

Mapping Fragile Areas: Case Studies from Central Asia

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Preface

Stretching from the Caspian Sea in the west to Mongolia in the east, and from Iran in the south to Russia in the north, Central Asia is a rich mosaic of cultures and histories. This diversity is reflected not only in the vast number of ethnic groups, languages, religions and tribes present in the region, but also in the number of security challenges. The unsettled border disputes between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, uncertainties in southern Kyrgyzstan, consequences of the Tajik Civil War, regional water and energy quarrels, and efforts to combat terrorism continue to impact peace, justice and security in Central Asia. As the Assistant Director of DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, and the Head of Operations Europe and Central Asia, it therefore brings me great pleasure to present this study on fragile areas in Central Asia.

Authored by experts at DCAF, the study presents six case studies of fragile areas in Central Asia. It explores their historical background as well as their proximate and structural causes. After mapping the actors involved in the conflicts, it identifies the current stage of each fragility, and analyzes responses to them, including confidence building and conflict resolution initiatives implemented by local, national, regional and international organizations.

The study demonstrates DCAF's firm commitment to advancing good security sector governance in Central Asia. It is aimed at academics, researchers and practitioners working on issues related to peace, justice, and security in Central Asia, and provides a valuable resource for those seeking to better understand this complex and dynamic region.



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Introductory remarks

I am pleased to have led the research team for this study. Composed of extremely knowledgeable individuals from DCAF's Europe and Central Asia Division, I am thankful for the substantial time they devoted in making this publication possible. The study explores fragile and conflict-affected areas in Central Asia. Its objective is twofold: to increase the knowledge of the international community, and to serve as a practical tool to support the preparation of needs assessment and the identification of new entry points for security sector reform programming in Central Asia.

For each case study, a comprehensive historical background is provided, which identifies the most important events that have impacted the level of fragility. The study then examines the causes of fragility, which include both long-term 'structural' and short-term 'proximate' causes. Depending on the context, these may be influenced by security, political and geopolitical, economic, environmental, ethnic, cultural, and religious issues. Each case study then identifies the key security or conflict actors, namely those who are positively or negatively affected by the fragility or conflict in question. These may include actors directly involved in hostilities, or those indirectly affected by dynamics related to fragility or conflict. It follows by considering the dynamics of fragility through highlighting recent developments and identifying the stage of fragility. An analysis of responses to these, including confidence building and conflict resolution initiatives, is then presented. These include initiatives undertaken by international organizations, national governments, civil society and other actors, aimed at addressing conflict dynamics. Finally, for each case study, a profile of the country, region and community is included, which contain important background data on the geography, demography, literacy, and governance structures along with other relevant documents, including peace agreements.

The study is based on primary and secondary data, including expert interviews. While it does not claim to be exhaustive, my hope is that it will enrich the knowledge of the international community. It will remain a 'living document', to be constantly updated and developed.



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I. Fragile areas in Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken



Kyrgyzstan borders four countries: Kazakhstan to the north, Uzbekistan to the west and southwest, Tajikistan to the southwest and China to the east. Official estimates set the population at 6,389,500 in 2019. The country is rural: only about one-third of Kyrgyzstan's population live in urban areas. Islam is the most widely held faith. Ethnic Kyrgyz constitute 73.5% of Kyrgyzstan's total population. The next largest ethnic groups are: 14.7% Uzbek, 5.5% Russian, and others. Relations between Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities in Southern Kyrgyzstan were tense, and significant ethnic violence was witnessed in 1990 and 2010 in the areas of Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken.

1. Historical context

The Soviet Union created the Kara-Kirghiz Autonomous Soviet District as part of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. The District was transformed into the Kirgiz Autonomous Soviet Republic in 1926 and its status was upgraded to a Republic in 1936. The newly established Republic incorporated territorial fragments inhabited by a variety of ethnic groups. The predominantly Uzbek-inhabited areas in Osh and Jalal-Abad were granted to Kyrgyz SSR due to its economic links and proximity to Kyrgyz territories.¹ Sources suggest that the migration of Kyrgyz from mountainous areas to the Fergana valley triggered

¹ Haugen A., 2004. The Establishment of National Republics in Central Asia. Palgrave Macmillan.

large-scale skirmishes between the Kyrgyz (KYR) and Uzbek (UZB) communities, which began in 1961.

The imminent collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 witnessed the establishment of ethnicity-based organizations in Kyrgyz SSR. The Kyrgyz community in the south of the country established the Osh Aimagi (Osh community), while the Uzbeks united behind the Adolat movement (Justice movement). Through the Adolat, in March 1990, the Uzbek community in Jalal-Abad formally requested the Soviet Union Supreme Council to establish an autonomous region within the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic. More radical elements of the Adolat movement proposed succeeding from Kyrgyzstan all together and joining the territory of Uzbekistan. Adolat representatives also called for the Uzbek language to be made official and sought a certain degree of economic independence.² In the meantime, members of the Osh Aimagi attempted to resolve the lack of land for agricultural purposes, disagreements which led to inter-ethnic clashes between Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities. According to a KGB report presented to the First Secretary of Communist Party of Kyrgyz SSR, Absamat Masaliev,³ on 27 May 1990, Kyrgyz demonstrators demanded to transfer the land of collective farm 'Lenin' (where Uzbek communities worked) to the Kyrgyz community, with local authorities subsequently agreeing. Uzbek representatives protested and despite attempts of the central government to solve the issue through diplomatic means, on the 4th June 1990 the communities clashed in the area of the collective farm, with six persons killed. The conflict rapidly evolved and spread to Osh and Uzgen. Local militsiya was not able to quell the unrest. After the deployment of armed forces, peace was achieved on 8 June. It is noteworthy that a large crowd of Uzbeks from Namagan and Andizhan (Uzbek SSR) were prevented by authorities from reaching the conflict zone, a decision which likely prevented further bloodshed.⁴ Despite this, the conflict had already spread to six areas throughout Osh city and Osh province, with over 300 killed and 462 seriously injured.⁵ A great deal of property was also destroyed. The heaviest casualties occurred in and around Uzgen, where Uzbek resistance was the strongest, with reports of numerous atrocities committed by both sides. Approximately 4000 incidents were investigated, and 3215 criminal acts recorded. About 1500 prosecution cases were launched, with 300 going to court, and about 300 individuals put on trial. Of these, 48 individuals, 80% of them Kyrgyz, were convicted to lengthy prison sentences for crimes including murder, attempted murder and rape.⁶

Relations between Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities remained tense, though it was not until 2010 that significant violence was again witnessed. In 2004, the State Language Law was adopted in Kyrgyzstan, which strengthened the position of Kyrgyz language in state affairs. Uzbek leaders in Kyrgyzstan, affiliated with the Rodina party, raised the issue of the status of the Uzbek language in the course of discussions on the Language Law; however their concerns were not taken on board.⁷ At the VII Kurultai (Congress) on 16 January 2006, the

² Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_490.pdf.

³ Докладная записка председателя КГБ Асанкулова о событиях в Ошской области роководителю Киргизии А.Маслиеву. Жирохов М.,А., 2011. Семена распада: войны и конфликты на территории бывшего СССР. БХВ-Петербург.

⁴ Жирохов М.,А., 2011. Семена распада: войны и конфликты на территории бывшего СССР. БХВ-Петербург.

⁵ The information is based on the Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_490.pdf, however the experts doubt its accuracy and suggest the number of victims was higher.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Алишева А., Кабак Д., Утешева Н., 2007. О выполнении Кыргызской Республикой обязательств по Конвенции о ликвидации расовой дискриминации за период с 1999 по 2006 гг. Кыргызстан: этносы и политика. Под общей ред. А. Алишевой. Бишкек. Доступно на: <https://www.osce.org/ru/odihr/34069?download=true>.

Uzbek national cultural center of Jalal-Abad region issued an appeal to the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Kurmanbek Bakiyev, in which the Uzbeks expressed concern about growing hostility towards them.⁸ Again, the request to upgrade the status of Uzbek language was made, premised on the fact that Uzbeks constituted the second largest ethnic group in Kyrgyzstan – 14.3% of the country's population, mostly concentrated in the southern regions of the country – Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken.⁹

The communities clashed again in April and May 2010, culminating in large-scale inter-ethnic violence in June 2010. When demonstrators ousted Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev in a violent uprising in April 2010, the subsequent political turmoil and infighting brought historic grievances to the fore. In need of political support, the interim government appealed to the traditionally apolitical Uzbek community, which had raised its profile by acting as a power broker between different interest groups and which had made demands for greater political power.¹⁰ The then UZB leader Batyrov from southern Kyrgyzstan stated that “I organized rallies in Jalal-Abad and demanded from the Kyrgyz authorities to solve the language issues of the Uzbeks. Also, the members of the Provisional government asked us (the Uzbeks) to help expel Bakiyev's supporters from the country, and we helped.”¹¹ On 13 May, supporters of Bakiyev occupied the buildings of the regional administration in Osh and Jalal-Abad. In support of the Provisional Government, the local Uzbek community confronted them, leading to an exchange of gunfire. According to the press service of the Ministry of Health of Kyrgyzstan, approximately 58 casualties were admitted to the Jalal-Abad regional hospital; 5 of them in serious condition, with 26 suffering gunshot wounds, and 1 person killed.¹² Local Kyrgyz interpreted the Uzbek resurgence as a threat to Kyrgyz statehood. Announcements by the Provisional Government contributed to this climate of fear, inferring that the Provisional Government would favor Uzbeks in the South.¹³

On 10 June, a clash near the ‘24 Chasa’ casino in central Osh ignited the incandescent Kyrgyz-Uzbek tension. What differentiated this incident from previous episodes of violence was the inability of the police to contain and defuse it. The Uzbek crowd had swelled to about 3000, but only 20-30 police officers attended. While attempting to negotiate with the protestors, the crowd began chanting anti-Kyrgyz slogans and throwing objects at the police. The police responded with warning shots and the use of truncheons. Several police were injured, and their vehicles set alight.¹⁴ On 11 June, an Uzbek drama theatre, OSH TV, two Uzbek cafeterias, and a supermarket were attacked by arsonists, and the central government decided to deploy the Armed Forces.¹⁵ The clashes rapidly spread to Jalal-Abad, resulting in the introduction of a state of emergency and the partial mobilization of the Armed Forces. Some members of the military were involved in some of the attacks on the mahallas.¹⁶ The then Head of Kyrgyzstan, Roza Otunbaeva, sent a request for military assistance to

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch. 16 August 2010. “Where is the Justice?” Interethnic Violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan and its Aftermath. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/08/16/where-justice/interethnic-violence-southern-kyrgyzstan-and-its-aftermath>.

¹¹ Қодиржон Ботиров Қирғизистондан қандай чиқиб кетгани, муваққат ҳукумат ва Атамбаев ҳақида. 2016. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=56&v=ZH9RnW7rskw.

¹² RFI. 14 May 2010. Mayhem in Southern Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <http://www.rfi.fr/ru/tsentralnaya-aziya/20100514-smuta-na-yuge-kirgizii>.

¹³ Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_490.pdf.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Жирохов М.,А., 2011. Семёна распада: войны и конфликты на территории бывшего СССР. БХВ-Петербург.

¹⁶ Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_490.pdf.

Moscow.¹⁷ The Kremlin rejected the request, with Press Secretary of the Russian President, Natalia Timakova, responding that there were no grounds for direct participation of the Russian Federation in the internal disputes of Kyrgyzstan, following the decline that had already been announced by the Collective Security Treaty Organization.¹⁸ The Kyrgyz border with Uzbekistan was opened in order to facilitate the movement of ethnic Uzbeks to Uzbekistan (UNHCR estimated that 300,000 people were internally displaced during the events).¹⁹ By 15 June, Bishkek had brought the situation under relative control, with sporadic incidents of unrest and violence continuing over the next few days; including reports of looting, sexual violence and hostage-taking. According to a report of the Kyrgyz General Prosecutor, 426 bodies with signs of violence were registered, of whom 89.4% were identified. Among the identified corpses, 105 were Kyrgyz and 276 were Uzbeks. Of the 1930 persons injured, 925 had gunshot wounds. Nearly 4000 properties, mostly private (3414) were demolished or looted. Different figures were provided by Human Rights Watch and Uzbek community in Osh.²⁰

2. Structural and Proximate Causes

It is difficult to identify one specific cause of the 2010 Osh conflict. Relevant literature generally views it as an inter-ethnic conflict,²¹ with roots in a variety of socio-economic,²² demographic, cultural and historical factors. In addition to these, the global economic crisis of 2008 influenced the 2010 conflict.²³ A change of elites within state institutions, which led to an uneven redistribution of economic power and resources between different ethnic groups, combined with criminal networks penetrating the state; was clearly visible on the eve of the conflict.²⁴

Socio-Political Causes. In general, four socio-political causes of the conflict can be identified. First, the fragile political context in Kyrgyzstan fuelled instabilities and uncertainties. Both outbreaks of violence in Osh (in 1990 and 2010) occurred at a time of political confrontation, when political leaders tried to replace old elites and when the central government had been weakened by political changes around it (including the approaching collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the removal of the authoritarian leader of Kyrgyzstan, President Bakiyev, in 2010). When Kyrgyzstan became independent in 1991, ethnic Uzbeks in

¹⁷ Human Rights Watch. 16 August 2010. "Where is the Justice?" Interethnic Violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan and its Aftermath. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/08/16/where-justice/interethnic-violence-southern-kyrgyzstan-and-its-aftermath>.

¹⁸ Newsru.com. 29 июня 2010 г. Медведев поставил аналитиков в тупик, начав ругать новое правительство Киргизии. Available at: <https://www.newsru.com/russia/29jun2010/tupik.html>.

¹⁹ Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_490.pdf.

²⁰ Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Events in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_490.pdf.

²¹ Ibragimova G. 2015. Everyone is Afraid of the Recurrence of those Events [Все боятся повторения тех событий] Lenta.RU. Available at: <https://lenta.ru/articles/2015/06/11/osh/>.

²² Asankanov, A. n.d. Ethnic conflict in the Osh region in summer 1990: Reasons and lessons. Available at: <http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu12ee/uu12ee0d.htm>.

²³ Hyunjung, K. 2017. Social Economic Change as a Precondition of Ethnic Conflicts: The Cases of Osh Conflicts In 1990 And 2010. Vestnik MGIMO-Universiteta, Vol.54 (3), pp.201-211. Available at: https://explore.rero.ch/en_US/ge/result/PC/VE5fZG9hal9zb2FpX2RvYWpfb3JnX2FydGljbGVfOTEzZDYzNDN-jMzc3NDIINDhINzJmYjdINzE4YTU0NjE=.

²⁴ Abgadzhaeva, D. and Vlaskina, A. 2019. Analysis of the Reasons for Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Osh in 2010 [Анализ Причин Межэтнического Конфликта В Оше В 2010 Году]. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332237832_ANALIZ_PRICIN_MEZETNICESKOGO_KONFLIKTA_V_OSE_V_2010_GODU.

Osh were granted limited autonomy in the new government of Akayev and were viewed with deep suspicion by the general population.²⁵

Second, the politics of ‘Kyrgyzization’ of the country and deprivation of political rights of national minorities could be cited as another cause. To this end, Michele E. Commercio claims that patronage-based politics of Kyrgyz political elites awarded political positions to “clan-based” regional allies and closed the public sector to Russians and Uzbeks. This led to an underrepresentation of Uzbeks in political institutions, and thus to their general exclusion from political life.²⁶ Related to this, the semi authoritarian nature of the Kyrgyz regime is also cited as a cause of the conflict, in which a closed political system meant ethnic minorities did not have adequate avenues to express their grievances not-violently, particularly during the period of Akayev.²⁷ The unwillingness of the Kyrgyz government to officially recognize the Uzbek language also heightened tensions,²⁸ particularly in Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken, which had high numbers of ethnic Uzbeks.

Third, the denial of rights drove nationalism-oriented politics on both sides; demonstrated by the fact that the 1990 events in Osh and Jalal-Abad augmented the numbers of intra-ethnic group marriages as a survival strategy.²⁹ Akayev promoted policies of “mild nationalism”, which combined patronage-based policies favouring Kyrgyz in the political sphere, with the promotion of ethnic mythologies, such as Manas, which attempted to forge a national ideology based on the historical supremacy of the Kyrgyz.³⁰ Nationalist policies were intensified during Bakyev’s reign. Due to mass migration of ethnic Russians back to Russia, Uzbeks became the largest ethnic minority in Kyrgyzstan, and thus the target of nationalist policies. In addition, the Tulip Revolution empowered aggressive nationalists and created new allegiances in the South, rendering alliances with the Uzbeks unnecessary.

Fourth, the Provisional Government counted on the local Uzbek community to drive out Bakiyev and his followers, who were deeply entrenched in southern Kyrgyzstan. The instrumentalization of Uzbek communities, traditionally apolitical, created a climate of fear among the Kyrgyz. Their fears were “fuelled by the idea of Kyrgyz control over the state slipping away,”³¹ a particularly prevalent sentiment between April and June 2010.³²

There are a number of proximate causes linked to the conflict. These include the role of the media before and after the 2010 violence. Those who have analysed statements released

²⁵ For example, in the mid-1990s, Uzbeks occupied only 4.7% of regional posts in Osh. See: Lubin, N. et al. 1999. *Calming the Ferghana Valley: Development and Dialogue in the Heart of Central Asia*. New York, NY: The Century Foundation Press. Available at: <https://archive.org/details/calmingferghanav00nanc>.

²⁶ Commercio M. 2017. Structural violence and horizontal inequalities: conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan, *Politics, Groups, and Identities*, pp.7. Available at: <http://www.uvm.edu/~mcommerc/PGI2017.pdf>.

²⁷ Collins K. 2011. Kyrgyzstan’s Latest Revolution, *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 22, Number 3. Johns Hopkins University Press. pp.152. Available at: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/444764/pdf>.

²⁸ Sikorskaya, I. 2015. A brief history of conflict in Kyrgyzstan, *Peace Insight*. Available at: <https://www.peaceinsight.org/blog/2015/09/a-brief-history-of-conflict-in-kyrgyzstan/>.

²⁹ Ismailbekova, A. 2013. Coping strategies: public avoidance, migration, and marriage in the aftermath of the Osh conflict, *Fergana Valley. Nationalities Papers: Belgrade and Beyond: Reading the Nation through Serbian Cityscapes*, 41(1), pp.109–127. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00905992.2012.748736>.

³⁰ Commercio, M. 2017. Structural violence and horizontal inequalities: conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan, pp.6. and Marat, E. 2008. *Imagined Past, Uncertain Future: The Creation of National Ideologies in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*. *Problems of Post-Communism* 55 (1), pp.15. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/36996515/Imagined_Past_Uncertain_Future_The_Creation_of_National_Ideologies_in_Kyrgyzstan_and_Tajikistan.

³¹ Gullette, D. and Heathershaw, H. 2015. The Affective Politics of Sovereignty: Reflecting on the 2010 Conflict in Kyrgyzstan. *Nationalities Papers* 43 (1): pp.122. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00905992.2014.970526?journalCode=cnap20>.

³² Laruelle M. 2012. The paradigm of nationalism in Kyrgyzstan. *Evolving narrative, the sovereignty issue, and political agenda*. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. 45 (1–2): pp.39–49. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0967067X12000037>.

by the media contend that certain media outlets in Kyrgyzstan played a crucial role in creating negative public image of minorities.³³ In addition, Kathleen Collins suggests that local bosses and community leaders supported protests and uprising to benefit their particular position.³⁴ One can also note the role that endemic corruption had on the political regime and its ability to provide basic services. Ambassador Andrew Tesoriere, the Head of the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, commented: “Stamping out corruption in Kyrgyzstan is widely recognized as absolutely pivotal to create a fresh start for the national economy, for national institutions and public trust in them”.³⁵

Security Causes. Southern Kyrgyzstan has faced various security threats including terrorist attacks, poorly controlled state borders and an inability of the government to claim a monopoly on the use of force. The role of domestic security actors, especially law enforcement bodies, and their limited capability to fulfil their functions in a professional and impartial way can be cited as one cause. Collins states that “most of the violence [related to the 2010 Osh Conflict] originated with the regime and involved the deliberate use of lethal force against mostly unarmed civilians.”³⁶ Laruelle Marlene concurs that “Uzbekophobia” permeated Kyrgyz security forces and led them to use unjustified and excessive force and discrimination in their everyday interactions with Uzbek minorities.³⁷ Post-conflict investigations suggest that Kyrgyz security forces organized attacks against Osh’s Uzbek neighborhoods of Cheremushki, Shait-Tepe, Shark.³⁸ Allegations that Kyrgyz forces handed out weapons to civilian mobs,³⁹ who then went on to persecute Uzbek minorities, also exist. Human Rights Watch claims that after the conflict, persecution against Uzbek minorities by Kyrgyz security forces persisted, with arbitrary arrests, and ill-treatment of detainees.⁴⁰

Socio-Economic and Environmental Causes. It is important to contextualise the 2010 conflict within the events of the 1990s. In June 1990, socio-economic problems in Kyrgyzstan became more pronounced.⁴¹ This coincided with a period during which Uzbek and Kyrgyz nations were in the process of formulating their national identities. Land distribution (especially in Fergana valley) served as a catalyst for violence in the 1990s. The right to own land ownership was demanded by those living in rural areas – including ethnic Kyrgyz living in Frunze (Bishkek) and Osh. However, the then Soviet law prohibited the allocation of land for individual use in the capital areas of Soviet Republics. Dissatisfaction among the Kyrgyz youth living in Frunze (Bishkek) consequently grew. The economic depression following independence only heightened these tensions.

It is worth noting that preceding the Osh Conflict, ethnic Kyrgyz enjoyed political power in the south, and Uzbek’s had economic power, leading both to feel “relatively deprived”. This structural violence is argued to have set the stage for the 2010 Osh conflict.⁴² Khaug argues

³³ Sikorskaya I. 2015. A brief history of conflict in Kyrgyzstan.

³⁴ OSCE. 2011. OSCE Centre in Bishkek supports debate on preventing corruption. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/bishkek/77173>

³⁵ OSCE Centre in Bishkek supports debate on preventing corruption. 2011. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/bishkek/77173>.

³⁶ Collins, K. 2011. Kyrgyzstan’s Latest Revolution. pp.159.

³⁷ Laruelle, M. 2012. The paradigm of nationalism in Kyrgyzstan. Evolving narrative, the sovereignty issue, and political agenda. pp.44.

³⁸ Solvang O. and Nesitat A. 2010. Where is the Justice? Interethnic Violence in Southern Kyrgyzstan and its Aftermath. Human Rights Watch. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/08/16/where-justice/interethnic-violence-southern-kyrgyzstan-and-its-aftermath>.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Markedonov, S. 2010. A reflection of the past in Kyrgyzstan violence. Russia Beyond. Available at: https://www.rbth.com/articles/2010/06/16/reflection_of_past_kyrgyzstan_violence.html.

⁴² Østby, G. 2008. Polarization, Horizontal Inequalities and Violent Civil Conflict. *Journal of Peace Research* 45 (2): pp.143–162. Available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0022343307087169>.

that the roots of the Osh Conflict can be traced to historic economic and political inequalities between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz, with the former controlling farming and commerce, and the later cattle breeding. In the context of the post-Soviet Union, clan politics exacerbated this division, with Uzbeks being further excluded from the political arena, while the collapse of collective farming further excluded Kyrgyz from the economic arena.⁴³

Kyrgyzstan was one of the first former Soviet republic to implement free-market economic reforms. In 2010, the country adopted a new constitution and transitioned to a parliamentary democracy.⁴⁴ However, a number of underlying structural issues persisted, with slow, unstable economic growth, and economic disparities,⁴⁵ creating social discontent and political unrest.⁴⁶ These resulted in uneven access to economic opportunities (e.g. private sector investment), a weak government, and a lack of rule of law. A shortage of skilled labour and uneven access to quality education; unreliable electricity supply, amongst other factors, also played a role. To this day, endemic corruption remains one of the key obstacles for conducting business in Kyrgyzstan, and thus for its economic growth.

Regional causes. While it is difficult to identify a direct cause of the conflict, clashes between Uzbek and Kyrgyz communities might be considered in the light of relationship between the governments of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The historic border dispute between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan centers on Uzbekistan's unilateral demarcation of the border and its alleged seizure of large tracts of Kyrgyz agricultural land which had been lent to Uzbekistan for temporary usage during the Soviet period.⁴⁷ While these historic grievances may have played a role in the conflict, it is important to note that during the 1990 and 2010 conflicts the government of Uzbekistan was instrumental in trying to diffuse tensions,⁴⁸ preventing Uzbeks from flocking to Osh, and accepting thousands of Uzbek refugees in 2010.

It is worth noting that the region has always been short of water, creating tensions between states.⁴⁹ The UN points to competition for water resources between farmers, municipal authorities, and industry as both a cause and driver of drinking water scarcity in southern Kyrgyzstan.⁵⁰ The newly created borders set community against community in their attempt to access the water, resulting in violent clashes. Regional disputes over water resources have also involved Uzbekistan, who opposed a plan to build a hydroelectric power plant at the Naryn River, claiming that it would restrict water flows into Uzbekistan. The poor man-

⁴³ Khaug, V. 2004. Demograficheskie Tendentsii, Formirovanie Natsii i Mezhetnicheskie Otnosheniia v Kyrgyzstane. In *Naselenie Kyrgyzstana*, 109–157. Bishkek: Natsional'nyi statisticheskii komitet Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki. pp.135.

⁴⁴ Some theorists contend that Kyrgyzstan remains a de-facto parliamentary-presidential republic. For example, see: O'Connell, J and Kiparisov, P. 2018. *Kyrgyzstan Value Chain Gap Analysis*. pp.3. Available at: <http://www.fao.org/3/i9199en/i9199EN.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Borthakur, A. 2017. An Analysis of the Conflict in the Ferghana Valley. *Asian Affairs*, Volume 48, 2017 - Issue 2. pp.334-350. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/03068374.2017.1313591?src=recsys>.

⁴⁶ These relate to the liberalization of Kyrgyzstan's economy, opening it up to trade with outside countries, and leading to it becoming reliant on Russia for remittances. These factors made Kyrgyzstan particularly vulnerable to events beyond its borders. For more information, see: O'Connell, J and Kiparisov, P. 2018. *Kyrgyzstan Value Chain Gap Analysis*. pp.17.

⁴⁷ Toktogulov, B. 2018. The Failure of Settlement on Kyrgyz-Uzbek Border Issues: a Lack of Diplomacy?. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328857542_The_Failure_of_Settlement_on_Kyrgyz-Uzbek_Border_Issues_a_Lack_of_Diplomacy.

⁴⁸ Akiner S. 2010. *Kyrgyzstan 2010: Conflict and Context*. Available at: http://silkroadstudies.org/resources/2016-Akiner-Kyrgyzstan_2010-Conflict-Context.pdf.

⁴⁹ O'Connell, J and Kiparisov, P. 2018. *Kyrgyzstan Value Chain Gap Analysis*. pp.22.

⁵⁰ Douaud, A and Ismanova D. 2014. The water crisis dividing Kyrgyzstan. *Equal Times*. Available at: <https://www.equaltimes.org/the-water-crisis-dividing?lang=fr#.Xqnu2PZuIdl>.

agement of hydropower production has led to electricity shortages throughout the country. In addition, international water disputes continue.⁵¹

3. Security actors

The national security system of Kyrgyzstan is primarily composed of statutory security bodies mandated to ensure national security. During the conflict in 2010, government agencies were unable to control the spread of violence and were accused of “inaction” in failing to quell the unrest. Moreover, Kyrgyz security actors also allegedly facilitated attacks against ethnic Uzbeks. Collins mentions that “Videos emerged showing Kyrgyz military and security forces failing to intervene in defense of Uzbek victims, and in some cases even assisting their attackers”.⁵² On the other hand, allegations also exist that groups of ethnic Uzbeks stole military uniforms, vehicles, and munitions and proceeded to stage the attacks in order to incite ethnic conflict.⁵³ In addition, Kyrgyz government sources claim to have arrested 20 snipers who were supporting Kyrgyz mobs, although no details were provided on their identity or the outcomes of their arrest.⁵⁴ Records from regional hospital in Osh seem to suggest the truth lies somewhere in the middle, with the chief doctors claiming to have treated roughly the same number of Uzbek and Kyrgyz during the conflict.⁵⁵

According to a report of the Human Rights Watch, during the conflict security actors were:

- Selective in their support and protection: they responded to the threat presented by Uzbeks, but not by Kyrgyz, even after it became clear that Kyrgyz mobs posed an imminent threat. They did not adopt any measures to protect the Uzbek population. Testimonies from members of the security forces suggest that some government forces also facilitated attacks on Uzbek villages.⁵⁶
- Unprepared to respond to civic unrest and communal violence: due to poor training and the use of outdated equipment. In contrast, the attackers were well prepared, both in terms of their size and the equipment they carried.
- Responsible for human rights abuses: There were allegations of torture in custody, arbitrary arrests (mostly arrests of Uzbeks) and ill-treatment. Daily raids were reported in Uzbek villages, with the security forces refusing to explain why they were entering civilian’s houses. Reports also suggest police officials demanded substantial bribes from family members (ranging from US\$100 to \$10,000) for the release of detainees.

There is some information on activities that have been undertaken by the Kyrgyz security actors by category.

⁵¹ FAO. Kyrgyzstan. Aquastat. Available at: http://www.fao.org/nr/water/aquastat/countries_regions/KGZ/KGZ-CP_eng.pdf.

⁵² Journal of Democracy. 2011. Kyrgyzstan’s Latest Revolution | Journal Of Democracy. Available at: <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/kyrgyzstans-latest-revolution/>.

