

⁴⁰ See 'About Hizb-ut-Tahrir' at the official web site of the party: <http://www.hizbuttahrir.org/index.php>

⁴¹ Ibid.

the alleged members of HT has dropped, which indicates the party is losing ground in Central Asia.

Traditionally HT was popular among ethnic Uzbeks; in addition to Uzbekistan the organization was also active in the border areas of neighboring counties populated by ethnic Uzbeks. In Tajikistan the group is most active in the Sughd province, the Tajik sections of the Ferghana Valley.

Salafism

The followers of Salafi movement of Sunni Islam have grown in number which has been a concern for authorities. In 2006, a new unregistered Islamic group of the Salafi sect began worshipping in Friday mosques in Dushanbe, Sughd, and Khatlon. According to Muhammadi Rakhmatullo, one of the leaders of Salafis in Tajikistan, there are 20,000 members, mostly young people of 20-30 years old, presently in the country.⁴² The U.S. State Department estimated 5,000 members.⁴³ Salafis (which in Arabic means predecessors) believe Muslims should follow the practices of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions and the next two generations, to practice Islam of the early period without diversion. They call for purity and simplicity in practicing and abandoning local cultural norms incompatible with Sunni Islamic doctrine. Tajik Salafis disapprove of Shias and Sufis – both have an influential adherence in some parts of Tajikistan. For now, no Salafi has been arrested on this ground. Although the chief prosecutor of Tajikistan stated they just watch the group, local observers cite an anti-Salafi campaign has already been launched by the law enforcement agencies. Chief Prosecutor of Sughd Province Hayrullo Saidov acknowledged that he ordered all mosques in his province to ban Salafis from entering and praying in mosques.⁴⁴

CCS contacts in Tajikistan proved that many mosques in various provinces had to forbid Salafi movement members to pray with other Muslims due to new orders from local law enforcement agencies.⁴⁵

On January 10, 2009 the government banned the movement. On June 23, 2009, security forces arrested 43 followers of the Salafi movement, including the leader of the group Eshoni Sirojiddin at the mosque in Zerovshon neighborhood in the capital Dushanbe. It is expected that they will be indicted based on Article 189 of the Tajik Criminal Code leading to imprisonment of up to 12 years for the fuelling of national, racial, parochial, or religious enmity.⁴⁶

⁴² “Tajik Government Concerned by Increasing Growth of Salafism,” Gulnoza Saidazimova, July 27, 2008, available at www.rferl.org/content/Article/1186548.html

⁴³ Tajikistan: International Freedom Report 2008, U. S. Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, Section I. Religious Demography, The report is available at: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2008/108507.htm>

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ E-mail communication, April 2009.

⁴⁶ “Over 40 Islamic fundamentalists detained in Tajikistan,” Interfax Russian News Agency, June 24, 2009. Available at: <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=6151>

CLAN NETWORKS

In Tajikistan the clans are based on regional identity. Until the end of Soviet rule and the first few years of the civil war the most powerful clan traditionally had been Khujand (formerly city of Leninobod, Leninobod Province) this clan group had close ties with Kulobis. Representatives from Khujand trusted their Moscow bosses and ruled the country for most of the Soviet period. The inability of the northern clan to control power amid the demise of the USSR led to the civil war in 1992. The opposing clans that took part in power distribution amid the collapse of the USSR were Gharmis from RRS and Pamiris from GBAP. The regional clan rivalry later obtained political façade when pro-Moscow Communist Party bosses from Khujand and Kulob were supported by Russia and Uzbekistan. Karategin, Gharm and Pamir were represented by Tajik democratic forces and Islamists who received shelter and support in Afghanistan and Iran. ‘Lali Badakhshon’ the secular Democratic Party, for instance, was made up by Pamiris and represented the interests of GBAP, and after the war power shifted to Kulobis. President Emomali Rakhmon comes from the Kulob clan. Clan leaders control some legal enterprises and most of Tajikistan’s extensive criminal economy. The black market, heroin smuggling, and informal transactions account for a significant part of the economy.⁴⁷

FOREIGN MILITARY BASES

INDIAN AIR FORCE BASE IN AYNİ

In 2007 India and Tajikistan, without publicity and in agreement with Russia, agreed to the establishment of India’s first overseas military base and deployment of one squadron of Mi-17 helicopters at the Ayni airbase, 20 kilometers from Dushanbe. India planned to station MIG-29 fighter jets. The Government of India invested about \$70 million in refurbishing (extending the runway, building a control tower, and new hangers) the old Soviet air base abandoned after the Soviets left Afghanistan.⁴⁸