⁵³ RFERL. 2 July 2010. Kyrgyzstan: Anatomy Of A Conflict. Available at: https://www.rferl.org/a/Kyrgyzstan_Anatomy_Of_A_Conflict/2089464.html.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch. 2010. Interethnic Violence In Southern Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2010/08/16/where-justice/interethnic-violence-southern-kyrgyzstan-and-its-aftermathe-southern-kyrgyzstan-and-its-aftermath>.

Security Sector Mapping

Kyrgyz Armed Forces	The Armed Forces controlled all roads that led to the conflict zone, and checkpoints were established by the army to control the movement of the population and to prevent the flow of additional supporters to those fighting in Osh. ⁵⁷ By the end of the conflict (around the 15th of June), the Army had moved military equipment into the main towns of Osh, Batken, and Jalal-Abad. There is no information on which army unit took part and whether the National Guard also participated.
State Internal Affairs Agencies	The police attempted to bring the fighting under control by firing warning shots, and detained people accused of causing unrest. However, these measures were largely unsuccessful. Human-rights defenders allege that police in the south regularly failed to protect ethnic Uzbeks, the families of accused persons (most of whom were Uzbek), their lawyers, and even judges from threats and attacks by Kyrgyz communities. In 2010, Kyrgyz police arrested Azimjan Askarov, a prominent Uzbek human-rights defender, charging him with instigating the conflict in June 2010, who remained imprisoned until his death in 2020.
The State Prosecutor's Office	While there is very limited information, it also appears that the Prosecutor's Office was unable to provide effective support to society and uphold justice: Collins mentioned that "Widespread malfeasance in the Procuracy, courts, and police, along with irresponsible statements by some Kyrgyz-nationalist politicians, has made the ethnic divide critically worse". ⁵⁸ However, the procedures were changed in 2010, after a new Constitution was adopted in Kyrgyzstan.
The State National Security Agency (the State Committee for National Security)	No information
Informal Armed Groups	The population of southern Kyrgyzstan organized local self-defense bodies – referred to as "people's squads". During the riots, these squads established roadblocks, inspecting passing cars and patrolled the streets. Testimonies suggest that the members of these groups were not defined by their ethnicity, but rather their place of residence, meaning the groups were multi-ethnic in nature. ⁵⁹

4. Assessment of the state of fragility

There is currently no active violence linked to the events of 2010. Evidence suggests that the Osh conflict is fluctuating between Normalisation⁶⁰ and Reconciliation.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Российская газета. 2010. Спустя 20 Лет В Киргизии Снова Произошла Страшная Резня. Available at: <<https://rg.ru/2010/06/17/osh.html>> [Accessed 6 May 2020].

⁵⁸ Journal of Democracy. 2011. Kyrgyzstan's Latest Revolution | Journal Of Democracy. Available at: <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/kyrgyzstans-latest-revolution/>.

⁵⁹ Козюлин, В., Ошский конфликт: драма с продолжением Народные дружины, ПИР-Центр. Available at: http://pircenter.org/kosdata/page_doc/p2232_1.pdf. After Kyrgyz authorities began formally supporting the groups, they were given official status and registered by the police. In addition to these groups, various paramilitary groups emerged under the direction of different political parties. These groups allowed different political parties to increase their support base and engage in agitation against their political opponents under the pretense of ensuring the safety of citizens.

⁶⁰ Normalization is defined as the phase in which active violence has ceased, but core issues remain unresolved. It is the second-to-last phase of a conflict.

⁶¹ Reconciliation is the last phrase of a conflict. It is defined as a process through which grievances related to the conflict are resolved through measures such as development activities, community projects, payment of compensation money, mixing between cultural groups, reopening of schools, and hospitals, free movement, return of refugees, disarmament, and reconstruction. A key component of this phase is transitional justice, which consists of judicial and non-judicial measures implemented in order to redress legacies of human rights

A wave of investigations and accusations continued after the end of the conflict in 2010. On 28 October 2011, the Jalal-Abad City Court sentenced in absentia the leaders of the Uzbek community Kadyrzhan Batyrov and Inom Abdurasulov to life imprisonment, finding them guilty of organizing riots and participating in separatist activities. Four others were sentenced to between 20 and 6 years in prison. All the accused left Kyrgyzstan immediately after the June 2010 events and were put on an international wanted list. A special working group was created in 2010, which included representatives of law enforcement agencies, as well as the Prosecutor General's Office of Kyrgyzstan. In 2012, the working group produced a final report on the analysis of the causes of the conflict. According to extracts from the report (it was not made publicly available),⁶² the reasons for the conflict lie in the "traditional isolation and closed nature of the residence of the Uzbek population" in the south of Kyrgyzstan, and its "insufficient integration into Kyrgyz society". The working group's report also emphasized that "open calls of individual leaders of the Uzbek ethnic community to promote separatist ideas at numerous meetings and rallies" played a significant role in triggering the conflict.

On 23 October 2014, the Osh City Court also sentenced Kadyrzhan Batyrov and Inom Abdurasulov to life imprisonment in absentia as organizers of mass riots. Karamat Abdullaeva, former chairman of the Osh regional branch of the Congress of Women of Kyrgyzstan, was also sentenced to 16 years in prison.

Politically, regionalism remains an important organizing principle for national politics,⁶³ suggesting that, at a minimum, the perceived division between southern Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken regions and the political center of Bishkek remains as a legacy of the 1990 and 2010 conflicts. This can be further assessed in light of bilateral relations between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. An existing point of contention between both countries related to the border dispute is almost solved. In 2017, checkpoints along the border were reopened and countries entered into discussions about border land exchange, as a response to multiple violent border confrontations.⁶⁴ Both countries agreed to a 'land swap' in the Osh region in September 2019,⁶⁵ marking significant progress in talks.⁶⁶ Kyrgyzstan agreed to relinquish 407 hectares,⁶⁷ including the Kerkidan reservoir, in return for an equivalent area of land near the village of Gulbaar, in the Aravan district of Osh region.⁶⁸ This successful exchange has inspired Kyrgyzstan to turn to land swaps in the Ferghana valley as a policy for solving border issues, indicated by their initiation of land swap negotiations with Tajik officials in December 2019.⁶⁹ Despite this, disputes and uncertainties over border areas remain.⁷⁰ If

abuses, such as criminal prosecutions and truth commissions.

⁶² Tass.ru. 2015. Межнациональные столкновения на юге Киргизии в 2010 году. Досье. Available at: <https://tass.ru/info/2033902>.

⁶³ Eurasianet. 2019. Internet provides new space for Kyrgyzstan's north-south divide. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/internet-provides-new-space-for-kyrgyzstans-north-south-divide>.

⁶⁴ Radio Free Europe. 2017. 'It Changes Lives': Families Welcome Reopening Of Kyrgyz, Uzbek Border Posts. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/kyrgyzstan-uzbekistan-reopening-border-crossings-mirziyoev/28735887.html>.

⁶⁵ Eurasianet. 2019. Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan exchange land in historic settlement. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/kyrgyzstan-uzbekistan-exchange-land-in-historic-settlement>.

⁶⁶ Aljazeera. 2019. Will a Central Asian border dispute be resolved soon? Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/central-asian-border-dispute-resolved-soon-191010152620004.html>.

⁶⁷ Trend. 2019. Land exchange between Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan confirmed. Available at: <https://en.trend.az/casia/uzbekistan/3117583.html>.

⁶⁸ Eurasianet. 2019. Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan exchange land in historic settlement. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/kyrgyzstan-uzbekistan-exchange-land-in-historic-settlement>.

⁶⁹ Radio Free Europe. 2020. Kyrgyz, Tajik Officials Agree To Swap Lands to Solve Border Issues. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/kyrgyz-tajik-officials-agree-to-swap-lands-to-solve-border-issues/30378214.html>

⁷⁰ Institute for War & Peace Reporting. 2019. Settling Kyrgyz-Tajik Border Conflicts. Available at: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/settling-kyrgyz-tajik-border-conflicts>.

not addressed by central authorities, these may yet ignite new episodes of conflict, leaving local populations in the Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken regions vulnerable.⁷¹

Interviews with local communities suggest that inter-ethnic relations between Kyrgyz and Uzbek have however improved, with more acceptance of Uzbeks in public space,⁷² and a desire not to repeat the violence of 2010.⁷³ Despite this, the 2010 conflict does appear to have left a lasting mark. One indicator of this legacy appears in the treatment of leading figures from the 2010 conflict. According to a decision taken by governmental organs in Bishkek, the body of Uzbek leader Kadyrjan Batyrov was not allowed to be repatriated to Jalal-Abad after his death in Ukraine in December 2018.⁷⁴ Kyrgyz authorities defended their decision on the basis that his repatriation might trigger ethnic tensions in the south.⁷⁵

Language policy is a further area that reflects tensions dating to the 2010 violence. According to a December 2019 UN report on Kyrgyzstan, the Special Rapporteur on minority issues highlighted education in minority languages as an area for improvement.⁷⁶ Although Kyrgyzstan developed a 2019-2021 Human Rights Action Plan that addresses the issues of education in minority languages and the under-representation of minorities in areas of public life, it is worth noting that in March 2014, the option to use the Uzbek language in national high school examinations, necessary for access to university, was revoked.⁷⁷ This shortage of education in Uzbek language, as a result of the closure of multiple Uzbek primary schools⁷⁸ and the only two Uzbek universities⁷⁹ in the years following the 2010 conflict, hint at a lingering mistrust between Kyrgyz and Uzbek populations and establishes a point of possible contention.

Active programs to encourage unity between Kyrgyz and Uzbek populations, including a UNICEF project targeting youth cooperation in the Jalal-Abad, Batken, and Osh regions,⁸⁰ would suggest that the international community continues to view the tension created by the 2010 conflict as a possible point of concern.

5. Confidence building and conflict resolution initiatives

Following the 2010 conflict in southern Kyrgyzstan, there have been a magnitude of projects aimed at reconciliation, peacebuilding, confidence building, and conflict prevention. These include initiatives from the Kyrgyz government, other national governments, international organizations, civil society actors, and other agencies. Between 2011-2013, these included

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Institute for War & Peace Reporting. 2019. Bringing Kyrgyz and Uzbek Communities Together. Available at : <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/bringing-kyrgyz-and-uzbek-communities-together>.

⁷³ Lenta.ru. 2015. «Все боятся повторения тех событий». Available at: <https://lenta.ru/articles/2015/06/11/osh/>

⁷⁴ Rus.ozodlik.org. 2018. Кадыржан Батыров не будет похоронен на родине. Available at: <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29638728.html>.

⁷⁵ Rus.ozodlik.org. 2018. Кадыржан Батыров не будет похоронен на родине. Available at: <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/29638728.html>.

⁷⁶ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. 6-17 December 2019. United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Ferdinand de Varennes, Visit to Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25422&LangID=E>.

⁷⁷ Radio Free Europe. 2014. Kyrgyz Abandon Uzbek for Secondary School Graduation Test. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbekistan-kyrgyzstan-language-education-graduation/25296082.html>.

⁷⁸ Eurasianet. 2013. Kyrgyzstan: Uzbek-Language Schools Disappearing. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/kyrgyzstan-uzbek-language-schools-disappearing>.

⁷⁹ Radio Free Europe. 2010. Kyrgyz Government Closes Uzbek Businessman's University. Available at: https://www.rferl.org/a/Kyrgyz_Government_Closes_Uzbek_Businessmans_University/2131398.html.

⁸⁰ Unicef. 2019. 'Продвижение согласия и сотрудничества молодежи Кыргызстана и Узбекистана'. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/ru/Пресс-релизы/продвижение-согласия-и-сотрудничества-молодежи-кыргызстана-и-узбекистана>.

key peacebuilding projects conducted by ACTED, EFCA, OSCE, United Nations, USAID, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, International Alert, and IREX.⁸¹

Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission⁸²

Following the events of 2010 in southern Kyrgyzstan, an Independent International Commission of Inquiry was established upon request of the then Kyrgyz President, Roza Otunbayeva. Dr Kimmo Kiljunen, Special Representative for Central Asia, OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, was requested to coordinate the process to establish the commission. Its mandate was to investigate the facts and circumstances relevant to incidents that took place in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, qualify the violations and crimes under international law, determine responsibilities and make recommendations, particularly on accountability measures, so as to ensure the non-repetition of the violations and to contribute towards peace, stability, and reconciliation. The Commission found ‘that the provisional government that replaced Bakiyev had failed to address the deterioration in ethnic relations in the south and, once the conflict began, its security forces failed to intervene adequately and may have been complicit in violence against Uzbeks’. It concluded that the violence against Uzbeks does not qualify as either ‘war crimes or genocide’, but aspects of it might constitute ‘crimes against humanity’.⁸³ Part of the mandate of the Commission was to make recommendations targeted towards the non-repetition of the violations. The Commission made recommendations covering reconciliation, accountability, and impunity. The recommendations in part V of the report are extensive and address many structural problems within the Kyrgyz society, particularly in the southern regions, and cannot be summarized here. Some nevertheless stand out, including:

- R.20: The Government should cooperate with the OSCE Police Advisory Group in Kyrgyzstan, headquartered in Osh, to enhance the professionalism and credibility of the security forces;
- R.25: The Government should consider seeking international assistance in the conduct of investigations and prosecutions arising out of the events of June 2010.⁸⁴ This assistance could encompass training for investigators, prosecutors, lawyers, and judges;
- R.29: The Government should recognise that violence against women is a serious offence, create a more gender-sensitive law enforcement response and ensure the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence in southern Kyrgyzstan;
- R.37: The Government should request the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, which has a local office in Kyrgyzstan, to undertake an evaluation of the progress that has been made and of the challenges that remain in the implementation of this report. The evaluation process should begin six months after the final publica-

⁸¹ Megoran N., Satybaldieva E., Lewis D., Heathershaw J. 2014. Peacebuilding and Reconciliation Projects in Southern Kyrgyzstan – Working Paper. Available at: <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/SIPRI-OSF-no2WP.pdf>.

⁸² Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission. Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry into the Event in Southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Full_Report_490.pdf.

⁸³ Based on recommendations R.27 and R.28 CAH is not incorporated in Criminal Code of Kyrgyzstan and neither is Kyrgyzstan a party to the Rome Statute, nor does it accept its jurisdiction as a non-party state, therefore this finding carries no legal implications. Megoran N., Satybaldieva E., Lewis D., Heathershaw J. 2014. Evaluating Peacebuilding Interventions in Southern Kyrgyzstan, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep19150.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A1cfceea3895b-cf4bdb118d8f862cfd8a>, p.2.

⁸⁴ The KIC noted that the EU has an established program currently operative in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

tion of the report and could also involve the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities and other relevant international bodies.

The Kyrgyz government, in the follow-up comments to the report, challenged its methodology, validity and findings including the occurrence of crimes against humanity.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, it did consider the recommendations and established a special Commission for the implementation and monitoring of the discharge of the recommendations.⁸⁶ It also noted that it will continue to collaborate with institutions of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities on a wide range of issues, including assessment of progress in implementation of the KIC recommendations.⁸⁷

National Government

A package of measures was adopted in response to the 2010 violence. Decisions previously made by the Kyrgyz government and authorities in Osh and Jalal-Abad Oblast were re-visited several times by groups of officials, including the Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Judicial Council. Meetings were held with the participation of chairpersons of courts, prosecutors at all levels, departments of internal affairs, and the defendants' and victims' attorneys. Judicial proceedings were moved to venues outside the conflict zone (TashKumyr, Nookan district of Jalal-Abad Oblast, etc.). To assure impartial consideration of criminal cases, judges from other regions of the country were assigned to the southern regions. Protection was organized for the defendants' attorneys and the defendants themselves.⁸⁸

Judicial reforms were also implemented following the new 2010 Constitution which instituted the Council for selection of judges.⁸⁹ On 12 April 2011, the Attorney General issued an order to strengthen the prosecutor's supervision over observance of human rights and freedoms. The principal requirement of this order was the immediate response to each case of receiving information about torture and other inhuman, cruel, or degrading treatment by law enforcement officers.⁹⁰ Along with other governmental reforms, these were instituted to increase and reinstate public confidence within the Kyrgyz government and public agencies.

The Kyrgyz government also engaged in initiatives to facilitate dialogue with civil society. The Interior Ministry established an independent public supervisory board consisting of representatives of nongovernmental organizations, human rights activists, war veterans, and police experts. A similar board was developed at the State Committee of National Security. The "Association of Female Police Officers" was created in order to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement as well as the social protection of female police officers and to enhance their potential'.⁹¹

Given the criticisms of the civil society and human rights organizations in respect of the human rights of individuals detained and accused of crimes during the June events, access rights were granted to human rights activists, the media, and representatives of international organizations to the temporary detention facilities of the Interior Ministry and to the pre-trial detention facilities of the State Bureau of Prisons and of the State Committee of

⁸⁵ Comments by the Government of Kyrgyzstan in response to the report of the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission into the events in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010. Available at: <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/KG-comments-final-ENG.pdf>.

⁸⁶ Comments by the Government of Kyrgyzstan in response to the report of the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission into the events in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, para. 94.

⁸⁷ Ibid. Para. 109.

⁸⁸ Ibid. Para. 77.

⁸⁹ Ibid. Para. 80.

⁹⁰ Ibid. Para. 88.

⁹¹ Ibid. Para. 83.

National Security.⁹² A department of ethnic and religious policy interacting with civil society was established within the President's administration. Within each of the regional and local administrations, especially in the city of Osh as well as in Osh and Jalal-Abad Oblasts, official positions were created in order to monitor the situation and implement policies in the area of inter-ethnic relations. The role of regional advisory committees was enhanced to involve the local leaders in the dialogue, as well as the committees on conflict prevention that were created in all populated areas with the active participation of the NGOs. Through these advisory bodies, a wide-ranging public consultation on the planning and implementation of local development plans with the participation of all communities was carried out.⁹³

International Organizations

Cooperation in confidence building initiatives with international organizations predominantly involves the United Nations, in particular the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the OSCE, and EU-funded projects.

United Nations

Between 2010 and 2013, the OHCHR mission to Osh – (OMO) – ROCA (Regional Office for Central Asia) implemented four projects - two funded by the UN Peace Building Fund (PBF) and two by the European Union (EU) under the Instrument for Stability (IfS) – and participated as well in the implementation of two other joint projects.⁹⁴ Additionally, the “Early warning for early response to ethnic conflict” project was implemented with the UNDP support.⁹⁵

A peace project funded by the UN Peace and Recovery Facility targeted youth and female population in Kyrgyzstan, having raised awareness on the importance of local conflict analysis, gender-based violence, as well as respect for human rights and diversity in Kyrgyzstan. This was a wide-ranging initiative promoting awareness, conducting workshops and classes on the inclusion of women (especially young women) in all aspects of public life and economic activity, focusing on ethnic divisions and building their rights regardless of ethnic origin. Under this project over two thousand secondary school students were taught how to conduct conflict analysis and how to address its causes by working with local governmental bodies and law enforcement.⁹⁶ Women were also targeted as efficient peace actors. The UN set up the Women's Peace Network, represented by 20 Women Peace Committees in 3 southern provinces.⁹⁷

Another project in the area, funded by the UNs Peacebuilding fund, promoted respectful relationships and increased livelihood skills for young people in remote villages. Under its “My Safe and Peaceful School” project, a large-scale confidence building initiative reached

⁹² Ibid. Para. 92.

⁹³ Comments by the Government of Kyrgyzstan in response to the report of the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission into the events in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, para. 104.

⁹⁴ OHCHR. Evaluation of the OHCHR Regional Office for Central Asia 2010-2013 – Final Report, 2014. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/AboutUs/Evaluation/RegionalOfficeCentralAsia.pdf>, p.6.

⁹⁵ Comments by the Government of Kyrgyzstan in response to the report of the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission into the events in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, para. 102.

⁹⁶ UN Women. 2017. Peace Project in Kyrgyz Republic Teaches Respect for Rights and Diversity. eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/12/peace-project-in-kyrgyzstan-teaches-respect-for-rights-and-diversity. See also: <https://eca.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2017/08/feature-kyrgyzstan-youth-at-the-forefront-of-building-peaceful-communities>.

⁹⁷ Megoran N., Satybaldieva E., Lewis D., and Heathershaw J. 2014. Evaluating Peacebuilding Interventions in Southern Kyrgyzstan, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep19150.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A1cfceea3895bcf4bdb118d8f862cfd8a>, p.3.

over 15,000 young people, teaching them how to prevent violence, promote gender equality and build tolerance of diversity in their communities.⁹⁸

In 2011, the UNDP with support from the Soros Foundation-Kyrgyzstan, launched 117 projects, aiming to revitalize the southern territories of Kyrgyzstan and bring peace through restoration. In continuation of UNDPs 2010 projects in the area aimed at providing aid and assistance to victims of the June 2010 Osh clashes, these further initiatives provided support for the renovation of schools, kinder-gardens, and other educational institutions, as well as medical institutions, libraries, and other community areas, and further focused on building and renovating key water installations and roads.⁹⁹

In 2015, the Cross-border Cooperation for Sustainable Peace and Development (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan) project was launched, funded by the UN Peacebuilding Fund and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. The project was “designed to address conflict drivers in unstable border areas by: strengthening cooperation between security providers and communities; improving community infrastructure and natural resource managements; increasing levels of inter-ethnic tolerance and understanding amongst youth; women’s active involvement in design and implementation of cross-border initiatives; conflict monitoring; and, Community dialogue platforms.”¹⁰⁰ After some initial challenges and delays due to the sensitivity of cross-border undertakings and issues such as absence of demarcation in certain areas of the border, the project seemed to show promising results. Its implementation involved the UN Resident Coordinators from both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as well as both UN Country teams engaged in frequent collaboration. Among other things, it contributed significantly to “reducing tensions over water resources, as well as issues related to border crossing rules, and attitudes towards one another.”¹⁰¹ The project also established a community-based conflict monitoring system named ‘TRACTION’, and made important steps towards reducing cross-border tensions over shared natural resources.

OSCE

The Government of Kyrgyzstan, together with the OSCE, implemented the “Public Safety Initiative” project with the goal of supporting the Ministry of Internal Affairs in its efforts to increase the capability and transparency of law enforcement. The main task of this initiative was to increase the confidence of citizens, including members of ethnic minorities, in law enforcement.¹⁰² In 2012, the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, in partnership with Public Foundation IRET, organized a series of mini projects on promoting tolerance and conflict prevention, which were carried out by seven mediator teams in Osh province and eight in Osh city. The activities included meetings, contests and working with school students.¹⁰³ As a report from the OSCE states: “In Osh and Jalal-Abad provinces, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) trained 750 community leaders as mediators. In addition, the OSCE set up 11 Youth Councils around Osh to encourage inter-ethnic tolerance and reconciliation among young people. The office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National

⁹⁸ Final Evaluation Report on the ‘Building a Constituency for Peace’ project available for download here: <https://gate.unwomen.org/EvaluationDocument/Download?evaluationDocumentID=9002>.

⁹⁹ Eshieva T. Sept. 2011, Renewing Kyrgyzstan’s South. Open Society Foundations. Available at: www.opensocietyfoundations.org/voices/renewing-kyrgyzstan-s-south.

¹⁰⁰ Kaye J.L. June 2018. What Works in UN Resident Coordinator-Led Conflict Prevention: Lessons from the Field. United Nations University Centre for Policy Research. P. 9-10. Available at: i.unu.edu/media/cpr.unu.edu/attachment/2853/RC-Project-Kyrgyzstan.pdf.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. P. 9.

¹⁰² Comments by the Government of Kyrgyzstan in response to the report of the Kyrgyzstan Inquiry Commission into the events in southern Kyrgyzstan in June 2010, para. 85.

¹⁰³ OSCE Office in Bishkek. Osh City and Osh Province Mediator Teams to Conduct Mini-projects on Promoting Tolerance and Conflict Prevention, 12/06/2012-30/06/2012. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/bishkek/91166>.

Minorities organized a Regional School on Multilingual and Multicultural Education in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, from 18 to 22 November 2019, bringing together around 90 participants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Tajikistan to share experiences and build capacities in this field.”¹⁰⁴

EU funded TASK Consortium: “Conflict mitigation and peace building in Kyrgyzstan”

The consortium (ACTED, DCA, ICCO, DRC, HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation, International Alert, Save the Children) and its local partners, which included local community groups and law enforcement bodies, implemented the ‘Conflict Mitigation and Peace Building in Kyrgyzstan’ Programme. It focused on the mitigation of sources and factors of conflict and facilitation of durable peace and stability in Kyrgyzstan. The objective of the programme was to mitigate the drivers of conflict and resolve socio-economic issues. It worked in nearly 200 communities in south Kyrgyzstan, specifically in the Chuy, Osh, Jalal-Abad and Batken Oblasts. Projects targeted access to healthcare and work, also specifically aiming to increase exposure to women, young persons as well as small businesses and civil society. As part of the TASK programme mediation training was held for local actors and members of affected communities. A legal assistance programme was implemented to help entrepreneurs affected by the 2010 violence restore their documents and restart their businesses, with small grants provided. A psychosocial support component was implemented in 10 communities in 3 oblasts. Support to agricultural businesses was given through financial and capacity building initiatives.

ACTED

ACTED created a REACH electronic mapping programme of socio-economic indicators in 240 administrative areas, focusing on early conflict warning and prevention; peace through access to irrigation, and peacebuilding roundtables. The project ran from August 2014 to March 2015, and analysed data from local government, community leaders, as well as households in various villages and communities in Osh. ACTED visited a number of actors involved in peace building processes to collect primary data, involving field visits to areas in Osh, Jalal-Abad, and the Batken Oblast. The research was conducted under the framework of the EU-funded “Women Building Peace” project.¹⁰⁵

EU funded project: “Women Building Peace”

This project focused on supporting NGOs active in the area of gender empowerment with the aim of preventing conflict and promoting durable peace through the active inclusion of women in conflict-prevention and peace-building processes in Kyrgyzstan.

International Alert

Funded by the EU project Transition and Rehabilitation Alliance for Southern Kyrgyzstan (TASK), International Alert oversaw the training of local community mediators in Jalal-Abad province in Kyrgyzstan in the period 2011-2012. The trainings focused on conflict prevention and conflict de-escalation, specifically focusing on conflict analysis and resolution methods

¹⁰⁴ OSCE. 22 November 2019. OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities’ office organizes Regional School on Multilingual and Multicultural Education in Osh, Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/hcnm/439841>.

¹⁰⁵ The assessment data can be accessed in hard copies from ACTED Kyrgyzstan offices or by visiting REACH (www.reach-initiative.kg) where peace building initiatives are mapped/categorized at village, city and municipality levels.

as well as the steps to successful mediation. The program was designed to function as both an early warning, and an immediate community-based early response to potential clashes. The participants were members of a wider network of community mediators supported by the OSCE.¹⁰⁶ The training was eventually extended with seminars conducted in 4 provinces (3 in the south and 1 in the north).

Foundation for Tolerance International (Kyrgyzstan)

The Foundation for Tolerance International (FTI) is a local NGO based in Bishkek, which originally grew out of the “Conflict Transformation and Tolerance Education” project of the UNHCR. It is one of the initiators and heads the Ferghana Valley NGO network Dolina Mira, a collective of 25 regional NGOs in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.¹⁰⁷ The organisation implements a variety of programs each year. In 2010, FTI launched a 5 year project called “Preventing Conflict through Collective Action on Security in the Fergana Valley” (NB: roughly translated from Предотвращение конфликтов посредством совместного подхода к безопасности в Ферганской долине).¹⁰⁸ The project included a study on local community security, identifying existing groups, mechanisms, and initiatives which could be transformed into community safety working groups. Following this, it provided people-centred safety and security training to members of local security institutions (including law enforcement agencies and local authorities). This approach led to the creation of working groups consisting of various community representatives in 8 different communities located in Osh and Jalal-Abad, as well as the Kyrgyz-Tajik border in Batken and Sughd. The members of these working groups identified and prioritised critical security issues faced by residents of these communities. Joint action-plans were formed to address these issues, with its public awareness aiding the wider community to understand approaches aimed at meeting these security needs.

One of its other projects, on the “Developing the Capacity of Women and Youth in reducing the Effects of Conflict”¹⁰⁹ (NB: roughly translated from “Развитие потенциала женщин и молодежи в снижении воздействия конфликтов”), ran from 2010-2011 and focused on building and improving the skills of the local civilian population, as well as local government and civil society in the prevention and mitigation of conflict, and adequate response to the main causes of escalation. FTI states that the project brought about the creation of five (still functioning) committees on community funds, reduced short- and long-term escalation of conflict, and contributed to the development of the collective and collaborative planning of its communities with regard to security issues. It further refers to an increase in cooperation between non-governmental sector and local authorities, and reports an increase in women’s participation in decision-making at community level. FTI’s regional partners in Uzbekistan include the Association of Businesswomen in Uzbekistan, Mehr, and the Tashkent Enlightenment Center. In Tajikistan FTI collaborates with the Youth Initiative Center “Ittifok,” Institute of Cultural Relations Association for Scientific-Technical Intellectuals (ASTI), and the Public Committee on Democracy Progresses Development. In Kazakhstan, the FTI collaborates with the Tajik Institute of Cooperation for Development.

¹⁰⁶ International Alert, 3 Sept. 2012. Training Mediators in Kyrgyzstan. Available at: www.international-alert.org/ru/news/training-mediators-kyrgyzstan.

¹⁰⁷ For additional information, see: НПО ФД «Долины Мира» available at: <http://fti.kg/projects/set-npo-fd-doliny-mira/>.

¹⁰⁸ See at: <http://fti.kg/projects/predotvrashhenie-konfliktov-posredstvom-sovmestnogo-podhoda-k-bezopasnosti-v-ferganskoj-doline/> for more information on this project.

¹⁰⁹ See: <http://fti.kg/projects/razvitie-potenciala-zhenshin-i-molodezhi-v-snizhenii-vozdjeystviya-konfliktov/>.

APPENDIX

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW	
Geography	
Location and area	<p>Osh Region¹¹⁰ – located in southern Kyrgyzstan; borders Batken, Jalal-Abad, Naryn Regions, China, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The administrative center is Osh City. The region has an area of 29,200.</p> <p>Batken Region¹¹¹ – located in southwestern Kyrgyzstan; borders Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the Osh Region of Kyrgyzstan. The Administrative center is Batken city. The region has an area of 17,000 and contains multiple enclaves, belonging to neighbouring countries.</p> <p>Jalal-Abad Region¹¹² - located in southwestern Kyrgyzstan; borders Uzbekistan, and the Talas, Chuy Naryn, and Osh regions of Kyrgyzstan. The Administrative center is Jalal-Abad city. The region has an area of 33,700.</p> <p>There are four enclaves in Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken, Sokh, Shohimardan, Jani-Ayil (Halmiyon), and Chon Qora/Qalacha, all of which are administered by Uzbekistan, but surrounded by Kyrgyz territory.¹¹³</p>
Climate and terrain	<p>65% of the country's territory is mountainous, dominated by the Pamir and Tian Shan mountain ranges.¹¹⁴</p> <p>Osh Region – located in Ferghana Valley.</p> <p>Batken Region – northern part of the region is in Ferghana Valley, the southern border is mountainous; with Alay Mountains to the east and Turkestan Range to the west.¹¹⁵</p> <p>Ferghana Valley is a fertile oasis, irrigated by multiple rivers, with low precipitation and a continental climate (hot summers, cold winters).</p>

¹¹⁰ Национальный статистический комитет Кыргызской Республики, 2015. Ошская область. Available at: <http://www.stat.kg/ru/oshskaya-oblast/>.

¹¹¹ Национальный статистический комитет Кыргызской Республики, 2015. Баткенская область. Available at: <http://www.stat.kg/ru/batkenskaya-oblast/>.

¹¹² Национальный статистический комитет Кыргызской Республики, 2015. Джалал-Абадская область. Available at: <http://www.stat.kg/ru/dzhalal-abadskaya-oblast/>.

¹¹³ Radio Free Europe. 2017. Tug-Of-War: Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan Look To Finally Settle Decades-Old Border Dispute. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbekistan-kyrgyzstan-resolving-decades-old-border-dispute/28918059.html>.

¹¹⁴ The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC. 2013. Country Factsheet. Available at: https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/deza/en/documents/laender/factsheet-kirgistan_EN.pdf.

¹¹⁵ Investment Portal Kyrgyz Republic. 2018. Batken Region. Available at: <https://invest.gov.kg/batken/>.

Natural resources	<p>Main exports include gold, textiles, fruits, and vegetable. There is an abundance of water.¹¹⁶</p> <p>Osh Region – Agriculture (livestock, crops, hunting, and forestry). Coal reserves (low quality).¹¹⁷</p> <p>Batken Region¹¹⁸ – Agriculture (cattle), coal, silicon.¹¹⁹</p> <p>Jalal-Abad Region¹²⁰ – Water (hydroelectric power plants), mining (metal ores, granite, sandstone, gold-copper deposit, and antimony).¹²¹</p> <p>*Industrial production is heavily concentrated in Chui, Issyk-Kul, and Bishkek Regions (accounting for over 75% of industry in 2016).¹²²</p>
Environmental issues that can impact security	<p>Jalal-Abad Region - Water pollution,¹²³ soil degradation from excessive irrigation, dumping of waste, oil spills, and agrochemicals.¹²⁴</p> <p>Osh, Jalal-Abad, and Batken Regions – High risk of air contamination and low self-cleaning potential due to lack of winds and climate condition, deterioration of air quality,¹²⁵ but low pollutant emissions. Pollutant emissions largely come from transportation in cities, but in Jalal-Abad they are also caused by industrial plants and factors, such as Kyrgyz Petroleum Company, Kelechek JSC, Nur JSC, and tobacco processing factories Tura-Ai LLC and Aziz-Tabak LLC.¹²⁶ Southern Kyrgyzstan is also highly vulnerable to floods, droughts, earthquakes, and mudslides.¹²⁷</p>
Population	
Population and age structure	<p>Osh Region – most densely populated region in Kyrgyzstan</p> <p>1'314'863 inhabitants</p> <p>0 – 14 years: 35.12% (male: 51.15% female: 48.85%)</p> <p>15 – 64 years: 61.17% (male: 50.64% female: 49.36%)</p> <p>65 years and over: 3.72% (male: 42.95% female: 57.05%)</p> <p>Jalal-Abad Region- second largest region in terms of population size</p> <p>1'214'433 inhabitants</p> <p>0 – 14 years: 33.73% (male: 51.3% female: 48.7%)</p> <p>15 – 64 years: 62.52% (male: 50.26% female: 49.74%)</p> <p>65 years and over: 1.73% (male: 44.67% female: 55.33%)</p> <p>Batken Region</p> <p>525'125 inhabitants</p> <p>0 – 14 years: 34.81% (male: 51.43% female: 48.57%)</p> <p>15 – 64 years: 61.3% (male: 51.61% female: 48.39%)</p> <p>65 years and over: 3.88% (male: 44.48% female: 55.52%)¹²⁸</p>

¹¹⁶ The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC. 2013. Country Factsheet. Available at: https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/deza/en/documents/laender/factsheet-kirgistan_EN.pdf.

¹¹⁷ Komendantova N., Atakanov N., Chekirbaev U., Karabashov N., Zheenaliev Z., Rovenskaya E., Strelkovskii N., Sizov S., and Rodriguez F. S., 2018. Industrial Development of Kyrgyzstan: Regional Aspects. Working Paper 5. Available at: https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/2018-12/Industrial_Development_Kyrgyzstan-Regional_aspects.pdf, pg. 13.

¹¹⁸ Investment Portal Kyrgyz Republic. 2018. Batken Region. Available at: <https://invest.gov.kg/batken/>

¹¹⁹ Komendantova N., Atakanov N., Chekirbaev U., Karabashov N., Zheenaliev Z., Rovenskaya E., Strelkovskii N., Sizov S., and Rodriguez F. S., 2018. Industrial Development of Kyrgyzstan: Regional Aspects. Working Paper 5. Available at: https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/2018-12/Industrial_Development_Kyrgyzstan-Regional_aspects.pdf.

¹²⁰ Investment Portal Kyrgyz Republic. 2018. Jalal-Abad Region. Available at: <https://invest.gov.kg/jalalabad/>

¹²¹ Komendantova N., Atakanov N., Chekirbaev U., Karabashov N., Zheenaliev Z., Rovenskaya E., Strelkovskii N., Sizov S., and Rodriguez F. S., 2018. Industrial Development of Kyrgyzstan: Regional Aspects. Working Paper 5. Available at: https://www.unido.org/sites/default/files/files/2018-12/Industrial_Development_Kyrgyzstan-Regional_aspects.pdf, p. 15.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Naturvernforbundet. 2020. Environmental issues in Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://naturvernforbundet.no/international/environmental-issues-in-kyrgyzstan/category937.html>.

¹²⁴ European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). February 2014. Osh and Jalal-Abad Solid Waste Management – Environmental and Social Due Diligence. Available at: <https://www.eib.org/attachments/registers/54495969.pdf>.

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 53.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 54.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 54.

¹²⁸ Национальный статистический комитет Кыргызской Республики. 2019. Available at: <http://www.stat.kg/ru/>

Religious and ethnic groups	As of 2019: 73.5% Kyrgyz, 14.7% Uzbek, 5.5% Russian, 1.1% Dungan, 5.2% other (including Uighur, Tajik, Turk, Kazakh, Tatar, Ukrainian, Korean, German). ¹²⁹ According to 2017: 90% Muslim (majority Sunni), 7% Christian (Russian Orthodox 3%), 3% Other (incl. Jewish, Buddhist, Baha'i). ¹³⁰
Languages and literacy (people aged 15 and over who can read and write)	99.23% literacy in 2009, according to census data. ¹³¹ Although Kyrgyz is the state language, four languages are used in schools (Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek, Tajik). ¹³² Until 2010, two Kyrgyz universities offered courses in Uzbek (Kyrgyz-Uzbek University in Osh, and the People's Friendship University in Jalal-Abad). ¹³³ Since 2015, high school exams can only be taken in Kyrgyz or Russian. ¹³⁴

statistics/gendernaya-statistika/.

¹²⁹ CIA World Factbook. 2019. Ethnic Groups – Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/400.html>.

¹³⁰ CIA World Factbook. 2017. Religions – Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/401.html>.

¹³¹ Национальный статистический комитет Кыргызской Республики. 2019. Грамотность населения (по данным переписей населения). Available at: <http://www.stat.kg/ru/statistics/obrazovanie/>.

¹³² United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. 16-17 December 2019. United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Fernand de Varennes, Visit to Kyrgyzstan – Mission Statement. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25422&LangID=E>.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Minority Rights Group International, World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples. 2018. Kyrgyzstan: Uzbeks. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/49749cf44f.html>.

II. The Tajik Civil War and its Consequences



Tajikistan borders four countries: China, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Official estimates set the population at 8,350,000 in 2015. Islam is the most widely held faith. Ethnic Tajik constitute 67% of Tajikistan's total population. The next largest ethnic groups are: 23% Uzbek, 3.5% Russian, and others. The country fell into civil war from 1992 until 1997. The General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan was signed on 27 June 1997.

1. Historical context

The Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) was established in 1929. The historical centers of Tajik culture, Samarkand and Bukhara, became part of the Soviet Uzbekistan.¹³⁵ Throughout the Soviet period, the Leninabad region (with administrative centre in Khodzents; re-named to Sughd in 2004) was not able to integrate the remaining three groups of the Tajik people - the Kulyab Tajiks in Kulyab oblast (southwestern part of modern-day Tajikistan), the Gharm Tajiks in Karategin valley (also referred to as the Rasht Valley, located in the west-central Tajikistan), and the Pamir Tajiks in Gorno-Badakhshan oblast (eastern half of the country). The Khodzhent Tajiks had the advantage of educational and political institutions and support from Moscow, which allowed them to have nominal power throughout the

¹³⁵ Goble, P., 21 July 2015. Today's Ethno-Regional Clans in Tajikistan Are Products of Soviet Nationality Policy. Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 12 Issue: 136. Available at: <https://jamestown.org/program/todays-ethno-regional-clans-in-tajikistan-are-products-of-soviet-nationality-policy/>.

Republic. Due to the high levels of crime there, the Kulyab Tajiks took over the police forces. In contrast, even in Soviet times the Pamir Tajiks were dominated by Muslim intellectuals.¹³⁶ Prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the majority of Tajikistan's communist leaders came from Leninabad oblast (Khodzents). Indeed, Leninabad domination of the central government led to resentment against the "northerners," which fueled inter-regional tensions. During the civil war and its aftermath, Leninabad politicians formed a coalition with Kulyabs, whose dominance in the country's politics was sealed by Rakhmonov's election in 1992. This coalition gradually crumbled, as Kulyabs succeeded in excluding their erstwhile allies from the nation's political affairs.¹³⁷

The presidential elections of November 1991 split the country into supporters of Rahmon Nabiev, the former Communist Chief of Tajikistan, from Leninabad, and opposition candidate Davlat Khudonazarov, who was from Badakhshan and backed by the Islamic Renaissance Party and the Democratic Party. Nabiev won the elections by some 35 per cent, an outcome which the opposition refused to accept. Nabiev formed a government heavily dominated by representatives of the northern Leninabad and southern Kulyabi regions, to the exclusion of others. This led to a tense stand-off between pro-government and opposition supporters in Dushanbe in March 1992 at Shahidon Square and Ozodi Square.¹³⁸ On 25 March 1992, the Speaker of the Supreme Council, Kendjaev, blamed the Minister of Interior, Navzhuvanov who was from Pamir, for abuse of power and the latter fought back and blamed him for insulting mountainous people.¹³⁹ Their fierce debate was aired and sparked off additional tension on the streets. The Pamiris formed the core of the anti-government protestors and were joined by the Gharmis. A rival demonstration of pro-government, anti-Islamist factions soon formed, consisting mainly of Kulyabs. The standoff continued for weeks, with each side continually provoking the other. Both sides were acquiring arms, but Nabiev reportedly refused to open fire to disperse the opposition.¹⁴⁰ Sources do not agree on the role of security actors. Some sources argue that they were divided and supported their own clans regionally, while others claim that the security actors made a deal to maintain neutrality.¹⁴¹

On 1 May 1992, the President issued a decree to set up a Presidential Guard (composed of Kulyabs demonstrators), with the aim of breaking up the opposition demonstrations. Two thousand rifles were distributed to the President's supporters.¹⁴² Fighting broke out in Dushanbe on 5 May, when a state of emergency was declared and Presidential Guards clashed with the opposition. It led to the first casualties of the civilian war.¹⁴³ Russian troops intervened. Nabiev was forced to form a coalition government in which the opposition had eight of 24 ministerial posts.¹⁴⁴ However, the Leninabad and Kulyab elites refused to recognize the new government and as a result by June fighting was widespread. The war moved to the south. After the demonstrators from the rival squares went home, 'Islamists' (Gharmis and Pamiris) in Kurgan-Tyube took their frustration out on the Kulyabi residents of

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Human Rights Watch. April 1998. Tajikistan. Leninabad: Crackdown in the North. Vol. 10, No. 2 (D). Available at: https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/tajikistan/#_1_11.

¹³⁸ Matveeva A., March 2009. The Perils of Emerging Statehood: Civil War and State Reconstruction in Tajikistan. Crisis States Working Papers Series No.2. Available at: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/98292/wp46.2.pdf>

¹³⁹ Жирохов М., А., 2011. Семени распада: войны и конфликты на территории бывшего СССР. БХВ-Петербург.

¹⁴⁰ Matveeva A., March 2009. The Perils of Emerging Statehood: Civil War and State Reconstruction in Tajikistan. Crisis States Working Papers Series No.2. Available at: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/98292/wp46.2.pdf>

¹⁴¹ Жирохов М., А., 2011. Семени распада: войны и конфликты на территории бывшего СССР. БХВ-Петербург.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Human Rights Watch. April 1998. Tajikistan. Leninabad: Crackdown in the North. Vol. 10, No. 2 (D). Available at: https://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports98/tajikistan/#_1_11.

the area. The first serious fighting broke out in June following the failed negotiations at the Kurgan-Tyube airport. Islamists were sent to 'punish' the Kulyabis and created the 'Headquarters of National Salvation'. On 27 June, they attacked kolkhozs and villages of the Vakhsh districts where resettlers from Kulyab lived and destroyed their defence units. Many people died and as estimated 140,000 fled the violence, becoming IDPs as a result.¹⁴⁵ On 27 July, a cease fire agreement was reached. However, it was rejected by Kulyabs leader Sangak Safarov who demanded the Government's resignation and the conflict continued.¹⁴⁶

In September, Nabiev was forced to resign. By October 1992, approximately 15.000-20.000 persons were killed on both sides.¹⁴⁷ In this context, the Kulyabs and the people from Leninabad sealed an alliance and formed a National Front. On 10 December, the coalition entered Dushanbe and seized the capital. Emomali Rakhmonov, who originated from Kulyab, was elected by a special session of parliament in Khujand as the Chairman of Supreme Council.¹⁴⁸ On 22 February 1993, the fighters of National Front moved to Gharm and slaughtered the opposition. Ethnic cleansing continued in Gissar and villages nearby the border with Uzbekistan. Occasionally, the Uzbek airforce was used to support pro-governmental forces. It is worth mentioning that in February 1993, Colonel Alexander Shislianikov was appointed Minister of Defence of Tajikistan. A. Shislianikov was a Russian officer who had previously served in the Ministry of Defence of the USSR and later of Uzbekistan.¹⁴⁹

In the face of the Government's intense crackdown against the opposition and people associated with it, most remaining leaders and active members of the various opposition movements fled the country to Russia, Afghanistan, Iran, and elsewhere. From December 1993 to December 1996, armed factions of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) located in Afghanistan fought against government troops and units of the approximately 20,000 Russian armed forces including border guards who, along with border troop units from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, were assigned to protect the Tajik-Afghan border.¹⁵⁰ The UTO opposition consisted of the Islamic Renaissance Party, National Movement 'Rastokhez', the Democratic Party of Tajikistan, and Community Lali Badakhshan (Ruby of Badakhshan). The UTO was established in 1993. Tajikistan faced internal and external security problems. According to a 1995 UN report,¹⁵¹ a tense situation developed at the end of June in the Gharm district, involving a series of killings and clashes between local armed groups and government security forces. The situation in Gorny Badakhshan remained complicated. In this autonomous province, the authorities and the opposition forces coexisted side by side. The latter moved about openly, especially in the Vanj area, where the Islamic Revival Movement enjoys strong support, and in the southern part of the province, where the so-called self-defence forces operate; the latter have their headquarters in the provincial capital, Khorog. The opposition made no secret of the fact that their fighters routinely crossed the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan's Gorny Badakhshan. One of the most notorious attacks

¹⁴⁵ Matveeva A., March 2009. The Perils of Emerging Statehood: Civil War and State Reconstruction in Tajikistan. Crisis States Working Papers Series No.2. Available at: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/98292/wp46.2.pdf>.

¹⁴⁶ Жирохов М., А., 2011. Семёна распада: войны и конфликты на территории бывшего СССР. БХВ-Петербург.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Although the civil war as such ended at the start of 1993, armed insurgency of the opposition forces, in particular from across the Tajik-Afghan border, continued. To protect the border, the Governments of Tajikistan and the Russian Federation agreed that the Russian border forces would continue to be deployed along the Pyanj river, which forms the Tajik-Afghan border. United Nations. 2000. Tajikistan. UNMOT Background. Available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/unmot/UnmotB.htm> Some experts claim that Uzbekistan was in charge of protection of border as well.

¹⁵¹ Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Tajikistan. 1995. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/198909>.

from Afghanistan was staged against the Russian Border Guard post. On 13 July 1993, Russian Border Troop Post No 12 in Tajikistan's Kulyab region was virtually overrun when 200 Afghan mujahideen, armed with mortars, rocket launchers, and recoilless cannons, launched a frontal assault from across the river Pyanj. Simultaneously, a second group of Tajik "militants" fell upon the post's 48 defenders from behind. By the time reinforcements from the Russian Army's 201st Motor Rifle Division and troops from the Tajik National Security Committee had repulsed the attackers, 22 of the post's complement had been killed and 18 wounded.¹⁵²

At a meeting held in Moscow on 24 September 1993 and as part of the efforts to stabilize the situation in Tajikistan, the Governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan decided to establish the Commonwealth of Independent States Collective Peacekeeping Forces in Tajikistan. These forces were mandated to: (a) assist in the normalization of the situation on the Tajik-Afghan border with a view to stabilizing the overall situation in Tajikistan and creating conditions conducive to progress the dialogue between all interested parties on ways of achieving a political settlement of the conflict; and (b) to assist in the delivery, protection, and distribution of emergency and other humanitarian aid, create conditions for the safe return of refugees to their places of permanent residence, and guard the infrastructure and other vitally important facilities required for the foregoing purpose.¹⁵³

In April 1994, the Government and UTO engaged in United Nations-sponsored peace negotiations, and an agreement on cessation of hostilities was signed on 17 September 1994 in Tehran (the Tehran Agreement). On 16 December 1994, the United Nations Security Council created a United Nations Mission of Observers to Tajikistan (UNMOT) to monitor adherence to the Tehran Agreement, which continued to be violated through to December 1996. It was in Kabul, in 1995, that the first real peace talks took place between the warring parties under an initiative organized by the then Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani and Ahmad Shah Masoud, a distinguished Afghan of ethnic Tajik descent. Renowned film director and public figure, Davlat Khudonazarov, who took part in the talks, said that the choice of Kabul as venue for the talks was fortunate also in that "the very atmosphere of this city in ruins was a warning signal to the Tajiks to give up armed confrontation and seek peace."¹⁵⁴ In December 1996, the Khusdeh Agreement between President Emomali Rakhmonov and Mr. Sayed Abdullo Nuri, leader of the United Tajik Opposition, effectively restored the ceasefire agreement,¹⁵⁵ which led to a peace agreement.

A breakthrough in the negotiations led to the conclusion and signature of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan (hereinafter, the General Agreement) on 27 June 1997. The General Agreement provides for the incorporation of the UTO into government structures, an amnesty law, the safe and dignified return of all refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs), preparations for parliamentary elections, legalization of banned political parties, and laws to ensure a free media.

The war was devastating: between 60,000 and 100,000 people were killed, some 600,000 – a tenth of the population – were internally displaced and another 80,000 fled the country. The cost of the war is estimated at U.S.\$7 billion.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Sherr J. 1994. Escalation of the Tajikistan Conflict. IBRU Boundary and Security Bulletin January 1994

¹⁵³ United Nations. 2000. Tajikistan. UNMOT Background. Available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/unmot/UnmotB.htm>.

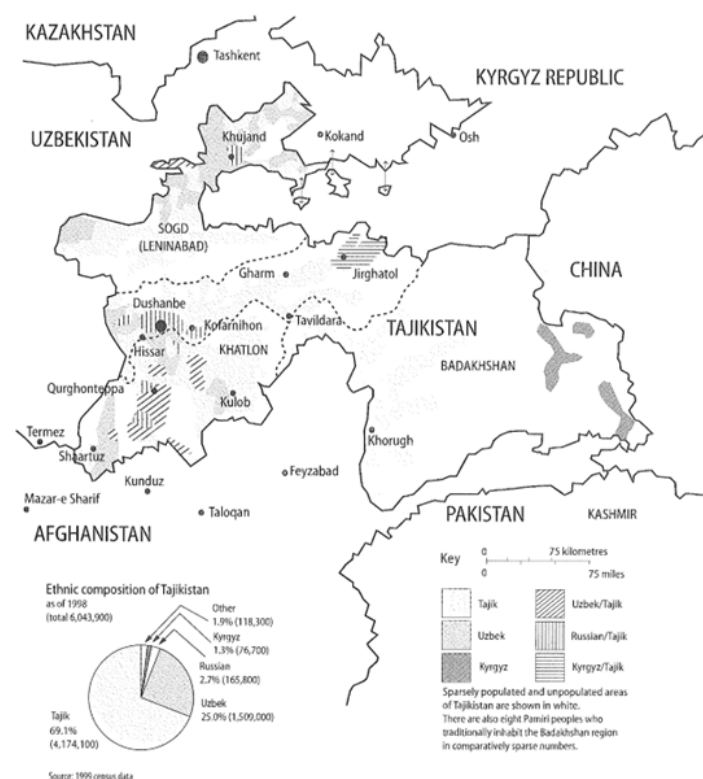
¹⁵⁴ Malashenko A., 2012. Tajikistan: Civil War's Long Echo. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Available at: https://carnegieendowment.org/files/MalashenkoBrifing_14-3-12_eng_web.pdf.

¹⁵⁵ United Nations. 2000. Tajikistan. UNMOT Background. Available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/unmot/UnmotB.htm>.

¹⁵⁶ International Crisis Group. 24 Dec 2001. Tajikistan: An uncertain peace. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/>

2. Causes of the Tajikistan Civil War

Political elite cause. Crisis occurred within the political elites transforming into an inter-regional clan confrontation.



Source of the map: *Politics of compromise: Tajikistan Peace Process* by Kamolludin Abdullaev and Catherine Barnes¹⁵⁷

The policy of perestroika by the USSR led to the emergence of the Islamic-democratic movement in the Tajik SSR. The backbone of the opposition was the Islamic Revival Party (IPV), the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), and a number of other movements. The confrontation between the former communist elite and the national-democratic and Islamic forces has moved from the political sphere to the clan field. In Soviet times, the dominant role in political life was played by people from Leninabad, who held the highest administrative positions, with which the people of Kulyab (alternatively called “the Kulyabs”), who held the highest positions in the security forces (MIA), actively cooperated. After the declaration of independence of Tajikistan, groups from other regions in the country - badakhshans, gisars, and gharms tried to change the distribution of roles in the governance of the country.

The physical geography of Tajikistan supported the development of many culturally distinct groups, between the north (predominantly rich urban-based culture), and the people of the mountains in the centre, east and south-west. People in the mountains, predominantly Sunni Muslims, were comparatively isolated and developed strong localized identities.¹⁵⁸ Of note the Pamiris are mainly Ismail Shias. This distinctive separation was exacerbated throughout the years of Soviet rule. When the Tajik SSR was formed in 1929, there was a

report/afghanistan/tajikistan-uncertain-peace.

¹⁵⁷ Abdullaev, K. and Barnes, C., 2001. *Politics of Compromise: The Tajikistan Peace Process*. Available at: https://rc-services-assets.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Politics_of_compromise_The_Tajikistan_peace_process_Accord_Issue_10.pdf.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

push to consolidate the nation by constructing a form of nationalism. This included standardizing a literary language in the Cyrillic script and creating transport links between Tajik regions and neighbouring Soviet republics.¹⁵⁹ This forced assimilation towards Soviet solidarity and deliberate distancing from Persian ties created deep roots of tension between a sanctioned state culture and that of the local population. This relates, in particular, to the under-represented regional groups from Gharm and Gorno-Badakhshan in the east of the country.

Religious cause. Islam had been embraced as an alternative ideology to communism. Although the number of Islamists (who were the leaders in the resistance against the Government) was insignificant, they played an important role in the development of events. Wahhabi groups from abroad had been penetrating the more devout areas of Tajikistan, propagating Wahhabism among groups who were discontent with the Soviet regime, such as Gharmis in Kurgan-Tyube province and the Ferghana Valley in the north. These were the most overlooked areas of resistance to Soviet rule in the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁶⁰

Socio-economic aspects. The population boom during the 1960-70s and cotton manufacturing issues served as sub-causes to this systemic cause. The Soviet system practiced large-scale (forced) resettlement initiatives from the mountains into the plains, motivated both by development projects that required a labour force (cotton industry) and difficulties in sustaining a growing population in the mountain regions.¹⁶¹ Tensions and rivalries between lowlanders and highlanders persisted throughout the post-Second World War era. Subsequently, several of the leading opposition figures in the civil war came from these uprooted communities. The later years of Soviet rule in Tajikistan created schisms within the population. Until the 1970s, economic prosperity was impressive with high rates of employment. However, in order to construct hydroelectric power plants in Tajikistan in the 1980s, labor was brought in from neighbouring republics, which left many young Tajik residents unemployed and marginalized. In addition, Tajikistan experienced a deep economic recession after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as access to credit and customary markets in other republics was reduced.¹⁶² Some experts name the disintegration of the USSR as the main catalyst for the outbreak of violence in Tajikistan, a catalyst which highlights the catastrophic economic downturn, the intensifying competition over local resources, and the fragmentation of elites as integral and co-related determinants.¹⁶³

Geopolitical interests. Some experts identify the weakening of Russia's role in the post-Soviet space and the interference of the Uzbek Government in the affairs of Tajikistan, as well as Russia's interference in Afghanistan 1979,¹⁶⁴ as causes that contributed to the development of the conflict.

¹⁵⁹ Conciliation Resources. April 2001. The Tajik Civil War: Causes and Dynamics. Available at: <https://www.c-r.org/accord/tajikistan/tajik-civil-war-causes-and-dynamics>.

¹⁶⁰ Matveeva A., March 2009. The Perils of Emerging Statehood: Civil War and State Reconstruction in Tajikistan. Crisis States Working Papers Series No.2. Available at: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/98292/wp46.2.pdf>.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Conciliation Resources. April 2001. The Tajik Civil War: Causes and Dynamics. Available at: <https://www.c-r.org/accord/tajikistan/tajik-civil-war-causes-and-dynamics>.

¹⁶³ Epkenhans T. 2016. The Origins of the Civil War in Tajikistan. Available at: <https://centralasiaprogram.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Pages-from-Epkenhans-Origins-Tajik-Civil-War-2016-1.pdf>, p. 7-8.

¹⁶⁴ Matveeva A. March 2009. The Perils of Emerging Statehood: Civil War and State Reconstruction in Tajikistan. Crisis States Working Papers Series No.2. Available at: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/98292/wp46.2.pdf>.

3. Mapping Conflict Actors

A wide array of security actors was involved in the Tajik Civil War, and either conducted operations in Gorno-Badakhshan and Karotegin, or supported actors in those regions via the provision of fighters, weaponry, and supplies; or through diplomatic means. The rebel groups consisted of a combination of liberal reformers and islamists, all of whom formally organized under the banner of the UTO in 1994.¹⁶⁵ Of note is the fact that many of the factions within the United Tajik Opposition were composed of ethnic and regional groups from Gorno-Badakhshan and Karotegin.¹⁶⁶ As the birthplace of the leader of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, Sayid Abdulloh Nuri, the Tavildara district of Karotegin was a particularly important area.¹⁶⁷ It was also the region in which the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (then called Adolat) would command units in support of the Islamic Renaissance Party, and who later established a military base and recruitment center there.¹⁶⁸ In addition to these organized non-state actors, a number of informal social networks also provided support to the opposition, including local power brokers, known as 'Authorities'; local horizontal informal social networks, known as Gashtaks and Gaps; and extended family units, known as Avlods. Together, they provided material and human resources to a variety of groups fighting under the banner of the UTO.¹⁶⁹ On the opposing side, were paramilitary forces of the Popular Front; the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (most notably the Russian Border Guards); and the Armed Forces of Uzbekistan.¹⁷⁰ Neutral brokers included the United Nations Mission of Observers to Tajikistan, a peacekeeping mission deployed from 1994 until 2000 in order to monitor peace agreements during and after the Tajik Civil War.¹⁷¹

The table below provides additional information on each actor.

¹⁶⁵ Conciliation Resources. 2001. *Politics of the Compromise. The Tajikistan Peace Process*. pp. 93; and Matveeva A. 2009. *The Perils of Emerging Statehood: Civil War and State Reconstruction in Tajikistan*. Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08b7bed915d3cfd000d4e/wp46.2.pdf>.