The major objective of India’s efforts to establish the military presence in Tajikistan is a potential armed conflict with Islamabad if the Afghan Wakhan Corridor, a narrow strip separating Tajikistan from Pakistan, were used to attack Pakistan from the north. Pakistan perceives the Indian investment at Ayni a serious strategic footprint and threat emanating on its western border. The positioning of MIG-29 fighter jets at Ayni puts Pakistan’s western flank under considerable threat. However, Russia had second thought about India moving into territory they normally controlled and intervened to prevent any Indian presence at the base, and went as far as pressuring President Rahmon’s “administration in Dushanbe to revoke Indian access to the base.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Library of Congress - Federal Research Division, COUNTRY PROFILE: TAJIKISTAN, January 2007, p. 7. Available at: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Tajikistan.pdf>

⁴⁸ http://www.rferl.org/a/Tajik_Military_Air_Base_Completed_With_Indian_Help/2152731.html

⁴⁹ <http://thediplomat.com/2015/07/will-there-be-an-indian-air-base-in-tajikistan/>

RUSSIAN MILITARY BASE

201st motorized-rifle division with more than 8,000 personnel⁵⁰ is the largest Russian military contingent abroad which rents former Soviet military facilities in Kulob, Qurgonteppa and Dushanbe, including a military space monitoring complex in Nurek.

The CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization's Rapid Deployment Forces include one battalion of the 201st division.

SECURITY SITUATION

There are internal and external significant challenges to Tajikistan's stability. Among external factors are the security and political situation in Afghanistan; second – tensions with Uzbekistan, a key neighbor and an important regional player.

EXTERNAL ISSUES

Afghanistan

Tajikistan has a long 1030 km porous border with Afghanistan. As a militarily weak state, Tajikistan will not be able to defend itself from armed incursions from the south-western neighbor's territory. Tajikistan's strong reliance on the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Russian base, explains Dushanbe legitimate fear of Afghanistan's internal security trajectory which has a direct impact on stability not only in Tajikistan but in all of Central Asia. Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Islamic Jihad Union, which operate in Afghanistan and Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan, have targeted President Karimov of Uzbekistan with the overall aim of overthrowing secular regimes of the former Soviet Muslim states in the region. The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), according to the Tajik government, has its members in Tajikistan. Ten alleged supporters of IMU were arrested within the first 3 months of 2009, and 100s of suspected members identified during the past decade.

- Border delimitation/demarcation issue
- Regional water distribution
- Natural gas cuts by Uzbekistan due to Tajikistan's failure to make timely payments
- Landmines cause casualties on Tajik civilians' side
- Tajikistan's attempts to complete the large hydro-energy station projects and to revitalize the Soviet built aluminum plant "TadAZ" are not acceptable for Uzbekistan
- Transport/transit barriers imposed by Uzbekistan impede Tajikistan's economic development.

⁵⁰ According to Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov. Read 'Tajikistan: First Permanent Russian Military Base Opened,' RFE/RL, October 17, 2004 Available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1055375.html>

INTERNAL ISSUES

Poverty, Corruption and Unemployment—a Growing Source of Instability

Unemployment and low wages are significant socio-economic challenges the government currently faces, and despite economic growth the population is growing and prices rise annually. IMF estimates the proportion of young people (15-29 years of age) in the overall structure of registered unemployment rates are quite high - in the range of 60-65%. The average age among the unemployed is 29.6 years.⁵¹ Recent economic decline in Russia amid the world crisis and subsequent cut of labor migrant quotas from Tajikistan will force around a half million Tajik laborers to return home in 2009 according to unofficial estimates. Many Tajiks lost their jobs in Russia and Kazakhstan after the global economic recession hit Russia and they were unable to financially support their families in Tajikistan. Experts warn that this inflow of migrant laborers will increase the problem of unemployment, drug trafficking, prostitution, and HIV/AIDS.

Lack of employment and low wages lead many to try the prosperous but dangerous business of illegally transporting drugs from Afghanistan to Russia and other states of former USSR. Many Tajik men, while living in Russia and Kazakhstan, use services of prostitutes and have sexual relations with women who are HIV/AIDS positive. The lack of safe sex education or neglecting the rules for personal protection against sexually transmitted diseases has led to proliferation of HIV/AIDS among woman and children in Tajikistan.

A March 2009 IMF report warns of the difficult situation in the country: “While the average poverty rate for the country as a whole is 64%, the risk of poverty in large households is twice as high as in households with two or fewer children. Rapid population growth (10% over the past seven years) puts strains on the education, health care and social welfare systems, which are already overburdened.”⁵² In one of its news programs on Tajikistan in January of 2009, the BBC highlighted another social problem which needs more thorough investigation and prosecution: due to poverty some women sell their babies upon giving birth for as much as US \$100.00.⁵³ Tajikistan’s slow GDP growth and poverty rate are not sufficient to suppress social pressure which the government faces. The high birth and inflation rates with the continuing rise of prices for goods and services, add pressure to the authorities to hasten structural reforms and battle corruption that has reached scandalous levels.