¹⁶⁶ Kolsto P. 2018. *Political Construction Sites: nation building in Russia and the post-Soviet states*. Routledge. pp. 76.

¹⁶⁷ Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty 2006. *Tajikistan: Influential Islamic Politician Remembered*. Available at: <http://www.rferl.org/featuresarticle/2006/08/aff1c624-af45-482f-b022-f44ef42013ba.html>.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Chaney T. 2011. *Tajikistan's New Security Environment and a US Policy Response*. Available at: https://conservancy.umn.edu/bitstream/handle/11299/118636/1/Chaney_Tajikistan's%20New%20Security%20Environment.pdf; Matveeva, Anna (2009). *The Perils of Emerging Statehood: Civil War and State Reconstruction in Tajikistan*.

¹⁷⁰ Conciliation Resources. 2001. *Politics of the Compromise. The Tajikistan Peace Process*. pp.90-93.

¹⁷¹ United Nations Security Council (2020). *Verbotim Report 4140*. Pp. 3. Available at: <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/S/PV.4140>.

Conflict Actors Mapping¹⁷²

Name of Actor	Position
The Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A political party which supported the UTO. - Banned by Tajik Government in 1993. - Had approx. from 3500 to 22,000 members. - In 1994, DPT split due to internal disagreements over whether it should be co-operating with the IPR. - As a result, its former leader, Shodmon Yusuf left the DPT and created the rival DPT Tehran Platform (DPTT). The original DPT then renamed itself as DPT Almaty Platform (DPTA), and was led by Jumaboi Niyozov and Abdunabi Sattorzoda. - From 1995, the DPTT began working with the Government, and was legally registered as a political party in July 1995. - After the war, the leaders of the DPTA joined the Commission on National Reconciliation. - Left the UTO in 1999. - In 2013, the DPT was registered at the Ministry of Justice of Tajikistan and is currently represented at the Parliament.
The Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IPRT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A political party which supported the UTO. - It was founded by Davlat Usmon and Said Ibrahim Gadoev in 1990, and led by Muhammed Sharif Himmatzoda. - Had approx. from 20,000 to 40,000 members. - Was banned by the Tajik Government in 1993. - Participated in negotiations that led to the General Agreement.
La'li Badakhshan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A political party who supported the UTO. - Had approx. from 3000 to 6000 members, mostly local people from the Badakhshan region. - It was established in Khorog in 1991. - Founded by Atobek Amirbekov. - Participated in inter-Tajik negotiations from 1994 until 1997, and joined the Commission on National Reconciliation in 1997. - Left the UTO in 1999.
The Movement for National Unity and Revival in Tajikistan (MNURT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A movement composed of pro-government regional representatives, political parties and associations loyal to the President. - Formed in July 1996, and chaired by President Rahmonov. - Tajikistan's largest political movement.
The Party of People's Unity and Harmony (PPUH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Founded by former Tajik Prime Minister, Abdumalik Abdullajanov, in 1994. - It was recognized throughout the war, but was banned in 1998 after being accused of masterminding the attempted assassination of President Rahmonov in 1998, and of being involved in a failed coup a year earlier.
The People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pro-government political party formed in 1994. - Had 20,000 members. - President Rahmonov joined in 1998 and was elected chair of the party.
The Popular Front	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A pro-government group composed mainly of ethnic Kulobis (at the initial stage). - Formed in 1992 and led by Sangak Safarov and Safarali Kendzaev. - Was instrumental in bringing Rahmonov to power in 1992. - Was disbanded by Presidential decree in 1997, and its units merged into the Armed Forces of Tajikistan.
National Movement 'Ras-tokhez'	Supported the UTO, political movement formed in 1989.
The United Tajik Opposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A coalition of anti-government political parties and paramilitary groups. - Formed in 1993 during the inter-Tajik negotiations, and led by Said Abdullo Nuri.

¹⁷² Conciliation Resources. 2001. Politics of the Compromise. The Tajikistan Peace Process. pp.90-93.

The Islamic Republic of Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provided indirect support to the Tajik opposition, particularly between 1991-92, and later hosted exiled leaders of the UTO until 1998. - Was one of the key sponsors of the inter-Tajik negotiations; held the status of official observer in the process; and hosted numerous rounds of negotiations.
The Russian Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintained official neutrality during the conflict, but was reported to have supported pro-government forces with weapons and supplies, including the Popular Front.¹⁷³ - Its border guards and 201st Motorized Infantry Division were reported to have played a key role in supporting the Government. - A key sponsor of the inter-Tajik negotiations; and hosted numerous rounds of negotiations.
The Republic of Uzbekistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reported to have supported pro-government forces with weapons and supplies until 1995, after which it distanced itself from the conflict. - Held the status of official observer in the inter-Tajik negotiations.
Adolat (later the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closely allied with the IRP until 1991. - After being banned by Uzbek authorities, the Adolat relocated to Tajikistan and later to Afghanistan, where they fought on the side of the UTO against government forces.¹⁷⁴

4. Assessing fragilities in Tajikistan and confidence building initiatives

The situation in Tajikistan can be estimated as being attributed to the post-conflict stage. On 27 June 1997, Tajikistan President - Emomali Rahmonov, the UTO leader - Sayid Abdulloh Nuri and Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General - Gerd Merrem, signed the “General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan” and the “Moscow Protocol” in Moscow, ending the civil war in Tajikistan.¹⁷⁵ The General Agreement established several confidence-building initiatives and reinforced the existing ones:

Commission on National Reconciliation (CNR). The CNR was established to implement the provisions of the General Agreement. It was also charged with bringing about an atmosphere of trust and mutual forgiveness and dialogue among various political forces to promote national reconciliation. The Commission was dissolved in March 2000.

UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT). The United Nations Security Council, in accordance with its Resolution 968 (1994), established UNMOT initially to monitor the ceasefire between Tajikistan’s Government and opposition forces. It was extended to monitor implementation of the General Agreement and to facilitate consultations and, when required, provide expert advice and the UN Secretary-General’s good offices. On 15 May 2000, UNMOT’s operations were ended.¹⁷⁶

Contact Group of Guarantor States. The Governments of Afghanistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Pakistan, Russia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, who served as official observers of the negotiations, were requested to act as political and moral guarantors of the General Agreement.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ Hiro D. 1994. *Between Marx and Muhammad: the changing face of Central Asia*. London: HarperCollins.

¹⁷⁴ Chaney T. 2011. *Tajikistan’s New Security Environment and a US Policy Response*.

¹⁷⁵ UN Peacemaker. General Agreement on the Establishment Of Peace And National Accord In Tajikistan. Available at: <https://peacemaker.un.org/tajikistan-general-agreement97>.

¹⁷⁶ United Nations. UNMOT. Available at: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/unmot/Unmot.htm>.

¹⁷⁷ Conciliation Resources. 2001. *Key Elements Of The Tajikistan Peace Agreement*. Available at: <http://www.c-r.org/accord/tajikistan/key-elements-tajikistan-peace-agreement>.

One of the most important achievements by the CNR was the adoption of the Reciprocal-Pardon Act and the Amnesty Act in 1997. The United Nations' efforts to establish peace in Tajikistan also played a central role in identifying tools for reconciling the warring parties and restoring the country's economy. During the process of moving towards peace, the country repeatedly faced difficulties and suffered serious failures before a peace agreement was signed in 1997. The United Nations Peace-Building Support Office in Tajikistan was established 3 years later in May 2000. It provided the basis for the beginning of the peace-building system in Tajikistan.¹⁷⁸ UNTOP, together with the UN Country Team, have played a leading role in implementing a wide range of UN post-conflict activities aimed at strengthening peace and national reconciliation, the rule of law, and democratic institutions. As part of these efforts, the United Nations has helped secure international support for programs that facilitate demobilization, voluntary surrender of weapons, and employment and reintegration of former militants, along with addressing drug trafficking in the region. Tajikistan has already achieved considerable success. The comprehensive efforts of the United Nations, which involve a political office and 12 aid agencies, are designed to ensure that the country adheres to the path towards peace and stability, democratization, and economic recovery.¹⁷⁹ The OSCE Mission to Tajikistan was also tasked with implementing confidence building initiatives. For example, it offered assistance and advice to the independent Ombudsman Institution and reported regularly on its activities. In addition, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, with the OSCE's assistance, conducted a comprehensive review of the Institution's accomplishments after the first year of its operations and submitted a written report to the Permanent Council.¹⁸⁰ Some of the attempts to strengthen trust-building have been only partially carried out. For instance, with the President's supervision, government officials are rewriting history by adopting the concept of "national unity" (*vahdati milli*), which seems to rest heavily on the promotion of certain cultural and historical symbols as a way of reminding (or perhaps persuading) Tajiks that they share a common national identity. Thus, the communalization and bereavement phase are beginning to take place.¹⁸¹ Members of the opposition groups, residents of Gorno-Bakhashan and former militants could be integrated into the Tajik society through reconciliation programmes. However, the success of these initiatives is debatable. One of the biggest reasons is the ongoing lack of interaction among the populations of different regions in Tajikistan. This phenomenon is partly the result of geographical circumstances, since the four regions of Tajikistan are divided by mountains and the transportation system is poorly developed. The only way to travel to most of the regions is by plane, which the majority of the population cannot afford. A need for roads connecting the northern and southern regions is particularly acute. Consequently, there is little interaction or business relationships between the populations of the two major cities of Tajikistan, Dushanbe and Khujand. This poor geographical connectivity results in even poorer connectivity between the people of Tajikistan and mutual understanding between different tribes in both the north and south of the country. Currently, the Inter-Tajik Dialogue remains the only initiative directed at confidence building in the country. It was created by the participants of the Dartmouth Conference Regional Conflicts Task Force, between Russia and the USA. The purpose of the initiators in 1993 was to "see whether a group can be formed from within the civil conflict to design a peace process for their own country". This objective contrasted sharply with the objectives of some international NGOs that intervene in conflicts with the aim of directly mediating peace agreements.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ Preventionweb.net. 2000. Доклад Генерального Секретаря О Работе Организации. Available at: <https://www.preventionweb.net/files/resolutions/N0060946.pdf>.

¹⁷⁹ United Nations. 2006. Таджикистан Поднимается Из Руин Гражданской Войны. Available at: <https://www.un.org/ru/events/tenstories/2006/story.asp?storyID=600>.

¹⁸⁰ The Permanent Council. The 60th plenary meeting on 29 February 1996.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Conciliation Resources. 2001. Key Elements of The Tajikistan Peace Agreement. Available at: <http://www.c-r>.

Multiple factors have facilitated a rather smooth peace process. An important aspect being that the IRPT did not suffer from deep-seated historical grievances and was only concerned with the more immediate rectification of the power imbalances of the old system. This enabled them to accept the notion of a secular state.¹⁸³ Additionally, throughout the war the state did not collapse completely, which has the impact of the state being able to reassert control in the territories it controlled.¹⁸⁴ There was no socially sanctioned culture of violence, instead there was a sense of common ethnic and cultural identity among Tajiks.¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, prior to the agreement, the parties reached a deadlock. The only options were either uncertain protracted guerilla warfare or a compromise with the Government.¹⁸⁶ The Peace Agreement resolved the power sharing dispute which underlined the persistent disagreements. In the first elections following the agreement, the opposition was incorporated into the Government according to a quota.¹⁸⁷ In 1999, an administrative re-organization occurred, aimed at undermining the future possibility of a dissident movement unifying around a regional government structure and depriving any movement of a potential urban base. During this re-organisation, five administrative territories were created: “(1) Khatlon province, which resulted from an earlier merger of Kurgan-Tyube and Kulyab; (2) Direct Rule Districts comprising the former opposition strongholds in north-east of Tavildara, Gharm, and Karategin; (3) the densely-populated city of Dushanbe and its environs; (4) Sughd (formerly Leninabad); and (5) the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast.”¹⁸⁸ The latter two survived intact from the Soviet era.

As a result, “Kurgan-Tyube was no longer a provincial capital and was to be administratively ruled from Kulyab, its arch-enemy. The Direct Rule Districts had no administrative centre or provincial government of their own, all 48 districts being directly responsible to Dushanbe. Such administrative arrangements appear to be impractical for the management of everyday regional affairs as they are vastly disproportional in population size and are likely to alter when the regime feels more secure.”¹⁸⁹ Simultaneously, in 1999, the ban on opposition parties was lifted, allowing independent parties to reappear.

In the decade following the Peace Agreement, there occurred a decay of the opposition, which preferred capitalizing on their lucrative opportunities offered by the Government, and in exchange, compromising on their ideological credentials. As Tajikistan was agreed to be a secular state, this on one hand made Islamism no longer appear as an ideological alternative. On the other hand, it normalized the movement by allying it with democrats and nationalists, thus appearing as a legitimate actor in Tajik political life. Nevertheless, tensions between the traditionalist and modernist wings of IRP continued in the post-war period. The death of the first leader of IRP, Sayid Abdulloh Nuri, in 2006, re-ignited these tensions. Following the agreements, much criminal activity such as racketeering, armed raids, robberies, kidnappings, and drug trafficking has taken place. The Government only achieved full control of the whole territory towards the end of 2001, when the last major bandit group was eliminated. Reintegration of ex-combatants was carried out by the United Nations’ Tajikistan Office for Peacebuilding, some of whom have been incorporated into the Tajik regular armed forces.

org/accord/tajikistan/key-elements-tajikistan-peace-agreement.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. p.7.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

The 1999 Electoral law leading to the first multi-party elections was supposed to put in place a parliament reflective of the peace and reconciliation accord of 1997, guaranteeing the power-sharing system.¹⁹⁰

Despite the initially successful reconciliation process, the problems have not dissipated. In 2012, on the fifteenth anniversary of the end of civil war, contradictions between Dushanbe and the Gorno-Badakhshan region caused several hostile clashes in which government armed forces were involved.¹⁹¹ Some sources claim that the conflict was provoked by the operation staged by the governmental forces in order to neutralize local informal leaders. The opposition was primarily made up of members of the IRPT and the Democratic Party of Tajikistan. Many of the opposition members have since then faced suspicious deaths, with allegations of terrorism exercised behind closed doors and criminal proceedings with serious violations of due process, including international allegations of torture or ill-treatment in pre-trial detention.¹⁹²

In March 2015, the IRPT for the first time failed to win any seats in the lower house of parliament due to various reasons. In the same year, IRPT's registration was revoked, following which it was declared an extremist organization.¹⁹³ This outlawing amounted to a violation of the terms of the 1997 Peace Agreement.¹⁹⁴ Due to the many concessions made previously by IRP Nuri to the President, many members of the IRPT were frustrated, particularly in the context of extensive prohibitions on Islamic practices.¹⁹⁵

There has furthermore been a broader campaign by the Government to vilify peaceful political opposition parties, part of which concerned the arrest and detention of at least 13 members of the IRPT leadership and its lawyers in a wave of arrests beginning 16 September 2015.¹⁹⁶ The detained IRPT members, among them the prominent former IRPT deputy chairman Mahmadali Hayit, had been arrested on allegations of participating in a failed coup, supposedly having been part of a strategy to discredit and dismantle the party. Relatives of the detained, informed human rights groups over suspicions of torture and prolonged incommunicado detention, which were then referred to the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. The detainees were tried and sentenced with imprisonment ranging from 14 years to life in prison.¹⁹⁷ In 2018, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued an opinion on the matter, finding the deprivation of liberty of Hayit and other prisoners as being in contravention of articles 9, 10, 19, 20, and 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and

¹⁹⁰ Torfeh M. 2016. Tajikistan: The success story that failed. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/12/tajikistan-success-story-failed-161208151057199.html>.

¹⁹¹ Adamishin A. 2012. Tajikistan: Lessons of Reconciliation. Available at: <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/tajikistan-lessons-of-reconciliation/>.

¹⁹² Torfeh M. 2016. Tajikistan: The success story that failed. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/12/tajikistan-success-story-failed-161208151057199.html>.

¹⁹³ Pannier B. 2020. Islamic Party Leaders Unfairly Imprisoned in Tajikistan, UN Group says. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/islamic-party-leaders-unfairly-imprisoned-in-tajikistan-un-group-says/30454509.html>.

¹⁹⁴ Sobiri B. 2017. The long echo of Tajikistan's civil war. Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/long-echo-of-tajikistan-s-civil-war/>.

¹⁹⁵ Torfeh M. 2016. Tajikistan: The success story that failed. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/12/tajikistan-success-story-failed-161208151057199.html>.

¹⁹⁶ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression on his mission to Tajikistan, 9th June 2017, A/HRC/35/22/Add.2, paras. 42-46. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session35/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?source-doc=/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session35/Documents/A_HRC_35_22_Add_2_EN.docx&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1.

¹⁹⁷ See: <http://www.freedom-now.org/news/tajikistan-un-declares-detention-of-opposition-party-leaders-in-violation-of-international-law/> 12 June 2020.

of articles 9, 14, 19, 21, and 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Hayit's detention was declared as arbitrary, falling within categories I, II, and III.¹⁹⁸

There exists a broader inability of Dushanbe to integrate Ismaili Pamiris living in Gorno-Badakhshan along the Afghan border. This situation is due to a magnitude of obstacles such as geographical, economic, and cultural differences, as well as a political porosity along the Tajik-Afghan border and ethnic and religious diversities between the Tajik and the Pamiris.¹⁹⁹ In Gorno-Badakhshan, rising tensions have been anticipated due to the political climate between Dushanbe and local paymasters and the Authorities. Operating as 'shadow authorities,' these men are partly integrated into local institutions and control much of the criminal activity in the region, paying little heed to Dushanbe despite receiving government salaries. A 2017 ICG report on the region states: "Most local observers speak of three or four key Authorities. Each has his own social base, usually a district in the region's largest town, Khorog, as well as a political and paramilitary apparatus. When all is quiet, the bosses compete for cross-border business. When the central government flexes its muscle, 'they come together again'."²⁰⁰ While the Authorities in Gorno-Badakhshan are described as "largely self-serving, aimed at maintaining a criminal enterprise, particularly in narcotics," they also "often fill the gaps left by an underpaid, underfunded, and unskilled local administration." For these reasons, and for publicly defending and maintaining Pamiri traditions and culture in opposition to the Tajik Government, these men hold large influence, popularity, and public legitimacy among the residents of the region, who see them as "guarantors of Gorno-Badakhshan's autonomy."²⁰¹

Constitutional amendments in 2016 granted the long-term President, Rahmonov, the right to effectively remove all term limits, and tensions remain until the present day. On 17 May 2020, protests occurred in the Khatlon region where hundreds of residents called for the Government to take action following severe mudslides in the region. These tensions are underlined by poor living conditions, little governmental involvement in the economic difficulties of the region, and are aggravated through forceful reactions from local administration and police detaining men attending assemblies on the distribution of aid.²⁰²

Similarly, unrests have sparked in the Pamir region, where residents gathered before local security service headquarters opposing the arrest of men accused of drug trafficking. This followed arrests in 2018, which similarly included detention of alleged criminals. However, local people believe that this had been an attempt to solidify Dushanbe's rule and quash the nearly wholly diminished remnants of autonomy in the region. Following riots in May and November 2018, at least 50 prisoners and five prison guards have reportedly died in government institutions under suspicious circumstances. For example during May 2019, at least 29 inmates and 3 prison guards were killed during a riot in a high security prison,

¹⁹⁸ UN Human Rights Council, Opinions adopted by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, 17 May 2018, A/HRC/WGAD/2018/2, paras. 78-79. Available at: https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Detention/Opinions/Session81/A_HRC_WGAD_2018_2.pdf.

See also: Pannier B. 2020. Islamic Party Leaders Unfairly Imprisoned in Tajikistan, UN Group says. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/islamic-party-leaders-unfairly-imprisoned-in-tajikistan-un-group-says/30454509.html>.

¹⁹⁹ Goble P. 2020. Tajikistan Struggles to Integrate Ismaili Pamiris Living Along Afghan Border. Available at: <https://jamestown.org/program/tajikistan-struggles-to-integrate-ismaili-pamiris-living-along-afghan-border/>.

²⁰⁰ International Crisis Group. 14 March 2018. "Rivals for Authority in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan." Briefing N°87, pp.6-7. Available at: <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/b087-rivals-for-authority-in-tajikistan.pdf>.

²⁰¹ Ibid. P7

²⁰² Eurasianet. 2020. Tajikistan sees unusual protests, authorities react with force. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/tajikistan-sees-unusual-protests-authorities-react-with-force>.

after members of Daesh reportedly first killed the guards and then freed their fellow militant convicts and turned on other inmates in the facility.²⁰³

Simultaneously, there was a government announcement that lethal force would be used to oppose violent uprisings within the prisons. In both cases, dozens of prisoners had been killed, raising concerns about a “disproportionate use of excessive force, and unjustified use of lethal force.”²⁰⁴ While allegations of criminal activity could likely have been true, the motivation behind them includes a central government intent on quashing and diminishing local authority figures in the region and advancing Dushanbe’s dominance in Gorno-Badakhshan.²⁰⁵

Motivated by the tense climate, concerns about the return of Uighur fighters and adjacent terrorist security threats, China has also increased its neighbouring security presence in the region of Gorno-Badakhshan. Reports of Chinese security installations and a ‘joint counter-terrorism centre’ near the border with Xinjiang and the Wakhan corridor, not only raise local concern but are simultaneously becoming a source of sensitivity for Moscow.²⁰⁶

In the midst of such uncertainties, media reports of attacks by Daesh are not infrequent. In July 2018, four foreign tourists were killed reportedly by Daesh militants during a cycling tour in the Danghara district.²⁰⁷ Reports also claim that Tajik authorities downplay the involvement of the so-called Islamic State despite public acknowledgements of the attacks made by the group, instead blaming the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan.²⁰⁸ It is unclear whether the attack on the cyclists was indeed carried out by Daesh itself or, as many suggest, seemingly inspired by their methodologies.²⁰⁹ However, more clearly in November 2019, at least 17 people died when Daesh militants attacked a checkpoint on Tajikistan’s border with Uzbekistan. The incident occurred when 20 Daesh fighters launched an attack on the border patrol, killing a border guard and a police officer but losing 15 men themselves.²¹⁰

There appears to be a strong polarization taking place within the country. Added to a forecasted economic spiral post 2020,²¹¹ continuing acts of repression against non-government media, civil society, activists, and opposition politicians are a common occurrence. Threats against journalists, prosecution or suspicious attacks appear to constitute a pattern aimed at repressing governmental opposition.²¹² With the absence of IRPT from the 2020 elections, Tajikistan is becoming a de facto one-party state.²¹³ While tensions over poor living

²⁰³ BBC. 20 May 2019. ‘IS members kill dozens’ in Tajikistan prison riot. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-48332969> accessed 12th June 2020.

²⁰⁴ Human Rights Watch, Country Chapters: Tajikistan, 2020. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2020/country-chapters/tajikistan>.

²⁰⁵ Eurasianet. 2020. Tajikistan: Arrests spark fresh unrest in Pamirs. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/tajikistan-arrests-spark-fresh-unrest-in-pamirs>.

²⁰⁶ International Crisis Group. 14 March 2018. Rivals for Authority in Tajikistan’s Gorno-Badakhshan. Europe and Central Asia Briefing N°87, p. 8.

²⁰⁷ New York Times. 30 July 2018. ISIS Says It Killed 4 Cyclists in Tajikistan. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/30/world/asia/tajikistan-attack-cyclists.html>.

²⁰⁸ The Diplomat. August 2018. Why Tajik Authorities Are Denying the Reality of the Islamic State Attack. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2018/08/tajik-authorities-deny-reality-of-islamic-state-attack/>.

²⁰⁹ Eurasianet. 3 March 2020. Tajikistan: Ringleader of ISIS-inspired killings of cyclists dies in prison. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/tajikistan-ringleader-of-isis-inspired-killings-of-cyclists-dies-in-prison>.

²¹⁰ RFE. 6 November 2019. 17 Killed In ‘Islamic State Attack’ on Tajik Border Post. Available at: <https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/17-killed-islamic-state-attack-tajik-border-post>.

²¹¹ Asian Development Bank. Tajikistan. Available at: <https://www.adb.org/news/tajikistan-economy-slow-down-sharply-2020-and-2021-weighed-covid-19-pandemic-adb>.

²¹² Eurasianet. 2020. Tajikistan: Reporter for independent newspaper assaulted. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/tajikistan-reporter-for-independent-newspaper-assaulted>.

²¹³ Lemon E. 2020. The Fall of Tajikistan’s Opposition. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/02/>

conditions and weak economic infrastructure, alongside a crackdown on any opposition, continue to cause significant tension, a fear of civil war breaking out again lingers in the air, forcing residents to tolerate many measures taken by the Government.²¹⁴

APPENDIX

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW - KAROTEGIN	
Geography	
Location and area	<p>Karotegin is the historical name of the Rasht Valley, which composes a significant portion of the Region of Republican Subordination, and includes the seven districts of Jirgatal, Faizobod Rasht, Roghun, Tavildara, Tajikobod, and Nurabad.²¹⁵ Karotegin also commonly appears in its alternative spellings of Qaratagin, Qarategin, Qaratigin, Karategin, Karatigin, and Karateghin.</p> <p>Located in central and north-eastern Tajikistan, Karotegin's main population center is the district of Rasht (formerly known as Gharm), in which the city of Gharm is located. In total, Karotegin has an area of 18,200 km². The three most north-eastern districts within Karotegin are bordered by Kyrgyzstan. Its most south-easterly district, Tavildara, is bordered by the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province, while to the west, it is bordered by the Khatlon Province, and to the north-west, the Sughd Province.</p> <p>Two hundred and fifty km of the 786 km long Vakhsh River passes through the south-eastern districts of Karotegin, as does the Pamir Mountain range.²¹⁶ Historically, Karotegin was an independent region in Central Asia, whose inhabitants claim to be descendants of Alexander the Great. In 1877, the Emirate of Bukhara conquered the region.²¹⁷ From the 1920s until 1995, Karotegin was within the Gharm Oblast and part of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1955, the oblast was abolished and lands divided between the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast and the Regions under Republican Subordination, the latter of which contains modern-day Karotegin.²¹⁸</p>

the-fall-of-tajikistans-opposition/.

²¹⁴ Pannier B. 2017. Tajikistan's Civil War: A Nightmare The Government Won't Let Its People Forget. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/qishloq-ovozi-tajikistan-civil-war/28575338.html>.

²¹⁵ Guenther T., Robinson S., Otambekov A., Jumakhonova R. 2006. Moving out of poverty in rural Central Asia: long term economic development or high income volatility? A case study from Tajikistan. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279191373_Moving_out_of_poverty_in_rural_Central_Asia_long_term_economic_development_or_high_income_volatility_A_case_study_from_Tajikistan.

²¹⁶ Guenther T., Robinson S., Otambekov A., Jumakhonova R. 2006. Moving out of poverty in rural Central Asia: long term economic development or high income volatility? A case study from Tajikistan. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279191373_Moving_out_of_poverty_in_rural_Central_Asia_long_term_economic_development_or_high_income_volatility_A_case_study_from_Tajikistan.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ritter W. 1985. The Final Phase in the Liquidation of Anti-Soviet Resistance in Tadzhikistan: Ibrahim Bek and the Basmachi, 1924-31. *Soviet Studies*. 37 (4). Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/151562>.

Economy (agriculture and industry)	<p>Given the barren nature of Karotegin and its extremely harsh winters, the local people traditionally relied on herding hardy cattle, and wove rough woolen cloth and mohair for clothes and income. In the summer months – between June and September - farmers would grow apples, pears, peaches, cherries, mulberries, and apricots in the lower end of the valley; and had produced sufficient amounts of corn to export. They could also irrigate the land using water from permanent snow.²¹⁹ In the early 20th century, the local people were also infamous for producing craft firearms and other weapons. Gold was also mined, and salt-pits could be found in the mountains. In modern times, economic activity appears to have changed little. This is in part due to the remote location of Karotegin, and poor access to services such as credit, electricity, markets, and agricultural inputs.²²⁰ For these reasons, light and heavy industries never developed. In addition, and in contrast to other mountainous regions in Tajikistan, cotton is not grown.²²¹</p> <p>Another primary source of income is remittances.²²²</p>
Climate and terrain	<p>Harsh and extremely cold winters, lasting from October to May. Summer months are warmer in the lower end of the valley.</p> <p>The main valley floor is wide, and ranges from 1000m to 2000m in altitude.²²³</p> <p>Environmental risks: flooding, wind, and water erosion, dust storms, and soil degradation.²²⁴</p>
Natural resources	Gold and salt.
Environmental issues that can have an impact on security	<p>Long winters and weak crop yields forces local communities to migrate to urban centers.²²⁵</p> <p>Soil degradation – flooding, wind, and water erosion continue to degrade soil quality, making it harder to grow crops.²²⁶</p>
Population	
Population and age structure	The 2010 census indicated that the seven districts of Karotegin were inhabited by 386'000 people. The largest population center is Gharm. ²²⁷

²¹⁹ Guenther T., Robinson S., Otambekov A., Jumakhonova R. 2006. Moving out of poverty in rural Central Asia: long term economic development or high income volatility? A case study from Tajikistan. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279191373_Moving_out_of_poverty_in_rural_Central_Asia_long_term_economic_development_or_high_income_volatility_A_case_study_from_Tajikistan.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid. pp.9

²²³ Guenther T., Robinson S., Otambekov A., Jumakhonova R. 2006. Moving out of poverty in rural Central Asia: long term economic development or high income volatility? A case study from Tajikistan. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279191373_Moving_out_of_poverty_in_rural_Central_Asia_long_term_economic_development_or_high_income_volatility_A_case_study_from_Tajikistan.

²²⁴ Ginzky. Harald et al (2017). International Yearbook of Soil Law and Policy 2017. pp. 80.

²²⁵ Guenther T., Robinson S., Otambekov A., Jumakhonova R. 2006. Moving out of poverty in rural Central Asia: long term economic development or high income volatility? A case study from Tajikistan. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279191373_Moving_out_of_poverty_in_rural_Central_Asia_long_term_economic_development_or_high_income_volatility_A_case_study_from_Tajikistan.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Asia-Plus. 2019. The next population census will take place in Tajikistan in October next year. Available at: <https://asiaplus.tj.info/en/news/tajikistan/society/20191010/the-next-population-census-will-take-place-in-tajikistan-in-october-next-year>.

Religious and ethnic groups	The largest ethnic group is Tajiks, followed by Uzbeks, then Kyrgyz, Russians, Turkmen, Tatars, Arabs, and Gharmis (exact percentages are unknown). ²²⁸ During the civil war between 1992 and 1997, the majority of Gharmis, primarily based in the district of Rasht, left for Afghanistan. ²²⁹ Most inhabitants of Karotejin are Sunni Muslims. ²³⁰
Languages	The only official state language is Tajik. ²³¹ Russian is widely used in government and business affairs, while various ethnic groups also speak Kyrgyz, Uzbek and other languages. ²³²

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW – AUTHONOMOUS DISTRICT OF GORNO- BADAKHSHAN	
Geography	
Location and area²³³	Gorno-Badakhshan is an autonomous region of 63,710 km ² located in eastern Tajikistan, along the Pamir mountainous region. It was formally known as the Kuhistani Badakhshan Autonomous Region. Due to its geographical disposition, this remains one of the most strategically sensitive areas in Central Asia. It is bordered on the east by China, by Afghanistan on the south and west, and is separated from Pakistan and Azad Kashmir by a narrow strip of Afghan territory. While the east section of the region consists of a high plateau, the western part is interspersed high ranges and narrow valleys. Although the region makes up nearly 45% of the land area of Tajikistan, only an estimated 3% of Tajikistan's population permanently reside there. ²³⁴
Economy (agriculture & industry)	In the east of the region, predominantly livestock (consisting of yaks, sheep, cattle, and goats) is farmed and raised for wool and skins. The western valleys are used to yield grains such as rice, wheat, corn, as well as cotton, and its hilly areas grow fruit trees, grapes, nuts, barley, legumes, and beans.

²²⁸ UNFPA. 2015. Evaluation of UNFPA support to population and housing census data to inform decision-making and policy formulation 2005-2014. Tajikistan: Country Case Study. pp. 14. Available at: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/admin-resource/Tajikistan_Case_Study_Report_1.pdf.

²²⁹ U.S. Department of State. 1994. Tajikistan Human Rights Practices. Available at: http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/democracy/1993_hrp_report/93hrp_report_eur/Tajikistan.html.

²³⁰ UNFPA (2015). Evaluation of UNFPA support to population and housing census data to inform decision-making and policy formulation 2005-2014. Tajikistan: Country Case Study. pp.14.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Robinson S., Whitton M., January 2010. Pasture in Gorno-Badakhshan, Tajikistan: Common Resource or Private Property. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Location-of-the-study-sites-in-Gorno-Badakhshan-also-showing-locations-subsequently_fig1_265283968.

²³⁴ Boonstra J. October 2011. Go Gorno-Badakhshan. Available at: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/159482/Commentary_19.pdf p.1.

General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan

UNITED
NATIONS

A S



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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-second session
Item 20 (b) of the preliminary list*
STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF
HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF
ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS,
INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE:
SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUAL
COUNTRIES OR REGIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 1 July 1997 from the Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed
to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the texts of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan (annex I), the Moscow Declaration by the President of Tajikistan, E. S. Rakhmonov, the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, G. D. Merrem, (annex II) and the Protocol of Mutual Understanding between the President of Tajikistan, E. S. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri (annex III), all signed in Moscow on 27 June 1997.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its attachments circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 20 (b) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

* A/52/50.

Annex I

General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National
Accord in Tajikistan, signed in Moscow on 27 June 1997

For the purposes of achieving peace and national accord in Tajikistan and overcoming the consequences of the civil war, inter-Tajik talks on national reconciliation have been conducted from April 1994 up until the present time under the auspices of the United Nations. In the course of eight rounds of talks between delegations of the Government of Tajikistan and the United Tajik Opposition, hereinafter referred to as the Parties, six meetings between the President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, and also three rounds of consultations between the delegations of the Parties, which took place in Almaty, Ashgabat, Bishkek, Islamabad, Kabul, Meshkhed (Islamic Republic of Iran), Moscow, Tehran and Khusdekh (Afghanistan), protocols were agreed and signed which, together with the present document, constitute the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan (the General Agreement). It includes the following documents:

- the Protocol on the fundamental principles for establishing peace and national accord in Tajikistan of 17 August 1995 (annex I);^{*1}
- the Protocol on political questions of 18 May 1997 (annex II)² and the related Agreement between the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Sharipovich Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, Said Abdullo Nuri, on the results of the meeting held in Moscow on 23 December 1996 (annex III);³ the Protocol on the main functions and powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation of 23 December 1996 (annex IV);⁴ the Statute of the Commission on National Reconciliation, of 21 February 1997 (annex V);⁵ the Additional Protocol to the Protocol on the main functions and powers of the Commission on National Reconciliation, of 21 February 1997 (annex VI);⁶
- the Protocol on military issues (annex VII);⁷
- the Protocol on refugees of 13 January 1997 (annex VIII);⁸
- the Protocol on the guarantees of implementation of the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan, of 28 May 1997 (annex IX).⁹

The President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition have agreed that the signing of the present General Agreement marks the beginning of the phase of full and interconnected implementation of the agreements reached, which will put an end once and for all to the fratricidal conflict in Tajikistan, ensure mutual forgiveness and amnesty, return the

* These annexes, containing earlier agreements, have not been included here (see the relevant Security Council documents).

/...

refugees to their homes, and create the conditions for the democratic development of society, the holding of free elections and the restoration of the country's economy destroyed by the many years of conflict. The highest national priorities of the country are peace and the national unity of all nationals of Tajikistan, regardless of their ethnic origin, political orientation, religion or regional affiliation.

The President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition have agreed to request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to provide assistance and cooperation in the comprehensive implementation of the General Agreement. They have also agreed to request the Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Governments of the guarantor States to provide cooperation in the implementation of the relevant provisions of the General Agreement.

The President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition have agreed to register the General Agreement with the United Nations Secretariat in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations.

(Signed) E. RAKHMONOV
President of Tajikistan

(Signed) A. NURI
Leader of the United
Tajik Opposition

(Signed) G. MERREM
Special Representative of the
Secretary-General of the
United Nations

Notes

¹ S/1995/720, annex.

² S/1997/385, annex I.

³ S/1996/1070, annex I.

⁴ Ibid., annex II.

⁵ S/1997/169, annex I.

⁶ Ibid, annex II.

⁷ S/1997/209, annex II.

⁸ S/1997/56, annex III.

⁹ S/1997/410, annex.

/...

Annex II

The Moscow Declaration, signed in
Moscow on 27 June 1997

We, the President of Tajikistan, E. S. Rakhmonov, the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, G. D. Merrem, have signed today in Moscow the General Agreement on the Establishment of Peace and National Accord in Tajikistan. Thus, after five years of civil confrontation which became one of the most tragic pages in the centuries-long history of our country, the inter-Tajik talks on national reconciliation have been successfully concluded and the long-awaited day of the triumph of reason and hope for a peaceful future has dawned.

The President of Tajikistan and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition express their sincere gratitude to the United Nations, under the auspices and with the mediation of which the negotiating process has been proceeding for the past three years. They express their conviction that the United Nations will provide Tajikistan with assistance and cooperation in the implementation of the agreements reached.

We are grateful to the observer countries at the inter-Tajik talks - Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, the Russian Federation, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan - for their cooperation in moving the talks forward and their all-round assistance during the years of our people's ordeal. Agreement at the international level to guarantee the implementation of the Agreement strengthens our conviction that all the obligations it contains will be implemented in full within the agreed periods.

We greatly value the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the inter-Tajik negotiating process, and express the hope that they too will provide cooperation in the implementation of the agreements reached.

We thank the Government of the Russian Federation and President B. N. Yeltsin personally for their great contribution to the Tajik settlement and their cooperation in the successful conduct of the present meeting in Moscow.

/...

As we enter on the new responsible phase of giving effect to the provisions of the General Agreement, we proclaim once again our desire for the speediest possible attainment of peace and national harmony in Tajikistan.

(Signed) E. RAKHMONOV
President of Tajikistan

(Signed) A. NURI
Leader of the United
Tajik Opposition

(Signed) G. MERREM
Special Representative of the
Secretary-General of the
United Nations

/...

Annex III

Protocol of Mutual Understanding between the President of Tajikistan,
E. S. Rakhmonov and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition,
S. A. Nuri, signed in Moscow on 27 June 1997

The President of Tajikistan, E. S. Rakhmonov, and the leader of the United Tajik Opposition, S. A. Nuri, held a separate meeting in Moscow on 27 June 1997, to discuss issues associated with the strengthening of confidence-building measures between the Parties in the interests of advancing the process of national reconciliation in Tajikistan.

As a result of the meeting, the following agreements were reached:

- (1) To convene in Moscow by 7 July 1997 the first meeting of the Commission on National Reconciliation to discuss and transmit for consideration by the Parliament of Tajikistan the draft of the General Amnesty Act;
- (2) In implementation of the provisions of the Bishkek Memorandum of 18 May 1997 (S/1997/385, annex II) regarding solution of the problems of exchanging prisoners of war and imprisoned persons as an act of goodwill, to exchange by 15 July 1997 50 prisoners of war and 50 imprisoned persons, including all those detained since February 1997;
- (3) Firmly condemning terrorism and confirming that their positions regarding joint action to combat it remain unchanged, the Parties have agreed that they will not use the existing known facts and suspicions to discredit one another politically.

(Signed) E. S. RAKHMONOV
The President of Tajikistan

(Signed) S. A. NURI
The leader of the United
Tajik Opposition

/...

In the presence of:

(Signed) G. D. MERREM
The Special Representative of the Secretary-General
of the United Nations for Tajikistan

(Signed) E. M. PRIMAKOV
The Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Russian Federation

(Signed) A. A. VELAYATI
The Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Islamic Republic of Iran:

Climate and terrain	Gorno-Badakhshan's climate mainly corresponds to central European weather conditions, yet the region remains one of the coldest in Tajikistan, with an average daily high temperature of 12 centigrade. The geographical environment of the region is among the earth's most alpine. "Immense and imposing glaciers grind down steep slopes, producing wild rivers which roar through narrow canyons and cascade down great waterfalls of uncountable number in this vast wilderness. Forests are noticeably absent here, as most of the province is above the tree line; only grasses and small shrubs survive in the highlands. This lack of vegetation results in the exposure of Gorno-Badakhshan's geologic past, and infinite varieties of amazing, unusual, and plain bizarre shapes and patterns are visible in the multi-colored rock. The largest peaks include Ismoil Somoni (formerly Communism Peak; 7495m.), Ibn Sina (formerly Lenin Peak; 7135m.), Korzhenev (7105m.), Independence (formerly Revolution Peak; 6974m.), and Karl Marx (6726m.). The most impressive river is the powerful Pyanj, which runs through a deep canyon from the Chinese border all the way to the Aral Sea, and forms the entire Tajik border with Afghanistan. Lakes in the region are often salty, such as gigantic Karakol (black lake); or stunningly beautiful, like Sarezkol (purple lake). Many mineral hot springs dot the countryside, some with developed infrastructure."
Natural resources	Gold, salt, mica, limestone, and coal are mined in the region. The mineral wealth of the region consists of precious metals, gemstones, and unexploited sulfur deposits.
Environmental issues that can have an impact on security	Long winters and weak crop yields exert lead to the local population migrating to urban centers. ²³⁵ Landslides and soil degradation – flooding, wind, and water erosion continue to degrade soil quality, making it harder to grow crops. ²³⁶
Population	
Population and age structure	According to the 2018 sources, the Population of Gorno-Badakhshan is estimated at 226,900 and consists mainly of Pamiris, Kyrgyz and several other minorities. ²³⁷
Religious and ethnic groups	The Pamiris living in Gorno-Badakhshan are a Persian ethnic group, distinct from the Tajik majority population, largely due to linguistic, cultural, and religious differences. While most Tajik people are Hannafi Sunnis, the Pamiris are Ismaili Shiites who recognize the Aga Khan as their spiritual leader. ²³⁸
Languages	The Pamiris living in the region converse in several Persian, Farsi, and local languages, including Shughnani, Rushani, Yazgulomi, Ishkashimi (Vakhani), and Sariquli (predominantly along the Chinese border area). ²³⁹ Tajik and Russian are also widely spoken.

²³⁵ Guenther T., Robinson S., Otambekov A., Jumakhonova R. 2006. Moving out of poverty in rural Central Asia: long term economic development or high income volatility? A case study from Tajikistan. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279191373_Moving_out_of_poverty_in_rural_Central_Asia_long_term_economic_development_or_high_income_volatility_A_case_study_from_Tajikistan.

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ See "Number of Constant Population (2018)" available at: <https://www.stat.tj/en/database-socio-demographic-sector> accessed 9 June 2020.

²³⁸ International Crisis Group. 14 Mar. 2018. "Rivals for Authority in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan." Briefing N°87, p.3.

²³⁹ RFERL. 9 October 2018. Tajikistan's Unconquerable Gorno-Badakhshan Region. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/tajikistan-unconquerable-gorno-badakhshan-region/29534057.html> accessed 9 June 2020.

III. The Complexity of Fergana Valley: from Violence against the Meskhetian Turks to the Andijan Tragedy



Fergana Valley is geographically shared by Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan. It has experienced social, economic, and political tumult and has faced significant security challenges including ethnic violence, the emergence of terrorism, and extensive social unrest. An initial ethnic conflict between the Uzbek community and Meskhetian Turks occurred in 1989 and demonstrated the region's vulnerability. The emergence of Islamism and subsequent creation of the Islamic Uzbek Movement (IMU) in Fergana Valley adds another layer of complexity, with the region being exposed to conservative or even radical Islam. Lastly, the notorious events in Andijan in 2005, to which IMU was allegedly connected, led to many civilian casualties and alluded to the region's outstanding fragility.

1. Historical developments

1.1 Violence against the Meskhetian Turks

The deportation of the Meskhetian Turks by the Stalinist regime, which took place from 15 to 17 November 1944, resulted in the exile of the entire population group, an estimated 90,000-120,000 people. They were resettled mostly in Central Asia, particularly in Uzbekistan. The term Meskhetian Turks refers to the people deported from southwest Georgia,

today the region known as Samtskhe Javakheti. The term was adopted at the 1998 'Hague Meeting on issues relating to Meskhetian Turks', during which all participants accepted the use of the term in the meeting's final document for the purpose of clarity.²⁴⁰

In Uzbekistan, Meskhetian Turks lived under special circumstances and had no right to leave the area. This condition was lifted only in 1956. After Stalin's death, a government decree eased their freedom of movement within the restrictions of the passport and propiska (registration) system. However, in practice, they remained unable to return to southwest Georgia, as the region was considered a "border zone" and it was necessary to obtain a special permit to visit the area.²⁴¹ The problem of confiscated property was additionally left unsolved.²⁴²

The beginning of ethnic conflict is tied to massive clashes between Meskhetian-Turk and Uzbek-Tajik youth groups that took place in Kuvasae on 16-18 May 1989.²⁴³ Violent clashes continued on 23 May and resulted in many casualties, including one Tajik killed. On 3 June the anti-communist movement of Uzbekistan, Birlik, planned to stage a demonstration in Tashlak. Despite the lack of authorization from local authorities to hold the demonstration, a crowd of young people gathered in Tashlak and set Turk houses on fire. Meskhetian-Turks suddenly fell under attack of numerous bands of young Uzbeks.²⁴⁴ Instances of Uzbek law enforcement agents seeding violence were recorded.²⁴⁵ MIA troops were unable to quell the attacks and violence continued to spread to other villages. The Uzbeks clashed with local militsiya and a curfew was introduced in Fergana. On 5 June, 8500 MIA troops were deployed to reinforce the local militsiya. However, this did not curb violence and on 7 June approximately 5000 Uzbeks travelled to Kokand area where 1500 Meskhetian-Turks lived. The crowd clashed with security actors, killed both Meskhetian-Turk and Uzbek civilians, and occupied official buildings and factories. They targeted the areas in which Meskhetian-Turks had sought refuge. Uzbek militsiya and security actors managed to establish control on 11 June, although several sporadic attacks took place in various Fergana districts after this date. The Soviet Army evacuated an estimated up to 17,000 Meskhetian Turks from the Fergana province and in total over 70,000 left the republic. As a result, Meskhetian Turks were scattered in seven different republics in the Soviet Union. At present there are numerous groups of Meskhetian Turks living in many CIS countries, notably in the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Azerbaijan.²⁴⁶ Immediately

²⁴⁰ Pentikäinen O, Trier T., September 2004. Between integration and resettlement: the Meskhetian Turks. ECMI Working Paper # 21. Available at: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/19696/working_paper_21b.pdf.

²⁴¹ Parliamentary Assembly Report. Doc. 10451. 4 February 2005. The situation of the deported Meskhetian population. Available at: <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewHTML.asp?File-ID=10779&lang=EN>.

²⁴² Записка А.Я. Сухарева Г.С.Таразевичу о расследовании событий вокруг турок-месхетинцев в Узбекской ССР. Жирохов М.,А., 2011. Семена распада: войны и конфликты на территории бывшего СССР. БХВ-Петербург.

²⁴³ This part is based on Жирохов М.,А., 2011. Семена распада: войны и конфликты на территории бывшего СССР. БХВ-Петербург. Some sources claim that commenting on the bloody events, the Chairman of the Council of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (former first Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Uzbekistan), Rafik Nishanov, said at a meeting of the Congress of people's deputies that it all started with a quarrel in the market over a "plate of strawberries" (a Meskhetian Turk was rude to an Uzbek saleswoman and this led to fist-fighting). The same point of view was expressed in an interview by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR G. Kadyrov.

²⁴⁴ Allworth A.E., 1995. Central Asia: One Hundred Thirty Years of Russian Dominance, A Historical Overview. Duke University Press Books.

²⁴⁵ Записка А.Я. Сухарева Г.С.Таразевичу о расследовании событий вокруг турок-месхетинцев в Узбекской ССР. Жирохов М.,А., 2011. Семена распада: войны и конфликты на территории бывшего СССР. БХВ-Петербург.

²⁴⁶ Parliamentary Assembly Report. Doc. 10451. 4 February 2005. The situation of the deported Meskhetian population. Available at: <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/X2H-Xref-ViewHTML.asp?File-ID=10779&lang=EN>.

following the violence, a joint investigation group was formed, led by Alexandr Frolov and made up of representatives from the KGB, General Prosecutor's Office, and MIA. According to the Commission established by the Central Committee of the Uzbek Communist Party, during the June pogroms, 112 civilians (51 Meskhetian-Turks, 38 Uzbeks, 25 of other nationalities) and one individual from the local militia were killed, and 1011 civilians, 137 soldiers, and 110 representatives of the local militia were injured. 757 houses and 27 governmental building were set on fire. 70,000 residents participated in the unrest.²⁴⁷

The reasons for the pogrom are disputed. Some argue that Uzbek nationalism was sparked by liberal political tendencies, that poor conditions in the over-populated Fergana Valley led to ethnic violence, or that a series of related factors compounded to result in an unplanned outbreak of violence. Others argue that the Soviet authorities orchestrated the violence.²⁴⁸

1.2 The Emergence of Adolat

In 1989, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Namangan, Burgutali Rafikov stated 'I have communism in my head and I have Islam in my heart'.²⁴⁹ This was a common attitude towards religion held by residents of Fergana during soviet times. A strong Islamic tradition, coupled with economic downturn and high criminality, prompted the emergence of new and rather radical movements that have changed the security landscape of Fergana. Namangan became notorious as an Islamic centre, as Fergana witnessed the birth of radical Islam through the establishment of Adolat.

The sources credit the foundation of Adolat to Abduhakim Sattimov.²⁵⁰ The basis of this organization was the so-called voluntary national group (DND), which was established in the summer of 1989 to protect Sattimov's small domestic silk production enterprise. The DND group quickly established training facilities and attracted trainers, one of whom was Yuldashev,²⁵¹ the future leader of IMU.

Adolat assumed authority over the security of Namangan, even conducting nighttime patrols. The city's religious leaders (i.e. Umar-hon Domla) took notice of Adolat's growing strength and credibility and began to make donations from the proceeds of mosques. Yuldashev was assigned as the ideological leader of the organization and insisted on changing Adolat's name to Islom Adolati (Islamic Justice) and on establishing an Islom militsiya in January 1990. As the organization expanded, new membership became contingent upon making an oath to contribute vigorously to the establishment of Sharia law in Namangan and Uzbekistan. Special patrol groups were created that prevented the sale of alcohol and caught petty thieves. Adolat aimed to be an imitation of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary

ID=10779&lang=EN.

²⁴⁷ Записка А.Я. Сухарева Г.С.Таразевичу о расследовании событий вокруг турок-месхетинцев в Узбекской ССР. Жирохов М., А., 2011. Семёна распада: войны и конфликты на территории бывшего СССР. БХВ-Петербург.

²⁴⁸ Pentikäinen O, Trier T., September 2004. Between integration and resettlement: the Meskhetian Turks. ECMI Working Paper # 21. Available at: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/19696/working_paper_21b.pdf.

²⁴⁹ Starr F.S. 2011. Ferghana Valley: The Heart of Central Asia. Routledge.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. Some sources claim that Yuldashev and Khojaev, originally members of the Uzbekistan branch of the Islamic Renaissance Party, became disillusioned with the Party's refusal to demand the establishment of an Islamic state and broke away to form the Adolat (Justice) movement. From its inception, Adolat lacked a political agenda. Instead, it called for the creation of an Islamicized society and the implementation of traditional Islamic law (Sharia) in Uzbekistan. Ciment J. 2006. Encyclopedia of Conflicts Since World War II. Routledge.

²⁵¹ The Uzbek scholar Bakhtiyor Babadzhonov describes it this way: "Sattimov himself was a completely non-religious person, but in his own way he also began to assess the significance of the growing process of Islamization. In addition, the bulk of his group came from religious families. That is why he puts forward Tahir Yuldashev as the "Islamic ideologue" of his organization. See: https://www.knyazev.org/books/integration_projects.pdf ctp. 206.

Guards. Young men with green headbands took control of Namangan overnight and persecuted those whom they judged to be breaking the law. The punishment awarded to thieves and prostitutes was unusual: they were paraded through the town sitting backwards on donkeys, tied to posts in public places, where people spat in their faces, and were flogged in the mosques. Crime was quickly eliminated.²⁵²

Local militia were unable to prevent Adolat's growing influence, despite the fact that illegal activities on the ground included beating local officials in public. By the end of 1991, the militants began calling themselves Islom Lashkarlali (Islam warriors), reflecting their aspiration to establish parallel power in the city. The organization's management gradually shifted into Yuldashev's hands.

As many as 12,000 young Muslims joined Adolat, which promoted an Islamic way of life. In September 1991, Adolat activists stormed the local Communist Party office to protest against the government's refusal to build a mosque in an abandoned government building. In December 1991, Adolat came into direct conflict with the state when head of state Karimov visited Namangan in an effort to assuage the simmering discontent, growing due to declining living standards in Fergana. Karimov, met by a crowd estimated to be 40,000 people, was caught off guard and forced into making concessions that included allowing the local Communist Party building to be used as a Muslim Women's hospital.²⁵³ The organization's final and most audacious act was its seizure of Namangan's City Hall in order to hold a meeting there on 19 December 1991.²⁵⁴

Fearing the growing power of Adolat as a threat to the stability of Uzbekistan, Karimov banned the organization in March 1992. 27 Adolat activists were arrested and sentenced to lengthy prison terms. The group's leadership, including Yuldashev and Khojaev (who changed his name to Namangani) fled to neighboring Tajikistan.²⁵⁵ They joined the Tajik Islamists in Gharm Valley and participated in the Tajik Civil War on the side of the United Tajik Opposition.²⁵⁶ After a peace agreement was achieved in Tajikistan in 1997, rather than disarming, the bulk of Uzbek fighters moved to Afghanistan.²⁵⁷

1.3. The emergence of the IMU

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) was formed in 1996 by Yuldashev and Namangani. Disillusioned with the 1997 power-sharing agreement between the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IPRT) and the Tajik government under Rahmonov, Yuldashev and Namangani formed the IMU with the purpose of overseeing Karimov's rule in neighbouring Uzbekistan and creating an Islamic State under Sharia law.²⁵⁸ Soon after its establishment, the IMU moved its main operating base to northern Afghanistan.²⁵⁹ Like the Taliban then, the IMU originally espoused nationalist jihadist ambitions, concerned purely with the establishment of an Islamic state in Uzbekistan. Despite this, the IMU was forced to rely on support

²⁵² Rotar I. 3 October 2012. Will the Fergana Valley Become a Hotbed of Destabilization in Central Asia? Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 9 Issue: 180. Available at: <https://jamestown.org/program/will-the-fergana-valley-become-a-hotbed-of-destabilization-in-central-asia/>.

²⁵³ Ciment J. 2011 World Terrorism: An Encyclopedia of Political Violence from Ancient Times to the Post-9/11 Era. Routledge.

²⁵⁴ Starr F.S. 2011. Ferghana Valley: The Heart of Central Asia. Routledge.

²⁵⁵ Ciment J. 2006. Encyclopedia of Conflicts Since World War II. Routledge.

²⁵⁶ Ciment J. 2011. World Terrorism: An Encyclopedia of Political Violence from Ancient Times to the Post-9/11 Era. Routledge.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (n.d.). Stanford Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC). Available at: https://cisac.fsi.stanford.edu/mappingmilitants/profiles/islamic-movement-uzbekistan#_ftn4.

²⁵⁹ The New Yorker, 14 January 2002. They're Only Sleeping – Why militant Islamicists in Central Asia aren't going to go away. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/01/14/theyre-only-sleeping>.

from a variety of like-minded Islamist organisations, due in part to Karimov's increasing suppression of Islam in the IMU's native Fergana Valley.²⁶⁰ The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, forced the IMU to relocate to Pakistan and seek support of organisations active in that region, such as Al Qaeda and the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).²⁶¹

In the period from the IMU's establishment to their relocation to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in northwestern Pakistan (1998-2001), several terrorist attacks occurred in Central Asia, many of which were attributed to the IMU. The first of these fell within the context of the Batken Conflict, which included a series of armed clashes between the IMU and the Armed Forces of Kyrgyzstan in 1999.²⁶² While Yuldashev based himself in Peshawar in Pakistan from 1995 until 1998,²⁶³ Namangani remained in Tajikistan, and maintained an IMU base in Tajikistan's Tavildara Valley.²⁶⁴ It was from here that the IMU projected power and, in August 1999, sent militants across the border into Kyrgyzstan's Batken province. These IMU militants occupied a number of villages in the Sokh and Vorukh enclave, including Zardaly and Korgon²⁶⁵ and kidnapped four Japanese geologists, their interpreter, a number of Kyrgyz policemen,²⁶⁶ and the commander of the Kyrgyz Ministry of Interior, Major General Anarbek Shamkeev. This was the IMU's first verifiable military operation.

After a month of fighting, IMU militants were pushed out of Batken by the combined armed forces of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, and into the surrounding mountainous areas. Sources suggest that twenty-seven Kyrgyz soldiers and civilians died in the fighting, while casualty figures for the IMU are unknown.²⁶⁷

Earlier in the same year, the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, experienced six simultaneous car bombings, one of which nearly claimed the life of President Karimov.²⁶⁸ Sources suggest 16 people died and over 130 were wounded in the attacks. Despite the government apportioning blame to the Hizb ut Tahrir, a Pan-Islamic party, and the IMU, some sources hold that the attacks were conducted by rival political and regional elites.²⁶⁹ Whatever the truth, the result

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Witter D. 2011. Uzbek Militancy in Pakistan's Tribal Region. Institute for the Study of War. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep07877>.

²⁶² Капарович А. 2014. Баткен 1999 год: события или война? Мнение. АКИпресс. Available at: http://mnienie.akiexpress.org/unews/un_post:2274.

²⁶³ They're Only Sleeping – Why militant Islamicists in Central Asia aren't going to go away. 2002. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/01/14/theyre-only-sleeping>

²⁶⁴ Central Asia Online. 6 March 2010. IMU said to seek control over Central Asia. Available at: http://centralasia-online.com/cocoon/caii/xhtml/en_GB/features/caii/features/main/2010/03/06/feature-01.

²⁶⁵ Омуралиев Н., Элебаева А. 2000. Баткенские события в Кыргызстане. Хроника событий. Central Asia & Central Caucasus Press AB. Available at: <https://www.ca-c.org/journal/cac-07-2000/04.omural.shtml>.

²⁶⁶ Child G. 2015. Over the Edge: The True Story of the Kidnap and Escape of Four Climbers in Central Asia. Mountaineers Books; Stein M. 2018. The Goals of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Its Impact on Central Asia and the United States. pp. 4. Available at: https://community.apan.org/cfs-file/__key/docpreview-s/00-00-08-44-82/2013_2D00_01_2D00_01-The-Goals-of-the-Islamic-Movement-of-Uzbekistan-_2800_Stein_2900_.pdf and RAND (2018). Conflict, Religion and Stability in the Former Soviet Union. Eds. Katya Migacheva and Bryan Frederick. Pp. 72. Available at: https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2100/RR2195/RAND_RR2195.pdf.

²⁶⁷ Polat A. and Butkevich N. (n.d.) Unraveling the Mystery of the Tashkent Bombings: Theories and Implications. pp. 549; and Child G. 2015. Over the Edge: The True Story of the Kidnap and Escape of Four Climbers in Central Asia.