A series of reports in March - April of 2009 revealed the level of fraud. An audit by Ernst & Young, an international audit and consulting firm, discovered Murodali Alimardon who led the

⁵¹ IMF: poverty Reduction Strategy in Republic of Tajikistan for 2007-2009, p.11, available at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2009/cr0982.pdf>

⁵² IMF: poverty Reduction Strategy in Republic of Tajikistan for 2007-2009, p.9, available at: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2009/cr0982.pdf>

⁵³ Watch video report ‘Tajikistan women ‘selling babies,’ BBC News, January 22, 2009 at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7843918.stm>

National Bank of Tajikistan from 1996 to 2008, (currently Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the agricultural sector) had channeled nearly US \$1 billion dollars to private enterprises, instead of supporting the agricultural sector the money was meant for. This amount represents almost the entire annual budget for Tajikistan, with an annual budget revenue of US \$1.28 billion. For 13 years the National Bank had provided false information on the country's economic indicators to IMF in order to receive new loans. The National Bank did not provide access to all documents requested by Ernst & Young and many documents were destroyed while new reports were created to cover up the fraud. The audit also found US\$ 800,000 spent for construction of a private tea place/restaurant in the country where the average salary is US \$70.00 a month.⁵⁴ There are two explanations why the Prime Minister has not been held responsible for misappropriation of funds on a huge scale: 1) the former chairman of the Bank was engaged in corrupt practices with the approval of the president, or 2) the authorities lied to the IMF in order to get loans but then channeled the money to "more useful projects for the country," as they see it. Central Asian states often complain that the IMF and the World Bank impose rules inappropriate for local conditions and they have to formally agree with international lenders, but then play the game.⁵⁵ Tajikistan ranked 151 with the 2.0 CPI score in 2008, according to Transparency International survey.⁵⁶ Given poor internal economic resources and heavy reliance on foreign aid, the transparency and integrity in government's economic performance is key.

While the NATO/ISAF forces are in Afghanistan and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and Russian bases provide protection from external threats, the most crucial task is to secure stability of the country by improving the socio-economic conditions of the people, the vast majority of which still lack jobs and adequate wages.

Rising Tensions Between Some Muslim Groups and the Government

In recent years the government has intensified harassment of women wearing hijab (Islamic headscarf) and visiting mosques; school children were banned from private Islamic classes and from praying in mosques. The new controversial law "On freedom of consciousness, religious associations and other organizations" signed by the President on March 25, 2009 provides the basis for clamping down on Islamic madrassahs and mosques, and limiting religious freedoms.

Female students at school and universities have to abandon hijab to pursue education and stop attending Friday prayers at mosque. Those who try to defend their rights are expelled, as in the case of Davlatmo Ismailova who attested the rejection of her rights by the government in court in July of 2007, but lost the case.

⁵⁴ 'Tajik Audit Reveals Huge National Bank Shortfalls,' RFE/RL, Farangis Najibullah, April 15, 2009 Available at: http://www.rferl.org/content/Tajik_Audit_Reveals_Huge_National_Bank_Shortfalls/1609233.html

⁵⁵ Field research in the region by CCS in 2000-2003.

⁵⁶ See the table at: <http://www.infoplease.com/world/statistics/2008-transparency-international-corruption-perceptions.html>

Law enforcement regularly apprehends Islamic literature and audio/video materials allegedly propagating extremism and violence. Imams are ordered not to allow school students to pray at mosques. School administrations are instructed to engage the youth in entertainment to keep children away from religion. Since mid-2008, Salafi adherents face resentments from official clergymen who have ordered the expulsion of Salafists from the congregation. They are now banned and face prosecution.

The government ordered the destruction of 3 mosques that people viewed with shock when local media outlets revealed how a tractor bulldozed two mosques, which did not meet the official complicated registration criteria. The government has closed hundreds of mosques and turned some of them into official buildings, police stations, barber shops and other public facilities. President Rahmon expressed his anger with the increasing number of mosques. He instructed business people in March of 2007, “I repeatedly tell you: Stop building mosques! Invest your money in enterprises or schools.”

Despite the government’s efforts to curtail the rise of interest among the public in Islam⁵⁷ the country is experiencing a religious boom. “You can see more women in hijab now than five years ago; you can observe lots of youth attending Friday prayers; Islamic CDs and audio tapes are a prospering business; thousands become more conservative and observant. Government’s effort to minimize attraction to Islam seems to have created what it tried to prevent.”⁵⁸

⁵⁷ The current political elite is extremely secular and fear that growing interest in Islam will lead to rise of Islamization of society.