²⁶⁸ Rabasa A. et al 2006. The Caucasus and Central Asia. Beyond Al-Qaeda: Part 1, The Global Jihadist Movement, RAND Corporation, 2006. pp. 105–118. Available at: https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2006/RAND_MG429.pdf.

²⁶⁹ Rabasa A. et al 2006. The Caucasus and Central Asia. Beyond Al-Qaeda: Part 1, The Global Jihadist Movement and Chivers, C. J. Threats and Responses: Central Asia; Uzbek Militants' Decline Provides Clues to U.S. New York Times, 2002. Web. 30 Aug. 2018. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/10/08/world/threats-and-responses-central-asia-uzbek-militants-decline-provides-clues-to-us.html>.

was an escalation of Karimov's suppression of political Islamist groups, particularly those active in the Fergana valley.²⁷⁰ After renewed pressure from the international community on Tajikistan, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan persuaded the IMU to abandon its stronghold in Tavildara.²⁷¹ The Russians acted as intermediaries, and some sources claim that they flew Namangani and his fighters to Northern Afghanistan.²⁷²

After expanding operations in Afghanistan, Namangani once again led his fighters back to the Tavildara valley in Tajikistan. From there, the IMU organized several cross-border incursions into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in 1999 and 2000, including intrusions into two enclaves, Vorukh and Sokh.²⁷³ In early August 2000, the IMU launched a coordinated assault on Uzbek government forces in southern Uzbekistan, resulting in 15 reported casualties.²⁷⁴ On the same day, IMU militants crossed the border from their base in Tajikistan's Tavildara Valley into southern Kyrgyzstan. In both cases, the IMU claimed official responsibility for the attacks. On 12 August 2000, fighting reportedly occurred in the mountainous border areas between IMU fighters and the Uzbek and Kyrgyz security forces. Official government reports state the death toll for Uzbek security forces as 20, and for Kyrgyz as 30.²⁷⁵ During the same year, reports emerged that four American mountaineers were kidnapped by IMU militants while trying to climb the "Yellow Wall" in Karavshin Valley in Kyrgyzstan.²⁷⁶ As a result, the U.S. designated the IMU as a Foreign Terrorist Organization on 25 September 2000.²⁷⁷

After this series of attacks, international pressure from both Uzbekistan and western powers increased on Tajikistan to expel the IMU from its base in the Tavildara Valley to Afghanistan.²⁷⁸ While the IMU retained a limited presence in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, it began directing operations from its stronghold in Northern Afghanistan and intensifying its cooperation with the Taliban. Namangani was reportedly appointed as the Deputy Defence Minister in the Taliban government and IMU forces supported a renewed campaign against Afghanistan's Northern Alliance.²⁷⁹ Mere months later, the U.S.-led operation in Afghanistan, the subsequent fall of the Taliban, and the death of the IMU's military commander Namangani in an American airstrike, forced the IMU to abandon its stronghold in Afghanistan and, under the leadership of Yuldashev, relocated permanently to Waziristan in the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan.²⁸⁰ It is from there, that the IMU, whose numbers were significantly depleted from their defeat in Afghanistan, organized attacks in Central Asia to be carried out by their sleeper cells.

²⁷⁰ They're Only Sleeping – Why militant Islamicists in Central Asia aren't going to go away. 2002. Available at: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2002/01/14/theyre-only-sleeping>

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ciment J. 2006. *Encyclopedia of Conflicts Since World War II*. Routledge.

²⁷⁴ Polat A. and Butkevich N. (n.d.) *Unraveling the Mystery of the Tashkent Bombings: Theories and Implications*. pp. 547.

²⁷⁵ Ibid. pp. 542.

²⁷⁶ Saidazimova G. 2 February 2006. *Central Asia: Is Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan Really Back?* Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1065364.html> and United States Department of State Bureau of Diplomatic Security 2000. *Political Violence Against Americans: 2000*. pp. 29.

²⁷⁷ United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2017 - Foreign Terrorist Organizations: Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*, 19 September 2018. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5bcf1f424.html>

²⁷⁸ They're Only Sleeping – Why militant Islamicists in Central Asia aren't going to go away.

²⁷⁹ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. 24 August 2019. Bruce Pannier. *Uzbekistan Experiences The Pitfalls Of Peacemaking In Afghanistan*. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbekistan-afghanistan-taliban-peacemaking-pitfalls/30126897.html>.

²⁸⁰ Saidazimova G. *Central Asia: Is Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan Really Back?* and Fitz, Duncan, Thomas M Sanderson, and Sung in Marshall. 2014. *Central Asian Militancy: A Primary Source Examination*. CSIS Transnational Threats Project.

In December 2002, the IMU claimed responsibility for a car bombing in a market in Bishkek, killing six people and wounding 40.²⁸¹ Six months later, in May 2003, the IMU bombed a currency-exchange office in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, killing one.²⁸² In that same month, reports suggest that Kyrgyz security forces disrupted a planned attack on the U.S. embassy and a nearby hotel in Bishkek.²⁸³ Reports by journalists affiliated with the NGO Forum 18, claimed that one of those arrested, Azizbek Karimov, testified that he had been ordered to carry out the attacks by the IMU.²⁸⁴

On 28 March, west of Tashkent in the Bukhara region, a large explosion occurred at a residence where explosive materials were supposedly produced, killing over a dozen people (killing 19 and wounding 26).²⁸⁵ Next day, on 29 March 2004, two suicide bombers attacked the Chorsu market in Tashkent, killing 3 and wounding 30.²⁸⁶ The attacks continued through 30 March, with a car bombing targeting a police checkpoint near Tashkent and an armed standoff between militants and police near the residence of President Karimov, in which two dozen people were reportedly killed.²⁸⁷ On 9 April, the IJU (Islamic Jihad Union) released a statement claiming responsibility for all of the attacks,²⁸⁸ although a subsequent investigation by Uzbek authorities claimed that Hizb ut-Tahrir had masterminded them, in cooperation with the IMU.²⁸⁹ Despite this, on 2 April, the Uzbek branch of Hizb ut-Tahrir reportedly released a statement denying its involvement in the attacks.²⁹⁰ Other commentators postulated that the internal power struggle between the National Security Service and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, combined with the alleged illness of President Karimov, led political interest groups to either conduct or support the attacks in an attempt to seize power.²⁹¹ Whatever the truth, analysts agree that the scale of the attacks suggest that support from outside of Uzbekistan may have been present.²⁹²

As a response to the attacks conducted in Uzbekistan between March and April of 2004, President Karimov temporarily closed the Uzbek borders, schools, and public events, and increased the number of checkpoints and police patrols.²⁹³ Other sources note that Uzbek authorities tightened media censorship and conducted large-scale detention operations.²⁹⁴

²⁸¹ Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (n.d.). Stanford Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC); United Nations Security Council (n.d.) Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Available at: https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/sanctions/1267/aq_sanctions_list/summaries/entity/islamic-movement-of-uzbekistan; Counter Extremism Project (n.d.). Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan. Available at: <https://www.counterextremism.com/threat/islamic-movement-uzbekistan> and Australian Government (2012). What Government are Doing – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

²⁸² Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (n.d.). Stanford Center for International Security and Cooperation (CISAC) and Australian Government (2012). What Government are Doing – Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

²⁸³ United Nations Security Council (n.d.) Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

²⁸⁴ Rubin B. 2010. Guide to Islamist Movements. Volume 2. London: England. pp. 174.

²⁸⁵ Ibid.

²⁸⁶ Counter Extremism Project (n.d.). Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and CRS Report for Congress (2004). The 2004 Attacks in Uzbekistan: Context and Implications for U.S. Interests. Available at: https://www.everycrsreport.com/files/20040416_RS21818_4610a280e6c5c627761c8f41b0bee2057ecddcf2.pdf.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Saidazimova G. Germany: Authorities Say Uzbekistan-Based Group Behind Terrorist Plot; Rubin B. 2010. Guide to Islamist Movements. Volume 2. pp. 174 and Counter Extremism Project (n.d.). Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

²⁸⁹ CRS Report for Congress (2004). The 2004 Attacks in Uzbekistan: Context and Implications for U.S. Interests.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Rubin B. 2010. Guide to Islamist Movements. Volume 2. pp. 174.

²⁹³ CRS Report for Congress (2004). The 2004 Attacks in Uzbekistan: Context and Implications for U.S. Interests.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

On 30 July 2004, multiple suicide bombers attacked the entrances of the U.S. and Israeli embassies in Taskhent. Reports suggest that seven people were killed in the attacks.²⁹⁵ In this instance, however, the IMU did not claim responsibility. While analysts suggested the culpability of the IMU, Al-Qaeda, or Hizb ut- Tahrir,²⁹⁶ the Islamic Jihad Union (IJU), a splinter group of the IMU, claimed responsibility.²⁹⁷ The U.S. State Department blamed the IMU for a bombing in Osh, Kyrgyzstan, in which one police officer and one militant were killed.²⁹⁸ No group claimed responsibility for the attack. In response, however, the U.S. State Department designated the IJU as a global terrorist organisation in May 2005, with the United Nations Security Council adding IJU to its terrorist list in June 2005.²⁹⁹

1.4 The Andijan events in 2005

Some sources claim that Andijan became a center for Hizb ut-Tahrir, the worldwide Islamist secret society known for its extremism and anti-Semitism, but also for its non-violence.³⁰⁰ Yuldashev, a mathematics instructor, embraced Hizb ut-Tahrir in the early 1990s but separated from the group in 1992. By 2004, Yuldashev's followers were grouped in small, outlier communities in several parts of Uzbekistan. The Uzbek government named the group "Akromiya" (Brothers) after Akrom Yuldashev. Hizb ut-Tahrir's prominence in the Andijan region certainly contributed to the government's overreaction to the May 2005 events. Almost every member of Akromiya was a former member of Hizb ut-Tahrir.³⁰¹

In the given context, the most significant development occurred after the May 2004 impeachment of Governor Kobil Obidov, who seemingly had an informal business arrangement with the Brothers, when the newly appointed governor, Saydullo Begaliyev, ordered the arrest of 23 businessmen with ties to Akromiya within his first weeks in office. Initially, female family members of those arrested quietly demonstrated at the prison and courthouse, but during the course of the trial, which ran from late February to May 2005, the protests grew to include dozens and later hundreds of family members, sympathizers, former employees, and human rights advocates.³⁰² In May 2005, the verdict was announced in secret. The 23 businessmen were convicted and sentenced to prison terms ranging from 12 to 22 years. In response, a group of armed men stormed the prison where the 23 businessmen were being held, freeing them and other inmates. A few government buildings were seized and about a dozen police officers were taken hostage.³⁰³ The unrest culminated in a disputed number of unarmed persons being shot dead as protesting civilians departed the square and the city. The deaths of unarmed civilians were the result of excessive force, including indiscriminate shooting and deliberate targeting by the governmental security forces.³⁰⁴ According to the UN reports, the incidents in Andijan that took place between 12 and 14 May 2005, resulted

²⁹⁵ Ibid. Pp 174.

²⁹⁶ Rotar I. 2005. Terrorism in Uzbekistan: A self-made crisis. Terrorism Monitor Volume: 2 Issue: 8. Available at: <https://jamestown.org/program/terrorism-in-uzbekistan-a-self-made-crisis/>.

²⁹⁷ Saidazimova G. 6 September 2007. Germany: Authorities Say Uzbekistan-Based Group Behind Terrorist Plot. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1078560.html>.

²⁹⁸ Ibid. pp.174, and United Nations Security Council (n.d.) Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.

²⁹⁹ Library of Congress (n.d.) Central Asia: Regional Developments and Implications for U.S. Interest.

³⁰⁰ Hartman W.J. 2016. The May 2005 Andijan Uprising: What We Know. Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program. Available at: <https://isdpr.eu/content/uploads/2016/06/2016-Hartman-the-May-2005-Andijan-Uprising-What-We-Know.pdf>.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ The Diplomat. Putz C. 13 May 2015. What Happened 10 Years Ago in Andijan? Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2015/05/what-happened-10-years-ago-in-andijan/>.

³⁰⁴ Report from the OSCE/ODIHR Trial Monitoring in Uzbekistan, September-October 2005 Publisher Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Date 24 April 2006. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/18840>.

in the death of between 173 and several hundred men, women and children. About 500 survivors of these incidents fled Andijan, crossed the border into Kyrgyzstan.³⁰⁵ There are divergent views of the actors that were engaged, the number of casualties, and the cause of the massacres.

An OSCE investigation published some five weeks after the Andijan events, found the basic and undisputed facts of what happened in and near the city of Andijan on 13-14 May 2005 to be as follows.³⁰⁶

- At the time, the trial of 23 local businessmen, who had been arrested in the summer of 2004 and charged with “extremism, fundamentalism, and separatism” related to their association with a group called Akramiya, was awaiting verdict.
- During the night of 12-13 May, an armed group attacked a military unit based in Andijan and seized weapons. In the early hours of 13 May, an armed group attacked Andijan prison and freed detainees.
- On the morning of 13 May, a mass gathering began on Babur Square in Andijan, and the Hokimiyat (Regional Administration) building was taken over by armed persons. Throughout the course of the day, a number of people were taken hostage and held inside the Hokimiyat. Buildings adjacent to Babur Square and a number of vehicles were set on fire.
- There were unsuccessful negotiations between the organizers of the gathering at Babur Square and senior representatives of the Government of Uzbekistan.
- As the demonstration concluded, the crowd sought to depart the square via a main city thoroughfare, Cholpon Prospekt. A number of people were shot dead at that time. Members of the crowd continued to the village of Teshik-Tash, on the border with Kyrgyzstan, where civilians were killed in a further shooting on the morning of 14 May.
- A group of around 500 participants from the meeting in Babur Square crossed into Kyrgyzstan. Subsequently, 439 of them were recognized as refugees by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and were evacuated from Kyrgyzstan to Romania for further resettlement in other countries. Four individuals, also recognized as refugees by the UNHCR, have been kept in detention in Osh, Kyrgyzstan since June 2005 following an extradition request from the Uzbek authorities.
- Concerned at reports based on the testimony of participants in the Babur Square demonstration that several hundred unarmed people were deliberately targeted and shot dead by Uzbek security personnel, a number of international actors, including the OSCE and the United Nations, began calling for an independent international investigation.


Human Rights Watch (HRW) has offered a slightly different version of events, published on 6 June 2005.³⁰⁷

- On 13 May 2005, Uzbek government forces killed hundreds of unarmed people who participated in a massive public protest in the eastern Uzbek city of Andijan. The scale

³⁰⁵ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. 15 July 2005. Report of the Mission to Kyrgyzstan by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) concerning the killings in Andijan Uzbekistan of 13-14 May 2005.

³⁰⁶ Report from the OSCE/ODIHR Trial Monitoring in Uzbekistan, September-October 2005 Publisher Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. Date 24 April 2006. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/18840>.

³⁰⁷ Human Rights Watch. May 13, 2005. “Bullets Were Falling Like Rain” The Andijan Massacre. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2005/06/06/bullets-were-falling-rain/andijan-massacre-may-13-2005>.



of this killing was so extensive, and its nature was so indiscriminate and disproportionate, that it can best be described as a massacre. The government has denied all responsibility for the killings. It claims the death toll was 173 people, including law enforcement officials and civilians killed by the attackers, along with the attackers themselves. The government says the attackers were “Islamic extremists” who initiated “disturbances” in the city. Uzbek authorities did everything to hide the truth behind the massacre and have tried to block any independent inquiry into the events.

- While the government’s efforts at sealing off the city and intimidating those involved or present in order to discourage them from discussing the massacre to outsiders have made it exceedingly difficult to establish the true death toll and reveal an attempt to cover up the truth, HRW believes that hundreds were killed. Eyewitnesses told HRW that about 300-400 people were present at the worst shooting incident, which left few survivors.
- The 13 May killings began when thousands of people participated in a rare, massive protest on Babur Square in Andijan, voicing their anger about growing poverty and government repression. The protest was sparked by the freeing from jail of 23 businessmen who were being tried for “religious fundamentalism.” These charges were widely perceived as unfair and had prompted hundreds of people to peacefully protest the trial in the weeks prior to 13 May.
- The businessmen were freed by a group of armed people who, earlier in the day, raided a military barrack and a police station, seizing weapons. After leading the prison break to free the businessmen, this armed group took over the local government building and took law enforcement and government officials hostage. The attackers, who additionally used hostages and civilians as human shields, committed serious crimes, punishable under the Uzbek criminal code. But neither these crimes nor the peaceful protest that ensued can justify the government’s response.
- According to numerous witnesses interviewed by HRW, there were many instances on 13 May when government troops on armored personnel carriers and military trucks, as well as snipers, fired indiscriminately into a crowd in which the overwhelming majority of people, numbering in the thousands, were unarmed. While some testimony indicates that security forces first shot into the air, in all other incidents no warnings were given, and no other means of crowd control were attempted. After troops sealed off the area surrounding the square, they continued to fire from various directions as the protesters attempted to flee. The presence of gunmen in the crowd, and even the possibility that they may have fired at or returned fire from government forces, cannot possibly justify this wanton slaughter.

The government of Uzbekistan provided their version of events that was submitted to the OSCE on 24 April 2006.³⁰⁸

- The Andijan events did not have any relation to the trial against 23 so-called businessmen. These individuals, to whom ODIHR refers to as businessmen, were accused of committing crimes against the Constitutional Order of the Republic of Uzbekistan, requiring criminal proceedings according to the national legislation. The protests, which took place near the court building during that proceeding, were used by terrorists as an excuse. The terrorist group, members of religious-extremist

³⁰⁸ Comments on the report prepared by the OSCE/ODIHR on monitoring the legal trial in Uzbekistan, September-October 2005, against 15 active participants of the Andijan events in May 2005. 24 April 2006. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/18842>.

sect “Akramilar”, organized a mass protest in order to involve the maximum number of people as their supporters.

- The speeches looked staged. The organizers also invited terrorists from Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan (their identity has been established by now) to participate in demonstrations. With the purpose of conspiracy, the terrorists were dressed in specially prepared clothes and resided in houses of some group members, a search of which revealed Hizb-ut-Tahrir fliers and other religious-extremist literature. Moreover, specially trained groups of women, children, and senior citizens, who were relatives and friends of the terrorists, were supposed to stage “civilian anti-government demonstrations”.
- With regard to actual events, on 12-13 May 2005 in Andijan, several groups of armed individuals committed a number of terrorist acts. This included an attack on a military unit with the seizure of weapons and ammunition, the release of over 500 prisoners from the city prison and their arming, an attack on city administration and civilian objects, taking several officials, law enforcement representatives, and civilians as hostages, the organization of an attempted armed seizure of power in the Andijan region, and the attempted destabilization of the situation in Uzbekistan.
- In order to regulate the situation in Andijan, a special committee on hostage release and neutralization of terrorists was organized. The committee faced the challenge of reducing the threat on citizens’ lives and freeing the hostages. Negotiations lasted for almost 11 hours. The Uzbek authorities were prepared to make compromises, agreeing to the release of 6 arrested extremists and offering terrorists buses and unobstructed transportation to the area of their choice. However, throughout negotiations, the terrorists added new, deliberately impossible demands. In particular, they demanded that a number of imprisoned leaders of religious extremist organizations be freed and that they be delivered by airplane to Andijan. Thus, adding demands of a political nature, the criminals deliberately undermined negotiations. All attempts by the Uzbek authorities to resolve the conflict peacefully failed.
- Under these conditions, the only possible decision was to cordon off the regional administration building. In response to this action the terrorists opened fire. With the assumption that the government troops were preparing an assault and attempting to anticipate this, the criminals, in several columns and holding weapons, shielded themselves with hostages and left the regional administration building. In order to prevent civilian casualties, the government troops allowed the armed groups to leave in three directions towards the Uzbek-Kyrgyz border.
- Active participants of the events, along with their relatives and friends, retreated to a territory on the border of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan in accordance with their plans. The terrorist group implemented their strategy of initiating broad dissemination of informational propaganda against Uzbekistan with the purpose of involving international human rights organizations. This is evidenced by the premature arrival of representatives of international human rights organizations, foreign media, and international charities in Andijan prior to the violent events of 12-13 May. These international actors arrived in time for the “operative coverage of the uprising in Andijan”. The hasty dissemination of unverified information without the consideration of Uzbekistan’s official position led to the emergence of groundless calls for an international investigation.
- The Uzbek Government has acted in compliance with existing international legal norms, specifically Article 51 of the UN Charter. Most of the Uzbek citizens, who crossed the state border, were deceived and pressured to leave Andijan. They were kept under constant psychological pressure by the criminals and were deterred from returning home by the false suggestion of government repression. A number of ac-

cused individuals, who were among the “refugees” and had a chance to go into hiding, later gave themselves up to the law enforcement bodies, proving this coercion. They explained during interrogations that the terrorists forced them under the threat of arms to cross into Kyrgyzstan, where they were forcibly kept and fed the fear that if they returned to Uzbekistan, governmental persecution would occur.

An independent commission of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of Uzbekistan was created to investigate the tragic events that occurred in Andijan on 13 May 2005. At a meeting of the Legislative Chamber of the Parliament, it was decided that an “independent parliamentary commission for a comprehensive investigation of the circumstances surrounding the events in the city of Andijan” would be created. The commission included Parliament representatives from all factions of political parties, as well as Senate representatives. The Independent Commission of the Parliament was “entrusted with a thorough investigation of all the circumstances of the events that took place in Andijan, a deep and comprehensive analysis of their development, identifying the causes and conditions that led to the tragic events of 13 May identifying the main cause and effect relationships of these events, as well as those forces that stand behind these criminal acts resulting in casualties”. The deputies instructed the Commission to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the actions of the government and law enforcement agencies, give them a legal assessment, and systematically inform the Parliament and the public about the progress of the investigation, including through the media.³⁰⁹

The results of the investigation were published by the General Prosecutor’s Office of Uzbekistan in September 2005. They caused a lot of controversy from the Uzbek population. To begin with, the Prosecutor General’s office referred to armed actions against the regime as “terrorist acts”, thus creating several questions related to the terminology. For instance, “As you know, on 12-13 May this year, a number of terrorist acts were committed in the city of Andijan, resulting in human casualties” and “The investigation established that the attacks in Uzbekistan were a detailed plan organized by external destructive forces against the independent policy of Uzbekistan, its national interests, to change the existing constitutional system and create an Islamic state that fully meets their geopolitical interests”.³¹⁰

Another issue left unresolved by the Uzbek investigation is the amount of dead and missing individuals. The official number of fatal casualties is 187. However, the report failed to provide the names and surnames of the deceased. It is suspected that the death toll is a lot higher than the figure claimed by the Prosecutor General’s office. There is a possibility that many victims were not identified and were buried in mass graves. The publication of the names of those who died would make it possible to establish their actual number. It is much the same for missing individuals. Many left home during the days of the Andijan events but did not return. While their whereabouts remain unknown, lists of missing persons are not compiled and accordingly a search is not conducted.

The report also raised questions about Akramiya and about the “invasion from outside”, both blamed for the events of 13 May. However, the report did not question the actions of the Uzbek army and the Uzbek authorities. Local testimonies, in which the troops fired at the crowd of protesters without warning and wounded civilians, were not provided medical assistance remain unaddressed.

Numerous accusations detailing the unjustified and indiscriminate use of force became cornerstones for the assessment of international organisations such as OSCE, ODIHR, Am-

³⁰⁹ РИА Новости. 2005. Узбекистан: Независимая Комиссия Расследует События В Андижане. Available at: <<https://ria.ru/20050524/40404942.html>> [Accessed 2 June 2020].

³¹⁰ Fergananeews.com. 2005. После Публикации Отчета Комиссии О Расследовании Андижанских Событий Вопросов Остается Больше, Чем Ответов. Available at: <https://www.fergananews.com/articles/3964>.

nesty International, and Human Rights Watch. For instance, ODIHR is concerned that this investigation does not extend to the alleged use of indiscriminate and disproportionate force by the Uzbek security forces, as reflected in practically all the information collected by the ODIHR and other international actors. Moreover, the events of 13 May should be examined within the context of the role of authorities in maintaining public order. While states have legitimate security concerns in the current fight against terrorism, caution must be applied to avoid excessively broad and indiscriminate use of the terms “terrorism” and “extremism”. If caution is unheeded, this presents negative consequences for legitimate political opposition, ethnic and religious minorities, and the effective enjoyment of human rights such as freedom of expression and association.³¹¹

The Uzbek government issued a response to this assessment, which denied the discoveries presented. It asserted that an open and transparent judicial examination against the most active participants of the Andijan events was conducted. All interested parties were invited, including diplomats, journalists, and representatives of international and non-governmental organizations. The statements of the ODIHR were referred to as “unsound” and the Uzbek government refuted that the report provided any established fact of violation of procedural norms during the trial: “the report is a reach in unfounded assertions that have no real ground”.³¹² Regarding the accusations on the methods and the use of terminology, such as “terrorism” and “extremism”, the Uzbek government comment stated that: “The methods, which are typical of the terrorist and extremist organizations, have been used (...) The measures undertaken by the law enforcement to suppress the actions of terrorists had a reciprocal character and were applied within the limits of commonly accepted standards of criminal law, such as ‘absolute necessity’ and ‘necessary defense’”.³¹³

An international investigation was strongly advised by international actors such as OSCE.³¹⁴ However, President I. Karimov categorically rejected the possibility of international investigations, stating that this would be a violation of state sovereignty, would bring unwanted attention to the events in Andijan, and that in any case, such an investigation would be biased.³¹⁵ This was strongly condemned by the international community. In November 2005, the European Union imposed an embargo on the sale of weapons and military equipment to Uzbekistan by EU countries, as well as a one-year ban on issuing visas to 12 senior government ministers and officials. In December 2005, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that deeply regretted the refusal of Uzbekistan to allow for an international investigation and called Uzbek authorities to end the practice of “harassment and detention of witnesses”. In turn, the Uzbek authorities banned member states of NATO from holding a presence in Uzbekistan and demanded that all countries except Germany withdraw their troops from the air base in Termez. In addition, in November 2005, the U.S. Army completed the withdrawal of its forces from the air base in Khanabad, an additional step demanded by the Uzbek authorities.³¹⁶

The trial took place in several stages from 20 September to 12 December 2005. The hearing was open. Representatives of the diplomatic corps and international organizations, including the UN, OSCE, ODIHR, UNHCR, and the SCO, monitored the trials and had free access to the courtroom. In total, 121 people were detained for participating in the rebellion. The

³¹¹ Report from the OSCE/ODIHR trial monitoring in Uzbekistan – September/October 2005.

³¹² Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Uzbekistan, Comments on the report prepared by the OSCE office, p.15.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Report from the OSCE/ODIHR trial monitoring in Uzbekistan – September/October 2005. P. 33.

³¹⁵ Human Rights Watch. 2005. Report on the events in Andijan, May 2005. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/Andijan0605ru.pdf>.

³¹⁶ Amnesty.org. 2006. Андижан – Безнаказанность Не Должна Возобладать!. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/76000/eur620102006ru.pdf>.

defendants received sentences mostly of 14 to 20 years in prison. They were accused of aggravated murder, assault on the constitutional system of the Republic of Uzbekistan, terrorism, and other charges. However, Amnesty International's report suggests that the vast majority sentenced were convicted in closed or secret courts, in violation of international fair trial standards. Most of the suspects were held in pretrial detention for several months without the right to communicate with the outside world. Before the trial began, only the names of the first 15 accused were announced in court. The Uzbek authorities also continued to actively - and often successfully - seek extraditions from neighboring countries, as well as from Russia and Ukraine, for members or persons suspected of membership in banned Islamic parties or movements such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and Akramiya, accused of participating in the Andijan events. For instance, the Uzbek authorities filed hundreds of extradition requests to Kyrgyzstan and, to ensure co-operation, threatened to cut off gas supplies. In one instance, Kyrgyz police took a group of refugees from the camp to a local police station, and then a few hours later, when the UN monitors had left for the night, handed four of them over to the Uzbek side.³¹⁷ Those that returned to Uzbekistan continue to be detained without the right to communication with the outside world, which heightens fears that they risk being subjected to torture or other forms of ill-treatment.

2. Structural and Proximate Causes leading to the Andijan unrest

It is difficult to determine whether the structural causes for the unrest in Andijan appear from preceding Islamic suppression or from the repressive socio-economic conditions and political deprivation present in the post-soviet state of Uzbekistan. Suppression of the Islamic religion escalated the role of Islam in the social life of the Uzbek population and may have catalysed radical groups to emerge. Socio-economic and political deprivation triggered significant social discontent and grievances. Both causes are systemic and closely intertwined with one another. Literature suggests that radical Islam had little support in Uzbekistan, due to a secularised state with strong Russian influences from its time under Soviet rule. However, growing grievances about economic decline, corruption, and systemic official abuse, such as torture, and the banning of most secular opposition have motivated many to join Islamist groups. Following the independence of the country, Uzbekistan's state policy introduced a re-Islamisation process to return the country to traditional Islamic practices.³¹⁸ These events crystalized the traditional, grassroot values of the Uzbek population. It is difficult to assert whether this scenario favoured Islamic radicalization or a more educated vision of Islam.³¹⁹ The population of Andijan, inhabiting part of the Fergana Valley where a stronger religious influence prevails in comparison to the rest of the country, were strongly discontented with the state's monopoly on the right to speak for Islam. The political marginalization of the Andijan population would suggest that the state was in urgent need of political reform at the time of the Andijan events.³²⁰

³¹⁷ Memorial Society Human Rights Center. 2006. Refugees from Uzbekistan in the CIS (2005-2006).

³¹⁸ '<...> for example, the administrative establishment of mahallas, strict control and censorship of television and radio broadcasts; the promotion of traditionalism in regard to marriage and family life, including the limitation of women's rights in this respect; bringing the religious heritage and the Islamic historical legacy in the face of Amir Temur, which slept under the Soviet rule, back to the surface of Uzbek consciousness; and the 'fight' against modernization in the form of surveillance of and restraints on the private economic sector and the overall economy'. Azhiben S. 2008. The Andijan Events: Radical Islam and Conflict in Uzbekistan. Conflict & Communication Online, Vol. 7, No. 1.

³¹⁹ '<...> despite the spread of the radical agenda of Wahhabism, Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) on the territory of the Republic.' Ref Azhiben S. 2008. The Andijan Events: Radical Islam and Conflict in Uzbekistan. Conflict & Communication Online, Vol. 7, No. 1.

³²⁰ 'The laws on criminal liability for extremism, religious fundamentalism, and separatism promulgated in the criminal code of independent Uzbekistan created a legitimate framework for identifying and banning local religious initiatives.' Ref Azhiben S. 2008. The Andijan Events: Radical Islam and Conflict in Uzbekistan.

Extremist threads. Some sources claim that Islamic radicalization is linked to the Chechen wars though it remains rather unsubstantiated. For instance, the IMU together with smaller terrorist organisations reportedly conducted a failed assassination attempt on Uzbek President Islam Karimov in February 1999 and coordinated several incursions into Uzbek-populated territories of Kyrgyzstan some months later. While the IMU's influence temporarily decreased following the death of Namangami in 2001, a chain of suicide bombings and machine-gun attacks against police stations, embassies, and civilians in Tashkent and other Uzbek cities in the spring and summer of 2004 marked a hefty and public resurgence of the group. These attacks emulated patterns of simultaneous Chechen terrorist bombings in Russia. "Although the extent and nature of the ties between the IMU and Chechen Wahhabists are difficult to trace (not least because Karimov frequently exaggerated the strength of the IMU to justify his own authoritarian rule), the inspiration that the IMU has drawn from Islamic fundamentalist leaders in Chechnya underlines the destabilizing effects of the Russian-Chechen conflict in regions well outside Russia's borders."³²¹ Nevertheless, terrorist activity in the Caucasus and Central Asia are rather different in terms of scope, 'partners', and objectives. The IMU partnered with the Taliban, while Al-Qaeda harboured Chechen radicals. The IMU intended to establish a caliphate in Central Asia, while the Chechens remained undecided on their participation in jihad, though some ideas of an Emirate in the North Caucasus surfaced with no success. With such extremist influence posing a serious threat to Uzbek internal security, the desire to suppress IMU activities in Uzbekistan may have been a prime motivational factor for the actions of the Uzbek authorities with regard to the arrests in 2004 and subsequent actions leading up to the violent events in Andijan in May 2005.

Economic Distress. The collapse of the Soviet Union marked the start of Uzbekistan's severe struggle with overcoming socio-economic crises, which were significantly exacerbated by disputes over irrigation and cross-border issues. In the six months prior to the events of May 2005, protests had taken place across the country, mostly driven by governmental decrees that levied high tariffs on imports and restricted the activities of bazaar traders.³²² Some Uzbeks rely on trading by re-selling cheap, low-quality clothing from China, purchased at bazaars in the Kyrgyzstan portion of the Fergana Valley. For example, the substantial bazaar in the Osh Province town of Kara-Suu, which borders Andijan Province, is popular with Uzbek shuttle traders.³²³ The 2005 Corruption Perception Index rated Uzbekistan extremely low, at number 137 out of 159 analysed states.³²⁴ However, in 2006, the International Crisis Group reported that profits gained from primary exports such as "cotton, gold, corn and gas, were distributed among a very small circle of the ruling elite, with little or no benefit to the population at large."³²⁵ Theories therefore suggest that local power struggles between the Fergana and Samarkand clans played a major role in the events leading up to the May unrest. Perceptions of increased corruption and ineffective bureaucracy prompted rising anger against the government, as did shortages of gas and electricity throughout the unusually cold preceding winter. National industry was stalled, foreign investment had evaporated, and agriculture provided very low levels of income for farmers. The World Bank

Conflict & Communication Online, Vol. 7, No. 1.

³²¹ Kramer M. March 2005. *Guerilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency and Terrorism in the North Caucasus: The Military Dimension of the Russian-Chechen Conflict*, *Europe-Asia Studies* 57, no.2 pp.262-263.

³²² IWPR. 20 November 2005. *Uzbekistan: A Year of Disturbances*. Available at: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/uzbekistan-year-disturbances>.

³²³ Ref International Crisis Group (ICG) Update Briefing, *Asia Briefing N°38*, Bishkek/Brussels, 25 May 2005.

³²⁴ Transparency International. *Corruption Perception Index 2005*. Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2005>.

³²⁵ Fritz V., Jonathan W. 2012. *Central Asia. Handbook of Democratization*. p. 101–102.

called Uzbekistan a “Low-Income Country under Stress”, a polite term for a state at serious risk of failing.³²⁶

Suppression of Civil Society. By 2005, Uzbekistan had increasingly become one of the “strongholds of authoritarianism in the former socialist bloc.” Following the development of the Rose Revolution in Georgia, Uzbek authorities began to create major obstacles for local and international NGOs. In 2003, Karimov stated in a speech that Uzbek society should cease appealing for assistance from outside Uzbekistan, and that internal resources should be mobilised towards independent Uzbek national development. Following Karimov’s speech, new policies were introduced that restricted access to grants received from international donor organisations and forced international NGOs to reregister with the Uzbek Ministry of Justice and reopen their bank accounts in one of two nationalised banks. The situation escalated further in January 2005, when Karimov “promised that ‘democracy and various so-called open society models’ along with other ‘alien’ ideas” perpetuated by NGOs would not be tolerated. By the end of 2005, most international projects and NGOs in the country had been suspended or evicted and over 60% of all active local NGOs had been shut down.³²⁷

3. Mapping security actors

The main security actors involved in the Andijan incident are a group of unidentified armed civilians, the Uzbek security forces, in particular Special Forces personnel from the National Security Service (SNB) headquartered in Tashkent and officers from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and a crowd of protesters numbering between 10,000 and 15,000.³²⁸ Uzbek President at the time of the Andijan events, Islam Karimov, has also been indicated as participating in the violence, allegedly giving a direct order to senior military officers to instruct troops to fire on the protesters.³²⁹ A lesser role was played by the local police force, who fall under the control of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.³³⁰ Additionally, the Kyrgyz border guards played a role.

The alleged crimes of the 23 local businessmen were defined as “extremism, fundamentalism, and separatism”.³³¹ The businessmen were charged with Article 242/1 (organisation of a criminal conspiracy), Article 244/1.a.b, and Article 244/2 (being funded by foreign criminal groups and organising criminal groups) of the Criminal Code of Uzbekistan. They were said to have been involved with Akramiya, supposedly an Islamic extremist group founded by former Hizb-ut-Tehrir member Akram Yuldotshev.³³² Competing narratives emerged about the identity of those in the group of armed civilians who attacked the Andijan military unit, seized a number of Kalashnikov automatic rifles, and stormed the Andijan prison to release the businessmen on the night of 12-13 May, 2005.³³³ According to Uzbek authorities, the

³²⁶ Ref International Crisis Group (ICG) Update Briefing, Asia Briefing N°38, Bishkek/Brussels, 25 May 2005.

³²⁷ Ashrafi J. Quotas for Quotes: Mainstreaming Open Society Values in Uzbekistan. How NGOs React: Globalization and Education Reform in the Caucasus, Central Asia and Mongolia, by Iveta Silova and Gita Steiner-Khamisi, Kumarian Press, 2008, pp. 232–233.

³²⁸ OSCE. 2005. Preliminary Findings on the Events in Andijan, Uzbekistan, 13 May 2005. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/15653?download=true>.

³²⁹ Radio Free Europe. 01 September 2008. Former Uzbek Spy Accuses Government of Massacres, Seeks Asylum. Available at: https://www.rferl.org/a/Former_Uzbek_Spy_Seeks_Asylum/1195372.html.

³³⁰ Institute for War and Peace Reporting. 20 November 2005. Andijan: A Policeman’s Account. Available at: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/andijan-policemans-account-0>.

³³¹ OSCE. 2005. Preliminary Findings on the Events in Andijan, Uzbekistan, 13 May 2005. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/15653?download=true>.

³³² Ibid.

³³³ OSCE. 2005. Preliminary Findings on the Events in Andijan, Uzbekistan, 13 May 2005. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/odihr/15653?download=true>.

armed group was made up of Islamic militants belonging to Akramiya.³³⁴ Governmental prosecutor Bakhadir Dekhanov specifically named the Akramists as responsible when giving a July 2005 tour of Andijan to journalists. The tour included the screening of a film of the 12-13 May violence, with “scenes of terrorists yelling Allah Akbar”.³³⁵ Karimov’s government also directed blame at unnamed Western powers, suggesting that there were attempts to orchestrate a coup via this militant group.³³⁶

Despite governmental assertion that Islamic extremism was the sole responsible violent actor, the Uzbek exile community and the international community are skeptical of these conclusions, considering that no independent investigation of events was ever sanctioned.³³⁷ In fact, investigations conducted by human rights organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch suggest that the Uzbek government used “coerced” evidence to reach their conclusions and that little to no evidence exists of a connection between Islamic extremism and the Andijan protests.³³⁸ This is supported by protesters’ statements, which focused on issues of poverty and unemployment, and by the appeal from insurgents asking Russian president Vladimir Putin to act as a mediator, an unlikely choice of authority for Islamic extremists.³³⁹ The international community continues to actively call for a fair investigation of security actors in the Andijan violence.³⁴⁰

4. Assessment of fragilities

Following Karimov’s death in 2016, his successor Shavkat Mirziyoyev launched an ambitious reform programme. Some of the worst human rights abuses (such as torture and forced labour) have since been reduced or completely phased out. Judges have become more independent, and the parliament has gained new powers. There is currently no active violence linked to the events in 2005. The evidence collected suggests that the Andijan conflict is situated at Step 8 – Normalisation. The international community has repeatedly called on the Uzbek authorities to conduct an independent investigation of the Andijan events, but 15 years later this still has not happened. The European Union imposed sanctions against Uzbekistan in 2005, due to these events. However, these sanctions were soon eased. The EU lifted the partial suspension of the partnership agreement between the EU and Uzbekistan in November 2006, and then took the names of four officials off the visa ban list in May 2007. In October 2007, while extending the sanctions for another 12 months, it suspended the visa ban for six months, justifying the move as a constructive gesture aimed at encouraging the Uzbek government to undertake the necessary human rights reforms. In April

³³⁴ Beehner L. 2006. Documenting Andijan. Available at: <https://www.cfr.org/background/documenting-andijan>; The Guardian. 13 May 2015. 10 years after Andijan massacre, Uzbek refugees remain silenced by fear. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/may/13/andijan-massacre-uzbekistan-sweden-refugees>.

³³⁵ Pravda.ru. 14 July 2005. Andijan – two months later. Available at: <https://www.pravdareport.com/world/8571-andijan/>.

³³⁶ Aljazeera. 12 May 2015. Uzbekistan: 10 Years after the Andijan massacre. Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/05/150511123115026.html>.

³³⁷ Reporters Without Borders. 12 May 2015. Uzbekistan: ten years after the Andijan massacre, the human rights situation is worse than ever. Available at: <https://rsf.org/en/news/uzbekistan-ten-years-after-andijan-massacre-human-rights-situation-worse-ever>.

³³⁸ Amnesty International. 2 July 2015. The Andijan Massacre Remembered. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/07/the-andijan-massacre-remembered/>.

³³⁹ Radio Free Europe. 14 May 2005. Uzbekistan: Bloody Friday in the Fergana Valley. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1058869.html>.

³⁴⁰ Радио Аззатык. 27-05-2020. 15 лет расстрелу в Андижане. Ташкент призывают к открытому расследованию. Available at: <https://rus.azattyk.org/a/30612230.html>.



2008, it extended the suspension of the visa ban for another six months, only to drop the ban altogether in October 2008.³⁴¹

The arms embargo was the only measure left in place until 2009, when it was also lifted. Several human rights organizations expressed concern over this relaxation, including Human Rights Watch, The International Crisis Group and Reporters Without Borders: “The decision underscores the EU’s lack of resolve in the face of Uzbekistan’s intransigence and severely undermines its global standing and credibility as a principled promoter of human rights”.³⁴² According to the testimonies of the participants of the conflict, the Andijan events of May 2005 are no longer discussed nor acknowledged in Uzbekistan. As for the Uzbek government, the question is closed.³⁴³

³⁴¹ Human Rights Watch. 2009. EU Fails Human Rights Victims. Available at: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2009/10/27/uzbekistan-eu-fails-human-rights-victims>.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Настоящее Время. 2015. 10 Лет Расстрелу В Андижане. Available at: <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/27014058.html>.

APPENDIX

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW	
Geography	
Location and area	<p>The Andijan province (viloyat) is situated 450 meters above sea level in eastern Uzbekistan, in the southeast of the Fergana Valley and is surrounded by high mountains and hills, covering an area of 4303 km². Andijan is situated approximately 475 km east of Tashkent and 45 km west of Osh, Kyrgyzstan. It borders Kyrgyzstan in the north, east and south, the Fergana provinces in the south, and the Namangan province of Uzbekistan in the west.</p> <p>The Andijan Region is divided into 14 administrative districts. The capital is the city of Andijan. The largest cities are Khanabad, Qorasuv, and Asaka.</p> <p>In Uzbekistan, the Andijan Region is the smallest (1% of territory) and most densely populated (9% of population). In the ancient and middle ages, Andijan city was known as the eastern gate of Fergana Valley and was a thoroughfare of the Great Silk Road.</p>
Economy (agriculture & industry)	<p>After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Andijan Region saw significant developments in both light and heavy industry. Industry in the region includes metal processing, chemical industry, and food processing. The first automobile assembly plant in Central Asia was opened in Asaka by the Uzbek-Korean joint venture, UzDaewoo, which produces Nexia and Tico cars and the Damas minibus.³⁴⁴ Andijan was the first city in Uzbekistan to be fully supplied with natural gas.</p> <p>Other economic activity includes cotton, cereal, viticulture, vegetables, and cattle raising. Despite being famous for its sweet melons and watermelons, the cultivation of crops is limited to irrigated land. Silk and cotton textiles produced in the region are exported across the Fergana Valley.</p>
Climate and terrain	<p>A cold, semi-arid climate with cold winters and hot summers.</p> <p>Environmental risks include:³⁴⁵ flooding; mudflows, and landslides; as well as earthquakes with a magnitude of 5 to 6.</p>
Natural resources	<p>The Andijan province contains deposits of petroleum, natural gas, and limestone. It is a center of oil production and hosts several oil refineries.</p> <p>The Kara Darya river crosses the region from east to west and is used mainly to irrigate fields.</p>
Environmental issues that can have an impact on security	<p>Low river levels in summer drastically reduces the available water for irrigation in Uzbekistan and creates a serious water shortage for the extensive canal network that supports numerous farms in the region. This lack of irrigation affects both food crops and cash crops. The most affected cash crop is cotton.</p> <p>A further strain on the ecosystem is the drilling of additional wells by desperate farmers searching for water. This act further depletes the groundwater levels and increases the salinization of the soil.³⁴⁶</p>
Population	
Population and age structure	<p>In 2019 the population in Andijan province was estimated to be approximately 3,066,900³⁴⁷ (i.e. 690/km²) with the population of Andijan city estimated to be 352,600.</p>

³⁴⁴ Brief Information on Andijan. Available at: <http://andijaninvest.com/about-andijan.php>.

³⁴⁵ Baker N., December 2011. The Ferghana Valley: A Soviet Legacy faced with Climate Change. Available at: <http://mandalaprospects.com/ice/ice-cases/ferghana.htm>.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁴⁷ City Population. Republic of Uzbekistan. Available at: <https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uzbekistan/>.



Religious and ethnic groups	The largest ethnic group is Uzbeks (69%) followed by Tajiks. Other ethnic groups include Russians, Armenians, Tatars, Koreans, Uighurs, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Persians, Azerbaijanis, and Georgians. Most of them are Sunni Muslims. It should be noted that under Uzbek law proselytism is prohibited.
Languages	The only official state language is Uzbek. Russian is an important language for interethnic communication, especially in the cities.

IV. Environmental nationalism and fragility in Karakalpakstan



The Republic of Karakalpakstan is located in the northwest of Uzbekistan, occupies 166,600 km² (28% of the territory of Uzbekistan) and is the largest region in the territory of Uzbekistan. As of 2018, the Republic's population is 1,842,000 people. This makes up 5.6% of the total 33 million people in Uzbekistan. Karakalpakstan is a zone of ecological disaster due to the drying up of the Aral Sea. Deserts now occupy more than 13.67 million hectares, which makes up more than 80% of the territory. Nationalists have sought to mobilize public support for an independent Karakalpakstan by focusing on the economic insecurity caused by the Aral Sea disaster. The Karakalpak language belongs to the Kipchak family of Turkic languages and they are closely related linguistically and culturally to the Kazakhs.

1. Historical context

According to the Uzbekistan's Constitution, Article 70, the autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan is part of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Specifically, Article 75 states that within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the relationship between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Karakalpakstan shall be regulated by treaties and agreements concluded by the two sides.³⁴⁸ Some sources claim that the

³⁴⁸ Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Available at: <https://www.un.int/uzbekistan/uzbekistan/constitu->

Karakalpak ethnic group was an invention of the Soviet Union with the aim of creating division within the Kazakh population.³⁴⁹ The Karakalpaks' language belongs to the Kipchak family of Turkic languages, and they are closely related linguistically and culturally to the Kazakhs.³⁵⁰ Similar to most of the Turkic-speaking groups in Central Asia under the former Soviet Union, the Karakalpaks lacked their own literary language before the arrival of the Russians and Tatars. Rather Persian, and to some degree Arabic, were the languages used for educational purpose. Literacy levels among the general populace were quite low. Until 1928, Karakalpak was written using the Arabic script and then the language was Latinised. In 1940, all the Turkic languages of Central Asia began to employ the Cyrillic script, a system which was especially poorly suited to the Karakalpak language.³⁵¹

The territorial emergence of the present Republic of Karakalpakstan (literally translated from Turkic as 'black hat') derives from the Soviet's projections and attempts to establish firm control in Central Asia. In 1924, the Karakalpak Autonomous Soviet District was established with a regional center in Turtkul. Next year, in February 1925, the Karakalpak Autonomous Soviet District (AD) became part of the Kirgiz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) and later renamed Kazakh ASSR. The territory of the Karakalpaks had been separated from the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and Khorezm People's Soviet Republic.³⁵² In 1930, Karakalpak AD was again subordinated to the RSFSR and two years later the District was upgraded to an Autonomous Republic. In December 1936, after intense negotiations between Moscow and Tashkent, Karakalpakstan became part of the Uzbek SSR with an initial capital in Turtkul, which was later transferred to Nukus. Similar to other territories in the Soviet administrative system, the Karakalpak ASSR was allowed a separate constitution. Similar to that of SSRs, ASSRs were governed by their own republican constitution. However, unlike SSRs, ASSRs did not have the right of secession granted to the SSRs under the 1936 Soviet Constitution and subsequent constitutions. Nor did ASSR status confer greater influence in the form of increased representation in the Soviet of Nationalities, in which Karakalpakstan had a total of 11 representatives.³⁵³

During and following Soviet times, Karakalpakstan was negatively affected by the ecological disaster of the Aral Sea. Between 1960 and 1989, the area covered by the Aral shrank by 41 percent, its volume dropped by 67 percent, and the water's salinity tripled. For the region's human populous, bleak employment prospects were compounded by the negative health effects associated with the concentrations of salts and toxic chemicals in the land, water, and food supply. In Karakalpakstan, infant mortality rates were double the Soviet average.³⁵⁴ Vozrozhdeniye Island straddled the maritime border between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in the heart of the Aral. The Island posed potentially catastrophic dangers when it was used as the primary testing ground for the Soviet biological weapons program.³⁵⁵

tion-republic-uzbekistan.

³⁴⁹ Saidzimova G. 5 April 2010. Uzbekistan: Shadowy Group Agitates For 'Free Karakalpakstan'. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1079744.html>.

³⁵⁰ Minority Rights Group International. June 2018. World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Uzbekistan: Karakalpaks. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/49749c85c.html>.

³⁵¹ Hanks R. 2000. A Separate Space?: Karakalpak Nationalism and Devolution in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 52:5, 939-953.

³⁵² Minority Rights Group International. World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Uzbekistan: Karakalpaks. June 2018. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/49749c85c.html>.

³⁵³ Hanks R. 2000. A Separate Space?: Karakalpak Nationalism and Devolution in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 52:5, 939-953.

³⁵⁴ White D., K. January 2013. Nature-society linkages in the Aral Sea region. *Journal of Eurasian Studies* Volume 4, Issue 1, Pages 18-33. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S187936651200022X>.

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

Environmental problems and Gorbachev's politics of perestroika, prompted the creation of a national movement, the Khalk Mapi (Will of National), which demanded greater autonomy and more rights from Tashkent. On 14 December 1990, the Supreme Council of the Karakalpak ASSR adopted the Declaration on State Sovereignty.³⁵⁶ In January 1993, an agreement was signed between the Uzbek and Karakalpak authorities concerning the status of Karakalpakstan. The current Constitution of the Republic of Karakalpakstan was adopted on 9 April 1993. Article 1 echoes the Constitution of Uzbekistan in stating that Karakalpakstan is a sovereign democratic republic forming part of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Succession from the Republic of Uzbekistan can only take place on the basis of a nation-wide referendum held by the people of Karakalpakstan.³⁵⁷ Some sources claim that the Khalk Mapi leaders, Marat Nurmukhamedov and Marat Aralbayev, did much to secure Article 74 to the Constitution of Uzbekistan, which sets out the right of Karakalpakstan to succeed from Uzbekistan.³⁵⁸ Article 75 of Uzbek Constitution clarifies that within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the relationship between Karakalpakstan and Uzbekistan shall be regulated by treaties and agreements concluded by the two sides. There are unsubstantiated claims that on 9 April 1993, Uzbekistan and Karakalpakstan might have signed a secret agreement, which allegedly expired in 2013.³⁵⁹ In 1993, the banners "What a big one needs, a small one needs too" hung everywhere in Karakalpakstan and symbolized then Uzbek leader, Karimov's, support for the aspirations of the Karakalpak elite.³⁶⁰

Although politics in the region have appeared relatively quiet and stable to external observers, several attempts to call for separation have occurred.³⁶¹ There are strong pro-Kazakh and pro-Russian sentiments built on the Karakalpaks historical ties with the Russian Empire.³⁶² During the spring of 2013, internet separatists appeared on social networks calling for a referendum on Karakalpak independence. Written in everyday Karakalpak, their posts demanded that the Government in Nukus be overthrown, which was no doubt inspired by the Kremlin's policy in Crimea, and ended with creation of "Alga Karakalpakstan! (Go Karakalpakstan)".³⁶³

³⁵⁶ Доклад на 4 сессии конференции ОБСЕ 2018 года. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/ru/odihr/394670?download=true>.

³⁵⁷ International Centre for Ethnic and Linguistic Studies. 2018. Karakalpakstan: a little-known autonomy in the post-Soviet Central Asia. Available at: <https://www.icelds.org/2018/05/10/karakalpakstan-a-little-known-autonomy-in-the-post-soviet-central-asia/>.

³⁵⁸ The Association for Human Rights in Central Asia. 2018. Death of another activist fighter for independence of Karakalpakstan. Available at: <https://ahrca.eu/uzbekistan/karakalpakstan/497-death-of-another-activist-fighter-for-independence-of-karakalpakstan>.

³⁵⁹ International Centre for Ethnic and Linguistic Studies. 2018. Karakalpakstan: a little-known autonomy in the post-Soviet Central Asia. Available at: <https://www.icelds.org/2018/05/10/karakalpakstan-a-little-known-autonomy-in-the-post-soviet-central-asia/>.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

³⁶¹ Horák S., 6 June 2014. Separatism in Uzbekistan? Karakalpakstan after Crimea. *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst* (Vol. 16 No. 10).

³⁶² Ислам в СНГ. 2010. Этнополитические проблемы Каракалпакстана. Available at: <http://www.islamsng.com/uzb/pastfuture/642>.

³⁶³ The Guardian. 5 Feb. 2015. Uzbekistan separatist movement threatens ancient culture. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/05/uzbek-separatist-movement-threatens-ancient-culture>.

2. Causes of fragility in Karakalpakstan

While the Republic of Karakalpakstan has not witnessed a conflict on its territory, there remain a number of structural factors which increase the chances of an outbreak. These are primarily related to the (1) ecological catastrophe of the Aral Sea and its effects on the economy of Karakalpakstan, and (2) nationalist Karakalpak movement, which seeks an independent Karakalpakstan.

Political Causes. Since the independence of Uzbekistan, Karakalpakstan has not witnessed serious political unrest or security-related incidents, but nationalism may yet challenge the authority of the national government. On 24 October 2019, members of the Karakalpak nationalist movement ‘Alga Karakalpakstan’ announced the creation of a government in ‘exile’.³⁶⁴ Although the Alga Karakalpakstan movement emerged in 2008, it has become more active since 2013, in part as a response to the failure of the Uzbek Government to hold a referendum on Karakalpak independence.³⁶⁵ The Alga movement and its sympathizers are driven by the basic premise that ethnic Karakalpaks have a distinct set of cultural and linguistic traditions which would be better protected within an independent state. To this end, the Alga movement claims that Uzbek authorities systemically discriminate against ethnic Karakalpaks, including through persecuting civil and political activists, limiting opportunities for social mobility, and subjecting them to forced labour, amongst others.³⁶⁶ Karakalpak nationalists are not known to have received support from any state actors which may be sympathetic to their ambitions, such as Russia or Kazakhstan, limiting their ability to effect real change. This is despite the leaders of the Alga movement claiming in 2014 that Karakalpakstan would join Russia if they “hear a good signal from Kremlin”.³⁶⁷ In addition, there are no reports of Uzbek security actors pursuing the leaders of the Alga movement, suggesting that they do not view it as a threat to territorial integrity.³⁶⁸

Economic and environmental causes. Another factor driving nationalist sentiments relates to the Aral Sea disaster. It is important to note that nationalists have sought to galvanize public support for an independent Karakalpakstan by recourse to the economic insecurity caused by the Aral Sea disaster and the apparent inability of Uzbek authorities to address it.³⁶⁹ Some have referred to this phenomena as “Environmental Nationalism”.³⁷⁰ This primarily pertains to the ecological catastrophe of the Aral Sea, and its effects on the economy of Karakalpakstan, which is located along its southern edge. Since the 1960s, the Aral Sea has shrunk by an estimated 90% primarily due to the diversions of rivers that fed the lake for Soviet irrigation projects.³⁷¹ This led UN Secretary-General António Guterres to recently declare that the Aral Sea is ‘Probably [the] biggest ecological catastrophe of our time’.³⁷² It is worth noting the fact that the Vozrozhdeniye Island in Aral Sea, divided between Uzbeki-

³⁶⁴ Alga Karakalpakstan. 24 October 2019. Decision on the Creation of a Government in Exile of the Sovereign Independent Republic of Karakalpakstan. Available at: <https://www.algakarakalpakstan.com/karakalpakstan>.

³⁶⁵ The Guardian. 5 February 2015. Uzbek Separatist Movement Threatens Ancient Culture. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/05/uzbek-separatist-movement-threatens-ancient-culture>.

³⁶⁶ Alga Karakalpakstan. 24 October 2019. Decision on the Creation of a Government in Exile of the Sovereign Independent Republic of Karakalpakstan.

³⁶⁷ The Guardian. 5 February 2015. Uzbek Separatist Movement Threatens Ancient Culture. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/feb/05/uzbek-separatist-movement-threatens-ancient-culture>.

³⁶⁸ Ibid.

³⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁷⁰ Hanks R. 2000. A Separate Space?: Karakalpak Nationalism and Devolution in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan, *Europe-Asia Studies*, 52:5, pp. 949. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/713663098>.

³⁷¹ Micklin P., Aladin N. March 2008. Reclaiming the Aral Sea. *Scientific American*. Available at: <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/reclaiming-the-aral-sea/>.

³⁷² United Nations Press Release. 10 June 2017. Aral Sea ‘Probably Biggest Ecological Catastrophe of Our Time’, Secretary-General Says, Stressing Need to Act Forcefully in Preventing Tragedy from Multiplying. Available at: <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sgsm18565.doc.htm>.

stan and Kazakhstan, posed significant security problems. The Island held a military prison, which was turned into a concentration camp in the 1930s. On this site in 1954, the Soviet Ministry of Defence established Aralsk-7, a biological warfare facility. It was abandoned following the collapse of Soviet Union. The Uzbek Government decontaminated anthrax from the Island with assistance provided by the United States.³⁷³

Since the 1990s, the use of water from the Aral Sea for the irrigation of cotton plantations, combined with the heavy use of insecticides, pesticides, herbicides, and defoliants has also caused frequent droughts,³⁷⁴ and chronic diseases associated with exposure to high levels of minerals and toxins in drinking water.³⁷⁵ Some estimates suggest that nearly 50% of the local Karakalpak population suffers from debilitating diseases.³⁷⁶

Traditionally agrarian, and thus heavily dependent on the Aral Sea for irrigation, the inhabitants of Karakalpakstan now struggle to grow crops. Nearly 70% of the land has become salinized.³⁷⁷ In addition, due to the desertification of the Aral Sea, residents of Karakalpakstan can no longer rely on fishing as a major source of income.³⁷⁸ The local economy of Karakalpakstan has been devastated by these developments, which has caused high levels of poverty and unemployment.³⁷⁹ As a result, there has been mass migration to urban areas, including Nukus, in order for those migrating to find work.³⁸⁰ Together, these developments have strained public services and increased tensions between residents of Karakalpakstan and Tashkent, the former of which views the Aral Sea disaster as an “Karakalpak problem”.³⁸¹

Nationalists have sought to mobilize public support for an independent Karakalpakstan by focusing on the economic insecurity caused by the Aral Sea disaster.³⁸² This sentiment is compounded by the physical distance between Karakalpakstan and Tashkent, which, as Hanks argues “serves to exacerbate feelings of neglect on the part of Karakalpaks, who thus see themselves as physically and politically marginalised.”³⁸³ However, in recent years, Uzbek authorities have embarked on several initiatives to improve water management and irrigation, which may improve the livelihoods of ethnic Karakalpaks, and go some way to decreasing tensions with Tashkent. These include the development and reconstruction of the Anasai canal, which funded by Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources of the Republic

³⁷³ Global Security. Vozrozhdeniye Island: Renaissance / Rebirth Island. Available at: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/russia/vozrozhdenly.htm>.