⁵⁸ Phone interview with Avar Mutabarov, a resident of Dushanbe, September 10, 2008.

APPENDIX I

LINKS TO NEWS AND RESOURCES ON TAJIKISTAN/CENTRAL ASIA

News on Tajikistan/Central Asia in English, Russian and Tajik:

Asia- Plus

<http://www.asiaplus.tj/en/>

Khovar

<http://khovar.tj/eng/>

Information Agency Ferghana.ru

<http://www.ferghana.ru/>

Information Analytical Agency Varorud

http://www.varorud.org/index.php?option=com_magazine&Itemid=86

Avesta News Agency

<http://avesta.tj/en/>

News on Tajikistan/Central Asia in English and Russian:

EurasiaNet

<http://www.eurasianet.org/index.shtml>

CentralAsiaNews

<http://en.ca-news.org/>

News on Tajikistan/Central Asia in Russian:

Russian news web site Centrasia.ru

<http://www.centrasia.ru/>

News of Tajikistan/Central Asia in English:

RFE/RL in English

<http://www.rferl.org/section/Tajikistan/162.html>

BBC Asia

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/default.stm>

Institute for War & Peace Reporting

http://www.iwpr.net/?apc_state=henprca

The Times of Central Asia

<http://www.timesca.com/>

CentralasiaNews.net

<http://www.centralasianews.net/>

Transitions On Line News

<http://www.tol.cz/look/TOL/section.tpl?IdLanguage=1&IdPublication=4&tpid=16>

Turkish Weekly

<http://www.turkishweekly.net/category/5/central-asia.html>

Central Asia – Caucasus Institute Analyst

<http://www.cacianalyst.org/>

News on Tajikistan in Tajik only:

RFE/RL in Tajik

<http://www.ozodi.org/>

BBC in Tajik

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/tajik/index.shtml>

Analytical Reports:

International Crisis Group

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1255&l=1>

Russian and Eurasian Security Network

<http://www.res.ethz.ch/news/sw/index.cfm>

National Bureau of Asian Research

<http://www.nbr.org/>

RAND Center for Asia Pacific Policy

http://www.rand.org/international_programs/capp/pubs/central.html

Regional/International Organizations:

Shanghai Cooperation Organization

<http://www.sectsco.org/>

Eurasian Economic Community

<http://www.evrazes.com/>

Collective Security Treaty Organization

<http://www.dkb.gov.ru>

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
<http://www.osce.org/tajikistan>

World Bank
<http://www.worldbank.org/tj>

International Monetary Fund
<http://www.imf.org/external/country/TJK/index.htm>

United Nations Development Program in Tajikistan
<http://www.untj.org/>

World Health Organization
<http://www.who.int/countries/tjk/en/>

Ministries/State Companies:

President of the Republic of Tajikistan
<http://www.president.tj>

Majlisi Milli of Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan (Upper Chamber of Parliament)
<http://www.majmilli.tj>

Majlisi Namoyandagon of Majlisi Oli of the Republic of Tajikistan (Lower Chamber of Parliament)
<http://www.parlament.tj>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan
<http://www.mid.tj>

Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of the Republic of Tajikistan
<http://met.tj>

Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Tajikistan
<http://www.minfin.tj>

Ministry of Health of the Republic of Tajikistan
<http://www.health.tj/>

State Committee of Statistics of the Republic of Tajikistan

<http://www.stat.tj>

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Tajikistan

<http://www.tpp.tj>

Central Scientific Library of Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan

<http://www.aclib.tj>

National Bank of the Republic of Tajikistan

<http://www.nbt.tj>

Open Joint Stock Company AGROINVESTBANK

<http://www.agroinvestbank.tj>

Open Joint Stock Company ORIENBANK

<http://www.orienbank.com>

Open Joint Stock Company TOJIKSODIROTBONK

<http://www.sodirotbank.com>

United Nations Development Program in Tajikistan

<http://www.undp.tj>

United Nations Tajikistan Information Platform

<http://www.untj.org>

Analytical Reports

International Crisis Group:

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=1251&l=1>

Russian and Eurasian Security Network:

<http://www.res.ethz.ch/news/sw/index.cfm>

National Bureau of Asian Research:

<http://www.nbr.org/>

RAND Center for Asia Pacific Policy:

http://www.rand.org/international_programs/capp/pubs/central.html

OFFICIAL WEBSITES OF MINISTRIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Regional International Organizations

Shanghai Cooperation Organization:

<http://www.sectsko.org/>

Eurasian Economic Community:

<http://www.evrazes.com/>

Collective Security Treaty Organization:

<http://www.dkb.gov.ru/>