³⁷⁴ Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2 December 2019. UNDP in Uzbekistan and UNFPA, with the support of the Government of Japan launch a new Joint Programme for the Aral Sea region. Available at: <http://mineconomy.gov.uz/en/news/view/2978>.

³⁷⁵ Ataniyazova O. 2013. Health and Ecological Consequences of the Aral Sea Crisis: `Anemia, tuberculosis, kidney and liver diseases, respiratory infections, allergies and cancer. The Karakalpak Center for Reproductive Health and Environment, Uzbekistan. Available at: https://www.caee.utexas.edu/prof/mckinney/ce385d/Papers/Atanizaova_WWF3.pdf.

³⁷⁶ Hanks R., 2000. A Separate Space?: Karakalpak Nationalism and Devolution in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan. Pp. 949.

³⁷⁷ Oral A. Ataniyazova 2013. Health and Ecological Consequences of the Aral Sea Crisis.

³⁷⁸ Encyclopaedia Britannica. Karakalpakstan Republic, Uzbekistan. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Karakalpakstan>.

³⁷⁹ Hanks R. 2000. A Separate Space?: Karakalpak Nationalism and Devolution in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan. Pp. 949.

³⁸⁰ Ibid. 947.

³⁸¹ Ibid. pp. 949.

³⁸² Alga Karakalpakstan. 24 October 2019. Decision on the Creation of a Government in Exile of the Sovereign Independent Republic of Karakalpakstan.

³⁸³ Hanks R. 2000. A Separate Space?: Karakalpak Nationalism and Devolution in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan. Pp. 949.

of Uzbekistan, now serves the town of Kyzketken, as well as the districts of Nukus, Kegeyli and Bozatau. It is due for completion in 2021.³⁸⁴

Beyond the Aral Sea disaster, several factors related to the economy of Karakalpakstan could also be argued to increase its fragility. These relate primarily to an over-reliance on agriculture, in particular grain and cotton; an underdeveloped industry; weak capital investment from Tashkent; and high levels of unemployment.³⁸⁵ Together, these factors have contributed to low levels of human development, a factor which many scholars argue increases the risk of conflict outbreaks and reoccurrence.³⁸⁶ Karakalpakstan accounts for 37% of the territory, 5.5% of the total population, but only 3.5% of the total GDP of Uzbekistan.³⁸⁷ Although underdeveloped, the industrial sector accounts for only 10% of total employment in Karakalpakstan.³⁸⁸ This sector includes some manufacturing; oil refineries; industrial plants processing raw materials such as limestone, gypsum, asbestos, marble, and quartzite; and a power station in Takhiatosh. Nevertheless, the economy is primarily agricultural with the main produce being cotton, rice, melons, watermelons, vegetables, karakul sheep, and cattle.³⁸⁹ In addition, reports suggest that the agricultural sector in Karakalpakstan may be on the verge of collapse, with the shift to less labour-intensive grain production leading to higher unemployment rates.³⁹⁰ These factors increase the appeal of Karakalpaks to ethno-nationalist sentiments.

Even though the Republic of Karakalpakstan has significant mineral resources,³⁹¹ and the largest crude oil and natural gas deposits in Uzbekistan,³⁹² there are accusations that much of the income generated from these is diverted to Tashkent.³⁹³ As a result, capital spending in Karakalpakstan, has decreased, which contributes to its underdevelopment and at the same time increasing tension between Karakalpakstan and Tashkent.³⁹⁴

The factors outlined result in a high unemployment rate in Karakalpakstan. Figures suggest that 26% of Karakalpakstan's rural population are unemployed.³⁹⁵ The ratio of the number of registered unemployed in Karakalpakstan to the region's population is higher than in any other part of Uzbekistan. Paradoxically, the desperate economic situation in Karakalpakstan may inadvertently work against nationalist tendencies. Given its underdeveloped industry base, weak internal capital, and disadvantageous geographic position, the economic base

³⁸⁴ Free Karakalpakstan. 20 March 2020. Work on Reconstruction of the Main Canal "Anasai" is Interesting. Available at: <http://erkinkarakalpak.uz/index.php/7570-2020-03-20-06-31-37>.

³⁸⁵ Hanks R. 2000. A Separate Space?: Karakalpak Nationalism and Devolution in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan. pp. 956.

³⁸⁶ Kim N., Conceição P. International Journal of Peace Studies Vol. 15, No. 1 (Spring/Summer 2010), pp. 29. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41852999?seq=1>.

³⁸⁷ Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 2 December 2019. UNDP in Uzbekistan and UNFPA, with the support of the Government of Japan launch a new Joint Programme for the Aral Sea region.

³⁸⁸ Ibid. pp. 948.

³⁸⁹ Hanks R. 2000. A Separate Space?: Karakalpak Nationalism and Devolution in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan.

³⁹⁰ Ibid. pp. 945 and 948.

³⁹¹ The Natural Resources of Karakalpakstan. Available at: <http://www.karakalpak.com/naturalresources.html>.

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ International Centre for Ethnic and Linguistic Studies. 2018. Karakalpakstan: a little-known autonomy in the post-Soviet Central Asia. Available at: <https://www.icelds.org/2018/05/10/karakalpakstan-a-little-known-autonomy-in-the-post-soviet-central-asia/>.

³⁹⁴ Hanks R. 2000. A Separate Space?: Karakalpak Nationalism and Devolution in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan. pp. 948.

³⁹⁵ Agafonoff A., Isamiddinova D., Saidova G. (eds). 1997. The Labor Market, Wages, Income, and Expenditures of the Population of the Republic of Uzbekistan. p.25.

required for an independent Karakalpakstan simply does not exist and nor is it likely to in the near future.³⁹⁶

3. Mapping security actors

Karakalpakstan enjoys a certain degree of sovereignty, but its security is linked to the law enforcement structures of Uzbekistan. According to the Article 70 of the Uzbek Constitution, Karakalpakstan is part of Uzbekistan. Further, the sovereignty of Karakalpakstan shall be protected by Uzbekistan.³⁹⁷ Absent is a reference to an autonomous or local Karakalpak security forces. Uzbekistan is divided into four special military districts and Karakalpakstan falls under the North-Western District with its headquarters located in Nukus. A fully manned army brigade is stationed in each district. In situations of an emergency, district commanders become the heads of all units and divisions of law enforcement agencies.³⁹⁸

The law enforcement agencies are located in Karakalpakstan. For example, the Office of the State Procurator, which supports the State's prosecution of cases in the courts and conducts investigation of the most serious crimes and reviews citizens' claims, has regional offices in all territorial units, including separate departments in Karakalpakstan.³⁹⁹ The police force is highly visible in the region with a noticeably high number of police deployed in the region. In this regard, there is a notable bureaucratization of provincial road-police checkpoints, as there are 15 of them between Nukus and Tashkent.⁴⁰⁰ Since 1999, a high-security prison Jasliq (Jaslyk) has been in operation, which is located on the Ustyurt plateau and this happens to be the site of a former Soviet army base. On 2 August 2019, Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a presidential decree ordering the closure of the prison.⁴⁰¹

4. Current developments and state of fragility in Karakalpakstan

In recent years, several developments have occurred in Karakalpakstan, each of which has impacted on its state of fragility. The most notable concerns the establishment of a Karakalpak government in 'exile'. The leader of 'Alga Karakalpakstan!', Aman Sagidullaev, sent a request to the OSCE and demanded an enhanced dialogue between Nukus and Tashkent in 2018. He prepared 11 points that included, for example, the withdrawal of Uzbek security actors from Karakalpakstan, Karakalpakstan's integration into Kazakhstan, and its full-fledged membership in the United Nations and OSCE.⁴⁰²

In its declaration in 2019, the Transition Government claimed that its creation in 'exile' was necessary to protect the interests of ethnic Karakalpaks. It continued advocating on the international stage for a fully independent Karakalpakstan.⁴⁰³ The Transition Government's creation is based on the claim that ethnic Karakalpaks have a distinct set of cultural

³⁹⁶ Hanks R. 2000. A Separate Space?: Karakalpak Nationalism and Devolution in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan. pp. 951.

³⁹⁷ Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Available at: <https://www.un.int/uzbekistan/uzbekistan/constitution-republic-uzbekistan>.

³⁹⁸ Regnum.ru. 05-05-2011. В Узбекистане создана новая система управления национальной армией - министр обороны. Available at: <https://regnum.ru/news/polit/1401553.html>.

³⁹⁹ Schultz M. and Haberfield R. 2005. Encyclopedia of Law Enforcement. p.1369.

⁴⁰⁰ Modern Karakalpak Life: Officialdom. Available at: <http://www.karakalpak.co.uk/K/modernlife.html>.

⁴⁰¹ Putz.C. 5 August 2019. Uzbekistan to Close Notorious Prison Colony, the 'House of Torture'. The Diplomat. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2019/08/uzbekistan-to-close-notorious-prison-colony-the-house-of-torture/> The Diplomat.

⁴⁰² Доклад на 4 сессии конференции ОБСЕ 2018 года. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/ru/odihr/394670?download=true>.

⁴⁰³ Alga Karakalpakstan. 24 October 2019. Decision on the Creation of a Government in Exile of the Sovereign Independent Republic of Karakalpakstan.

and linguistic traditions which would be better protected within an independent state. To this end, the statement creating the Transition Governments claims that Uzbek authorities systemically discriminate against ethnic Karakalpaks. Examples of discriminatory practices are persecuting civil and political activists, limiting opportunities for social mobility, and subjecting Karakalpaks to forced labor.⁴⁰⁴ The Transition Government is led by the Political Committee of Democratic Choice of The Republic of Karakalpakstan, a coalition formed of 278 members, including leaders of political pro-secessionist political parties in Uzbekistan; social and political movements; representatives of cultural centers, associations, human rights activists, elders, and community leaders.⁴⁰⁵ Sources suggest that the original founders of the Alga Karakalpakstan movement may reside in Kyrgyzstan.⁴⁰⁶

Uzbek authorities have not publicly acknowledged the existence of the Transition Government, nor have they responded to its claims of discrimination. In the medium-to-long term, the creation of the Transition Government may serve to increase tensions vis-à-vis Tashkent, and impact on the fragility of both Karakalpakstan and the wider region. Although the Transition Government lacks clear policies and leadership, it constitutes the first medium through which Karakalpaks in favor of secession can clearly express their political ambitions. This may provide a pretext upon which Uzbek authorities deem it necessary to further extend control over Nukus in order to limit such aspirations. The new President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, periodically visits Karakalpakstan and engages in dialogue with local authorities.⁴⁰⁷

Despite these efforts, years of underinvestment in energy infrastructure has resulted in regular interruptions to electricity and gas supplies, including in Karakalpakstan. In 2019, residents of the towns of Buston and Shortanbai, in the Elikqala and Nukus Districts of Karakalpakstan, took to the streets to protest when supplies of natural gas and electricity were abruptly cut off.⁴⁰⁸ In a rare sign of public discontent, they reportedly burnt tires and blocked roads.⁴⁰⁹ In both cases, local representatives met with the protestors to diffuse tensions. Prime Minister Abdulla Oripov publicly acknowledged that some regions had been left without gas and electricity.⁴¹⁰ In addition, in 2019, the Uzbek President, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, ordered the closure of Jaslyk prison, located in Karakalpakstan, and associated with allegations of torture and ill treatment of convicts, including ethnic Karakalpak dissidents.⁴¹¹ In another sign of attempts to ease tensions, Uzbek authorities recently authorized the Mercy Corps, a US-based NGO working on poverty relief and local justice, to conduct activities in Karakalpakstan.⁴¹² In an apparent attempt to address serious economic issues

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Alga Karakalpakstan. Members of Transition Government Democratic Choice of Republic of Karakalpakstan. Members of the Political Committee Democratic Choice of the Republic of Karakalpakstan. Available at: <https://www.algakarakalpakstan.com/government>.

⁴⁰⁶ The Guardian. 5 February 2015. Uzbek Separatist Movement Threatens Ancient Culture; and Radio Azattyk. 20 December 2015. Independence Day of Karakalpakstan passed unnoticed.

⁴⁰⁷ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan. 22 August 2019. President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited Karakalpakstan. Available at: <https://mfa.uz/en/press/news/2019/08/20566/?print=Y>.

⁴⁰⁸ Radio Ozodlik. 28 November 2019. In Karakalpakstan, villagers blocked the road, demanding the resumption of natural gas supply (video). Available at: <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/30296300.html>.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid, and Radio Free Europe. 4 December 2019. Power Crisis: Severe Energy Shortages Spark Rare Protests in Uzbekistan. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/power-crisis-severe-energy-shortages-spark-rare-protests-in-uzbekistan/30307881.html>.

⁴¹⁰ Kun.uz. 29 November 2019. On 28 November, the Prime Minister of Uzbekistan held a video conference on the issues of providing the population with electricity and natural gas. Available at: <http://kun.uz/ru/news/2019/11/29/aripov-rukovoditeli-otvetstvennyie-za-svet-i-gaz-sidyat-v-teplenkix-kabinetax>.

⁴¹¹ Radio Free Europe. 5 August 2019. Uzbek President Shuts Down Notorious 'House of Torture' Prison. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbek-president-shuts-down-notorious-house-of-torture-prison/30093031.html>

⁴¹² Eurasianet. 11 March 2020. Uzbekistan sparks hope with registration of NGOs. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/uzbekistan-sparks-hope-with-registration-of-ngos>.

in Karakalpakstan, including high levels of poverty and unemployment, Uzbek authorities have opened up the region to foreign investment. This includes ongoing discussions with foreign investors on establishing an entertainment center and casino in Nukus.⁴¹³

While Karakalpakstan has a number of unresolved issues, recent events may elude to an attempt on the part of new leadership in Tashkent to ease tensions with Karakalpakstan, and the ethnic Karakalpaks that reside there.

APPENDIX

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW	
Geography	
Location and area	<p>The Republic of Karakalpakstan is located in the northwest of Uzbekistan, occupies 166,600 km² (28% of the territory of Uzbekistan), and is the largest region in the territory of Uzbekistan.</p> <p>The territory of Karakalpakstan includes the southern half of the former Aral Sea, on which the new Aralkum solonchak desert is now formed. The lower reaches of this desert now extend to the Amudarya River.</p> <p>In the south, the Republic borders with the Dashoguz and Balkan provinces of Turkmenistan, in the west with the Karakiy, Mangistau, and Beineu districts of the Mangystau region of Kazakhstan, in the north with the Baiganinsky district of the Aktobe region of Kazakhstan, in the north-east with the Kazaly and Karmakshy districts of Kyzylorda region of Kazakhstan, in the southeast with the Khorezm and Bukhara regions, and in the east with the Navoi region.</p>
Climate and terrain	<p>Karakalpakstan is a zone of ecological disaster due to the drying up of the Aral Sea. Deserts now occupy more than 13.67 million hectares, which makes up more than 80% of the territory.⁴¹⁴</p>
Agriculture	<p>The main agricultural sectors of the Republic of Karakalpakstan are grain growing (wheat and raw rice production), cotton, cattle, and sericulture.</p>
Environmental issues that can have an impact on security	<p>Before drying out, the Aral Sea was the fourth largest lake in the world. The degradation of the Aral Sea began in the 1960s when its waters started to be irrigated for the domestic needs of Soviet Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and southern Kazakhstan. As a result, the sea significantly receded from its shore and the bottom was exposed, which was covered with sea salts mixed with pesticides and other chemicals. From 1960 to 2007, the Aral Sea already lost approximately 1000 km³ of water due to evaporation. Due to the run-off from fields into the rivers and seas, large amounts of chemical fertilizers and pesticides used in agriculture are inhaled into the air, which can negatively affect the health of people and animals in the affected regions. Every year, up to 75 million tons of salt rises from the bottom of the Aral Sea.⁴¹⁵ The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights has expressed concern that “a substantial proportion of the population lacked access to adequate sanitation and safe drinking water, especially in the Khorezm and Karakalpakstan regions affected by the drought and the Aral Sea catastrophe.”⁴¹⁶</p>

⁴¹³ Eurasianet. 8 February 2019. Is Uzbekistan to get its own Las Vegas? Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/is-uzbekistan-to-get-its-own-las-vegas>.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid.

⁴¹⁵ Earthobservatory.nasa.gov. 2011. Aral Sea In 2011. Available at: <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/52002/aral-sea-2011>.

⁴¹⁶ The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, E/C.12/UZB/CO/2, paragraph 25.

Population	
Population and age structure	As of 2018, the Republic's population is 1,842,000 people. This makes up 5.6% of the total 33 million people in Uzbekistan. As of the beginning of 2017, the population of Karakalpakstan was 1,817,500 people. At the same time, 230,006 people lived in the capital of the region, Nukus. ⁴¹⁷
Religious and ethnic groups	In the official website of the Committee on Inter-ethnic Relations and Friendly Relations with Foreign Countries under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the following information on the number of national minorities in Karakalpakstan (as of January 1, 2017) is provided: ⁴¹⁸ Karakalpaks – 518,301 people; Uzbeks – 32,8% Kazakhs - 292,395 people; Koreans - 6 526 people; Russians - 10,470 people; Turkmens - 96,264 people; Ukrainians - 1 104 people. Karakalpaks are primarily followers of the Hanafi School of Sunni Islam.
Languages	The Karalpak language is spoken by approximately 400 thousand people of whom the majority live in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, where it is the official language. Approximately two thousand speakers of the Karalpak language live in Afghanistan, smaller diasporas are also living in in Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and other countries.

⁴¹⁷ Worldpopulationreview.com. 2020. Available at: <<https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/uzbekistan-population/>>.

⁴¹⁸ Interkomitet.uz. 2020. Национальные Культурные Центры — KMODS. Available at: <<http://interkomitet.uz/o-komitete/nacionalnye-kulturnye-centry/#1519389583851-8b2d630f-5c64>>.

V. The Enclaves in Central Asia



During Soviet times, the enclaves dispersed throughout Fergana caused rather limited issues. The declarations of independence in Central Asia and the formation of nation-states prompted the emergence of disputes over the enclaves. There are approximately 30 enclaves in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan.⁴¹⁹ Several enclaves have ceased to exist as a result of bilateral deals and quite a few enclaves are completely depopulated.

1. Historical developments

The enclaves in Central Asia are prisoners of the Soviet approach. Attempts to ensure that territorial distribution served both federal and local interests created complexity in the enclaves. At the federal level, there was an attempt to establish control in the area by creating new and ethnically mixed territorial fragments, while at the local level the concerns and needs of local groups were partially met. This led to regular territorial changes appearing on the maps throughout different periods, creating ambiguity and ultimately resulting in disputes. For example, the current dispute between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan regarding border demarcation finds roots in this historical narrative of fluid geographical distinction, with both sides arguing which maps should be used. Tajikistan suggested working with documents and maps from the 1924-1927 period, while Kyrgyzstan preferred using the maps

⁴¹⁹ Ng.ru, Панфилова В. 17.12.2018. Киргизия переложила заботу об анклавах на Ташкент. Доступно на: http://www.ng.ru/cis/2018-12-17/5_7464_kyrgyz.html.

of the bilateral commissions from the periods of 1958-1959 and 1989.⁴²⁰ Therefore, an assessment of the historical aspect remains of immense importance to understanding the emergence of enclaves in Fergana.

The establishment of Soviet power in Central Asia was followed by the creation of territorial units. After the October revolution of 1917, the Bolsheviks established the Turkestan Socialist Federative Republic in Central Asia, later extending the zone of influence to Bukhara and Khiva. Consequently, the People's Republics of Bukhara and Khorezm were formed. In 1920, the Kirgiz Autonomous Socialist Republic was created mainly in the territory of modern-day Kazakhstan. In 1924, administrative reforms ensued and new Soviet Republics or territorial units surfaced in areas where they had previously not existed. This process of organizational reform, and subsequently the formation of new Republics, lasted from 1924 to 1936 and was neither straightforward nor smooth. In October 1924, the Uzbek SSR and the Turkmen SSR were established. The Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was formed within the Uzbek SSR, while Kara-Kirghiz Autonomous District (AD, future Kyrgyzstan) was established and included in the RSFSR. It was renamed to Kirghiz AD in May 1925 and in February 1926, its status was upgraded to Kirghiz ASSR. On 16 February 1925, the Karakalpak AD was created as part of Kirgiz ASSR (the latter was established in 1920 and in 1925, it was renamed to Kazakh ASSR, future Kazakhstan). In 1930, the Karakalpak AD was re-subordinated to the RSFSR, receiving the upgraded status of Autonomous Republic in 1932. On 5 December 1936, the Karakalpak ASSR became part of the Uzbek SSR. During the process of reshaping the administrative structure, and thus changing the status of Republics and districts, the Tajik ASSR was detached from the Uzbek SSR and became a Republic in 1929. Similarly, the Kazakh ASSR and the Kyrgyz ASSR were transformed into Republics in 1936. This tumult of territorial changes accompanied by shifting legal status made borders appear ill-defined and resulted in the emergence of enclaves. During the 12-year process of territorial transformation as the criteria for territorial status was significantly redefined, the Central Asian region experienced transient border lines, various territorial unit name variations, and changes of their capitals and administrative structures. Fierce fighting broke out over Tashkent, which was claimed to be the capital by both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. There were the Uzbek-Tajik-Kyrgyz conflicts in Osh, Gulch, and Chimbay, Uzbek-Turkmen conflicts along the right bank of the Amu Darya up to Charjuy and the Urgench oasis, the Tajik-Kyrgyz conflicts in the Pamir, and Kazakh-Turkmen conflicts in Mangyshlak and Krasnovodstvo. The inclusion of Samarkand and Bukhara in Uzbekistan initiated yet another spark of violence.⁴²¹

The complexity at the federal level was fueled by skirmishes and the realignment of diverging interests within the local communities. When changing and drawing new border lines, the Soviet authorities considered various factors, including land use and irrigation, economic profitability, and ethnographic, political, and community interests. The case of Iskander clearly illustrates the complexity of the approach taken by the Soviet government to resolve territorial problems. The petitioners from Iskander claimed that Uzbek agriculture in the area was near ruin and that this would unavoidably lead the Uzbeks in Kirgizia to revert back to nomadism. The petitioners asked for their area to be included in the Uzbek SSR. Evaluating the border dispute in Tashkent, Soviet authorities weighed ethnographic, economic, and administrative considerations, consulted experts, and drew up a detailed response. First, it evaluated the ethnographic composition of Iskander based on data from the 1920s, concluding that 47,3% were Uzbeks. From the economic perspective, the commission determined that it was more convenient to get from Iskander to the Uzbek economic centre than

⁴²⁰ Radio Free Europe. 16 January 2014. Small Exclave Spells Big Problems For Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/kyrgyzstan-tajikistan-exclaves-vorukh-tensions/25232311.html>.

⁴²¹ Горшенина С. 2020. Конструируя Центральную Азию: от названия и границ до российского «колониализма». Доступно на: <https://caa-network.org/archives/18996>.

to the Kirgiz economic centre. It also noted that unlike most Kirgiz regions, Iskander was a settled agricultural region with an economic orientation similar to that of the Uzbek parts of Tashkent. However, the commission concluded that the transfer could incite other border changes in the area and therefore offered a compromise that Iskander should remain in Kirgizia as an administrative part of a separate Uzbek national region.⁴²² An analysis of these documents and decisions from the Iskander case discloses that ethnic composition did not play an important role in Soviet territorial organization in Central Asia. This is supported by the intense disputes that occurred in Fergana Valley in 1924. The Kirgiz delegation admitted that although none of the main towns in the Fergana Valley had ethnic Kirgiz majorities, the economic perspective made it essential to absorb commercial centres close to Kirgiz territories into Kara-Kirghiz AD.⁴²³

The emergence of enclaves in Central Asia remains terra incognita and requires further work with archival documents. Clear information on several enclaves is lacking. For example, the Tajik Sarvak enclave is the territory that was leased by Tashkent to Tajikistan in 1935. Subsequently, the lease terms were regularly extended until 1990. In 1991 the land was assigned to Tajikistan and remained encircled by Uzbekistan. The Uzbek Sokh enclave was part of the Rishtan district of the Fergana district of the Uzbek SSR. In 1942, it became a separate Sokh district, and in 1959 it was re-assigned to the Rishtan district. In 1991, Sokh was again recognized as a separate district, and became surrounded by the Kyrgyz territory. The Uzbek Shakhimardan enclave had been part of the Kirgiz SSR until 1930, after which it was transferred to the Uzbek SSR. After the collapse of Soviet Union, it became surrounded by Kyrgyzstan.⁴²⁴

During Soviet times, the enclaves dispersed throughout the Fergana Valley caused rather limited issues. The declarations of independence in Central Asia and the formation of nation-states prompted the emergence of disputes over the enclaves. There are approximately 30 enclaves in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan.⁴²⁵ Several enclaves have ceased to exist as a result of bilateral deals and quite a few enclaves are completely depopulated.

2. Profiles of enclaves

The enclave issue is most pronounced in the Fergana Valley, which hosts many of the enclaves and spans all three nations. The Fergana Valley is significant to the states because of its population, available arable land, transport routes, and historical claims, further exacerbating the issue of enclaves. Many of the most significant tensions have appeared out of local issues such as access to water supplies and the passage of vehicles.

⁴²² Hirsch F. 2005. *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union*. Cornell University Press.

⁴²³ Ibid.

⁴²⁴ Зверинцева Т., Ханкишиев И. 2018. Анклавы в Центральной Азии: история и современные проблемы. Доступно на: <https://yenicag.ru/anklavy-v-centralnoy-azii-istoriya-i-s/270761/>.

⁴²⁵ Ng.ru, Панфилова В. 17.12.2018. Киргизия переложила заботу об анклавах на Ташкент. Доступно на: http://www.ng.ru/cis/2018-12-17/5_7464_kyrgyz.html.

Enclave	Belongs to	On the territory	Population	Territory km ²	Ethnic groups ⁴²⁶	Natural resources	Main security problem
Arnasai (semi-exclave)	Kazakhstan	Uzbekistan	650 ⁴²⁷	1 km ² ⁴²⁸		While living in the enclave, the inhabitants had pastures and cattle. Now, living in the 'motherland', they are left without plots of land.	The enclave was depopulated after negotiations took place in 2010 that determined the Arnasai status as an enclave to be ineffective. The population of Arnasai was resettled in the 'motherland', Kazakhstan.
Barak	Kyrgyzstan	Uzbekistan	600-627 ⁴²⁹ (i.e. 627 households ⁴³⁰); >1000 in 1991 ⁴³¹	4 km ² ⁴³² (Andijan Region, 1.5 km away from the border with Kara-Suu district of Osh Region)	100% Kyrgyz		The irrigation system was disrupted. The borders were closed in 2003 and 2013, preventing Kyrgyz citizens from travelling directly to Barak. During this time, the access route from Barak to Kyrgyzstan was 300 km long. ⁴³³ In August 2018, the intergovernmental commission on delimitation and demarcation of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border agreed to a land swap. ⁴³⁴
Sarvak	Tajikistan	Uzbekistan	400-2500 ⁴³⁵	8,4 km ² ⁴³⁷	99% Uzbek, 1% Tajik	Cattle breeding.	The center of the territory is Sarvak, a village located on both sides of the border. The narrow strip along the border hosts a few cattle farms, and cattle often drifts onto the Uzbek side, causing skirmishes between the local population and the border guards. ⁴³⁸ Due to border controls imposed by the Uzbeks and administrative procedures (i.e. list of those allowed to cross; timetable for crossing; fines), ⁴³⁹ it has become difficult to sell agricultural products.
Maktaaral district (semi-enclave)	Kazakhstan	Uzbekistan	Approx. 2500 ⁴⁴⁰ 133,539	1800 km ² . ⁴⁴¹	72,16% ethnic Kazakhs; 11,26% ethnic Tajiks (Kazakhstan's largest Tajik community); 8,17% ethnic Uzbeks.	Textile industry and cattle herding.	Uncertainty remains around crossing the border from the enclave to Uzbekistan (crossing is necessary for workers, students). In 2010, a wandering cattle herd was banned from entering Maktaaral.

⁴²⁶ OCHA. 2013. Humanitarian Bulletin – South Caucasus and Central Asia: Border incidents in Central Asian enclaves. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HB_ROCCA_20130709%20EN.pdf.

⁴²⁷ CA-portal.ru. 2018. Анклавы в Центральной Азии: история и современные проблемы. Available at: <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:45911>.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

⁴²⁹ Baker N., 2011. The Ferghana Valley: A Soviet Legacy faced with Climate Change. Available at: <http://mandalaproyects.com/ice/ice-cases/ferghana.htm>.

⁴³⁰ International Crisis Group. 4th April 2020. 'Central Asia: border disputes conflict potential'. Report No 33

⁴³¹ CA-portal.ru. 2018. Анклавы в Центральной Азии: история и современные проблемы. Available at: <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:45911>.

⁴³² Varandey. 2019. Ферганские анклавы. Часть 2: Чон-Гара (Узбекистан в Киргизии). Available at: <https://varandey.livejournal.com/875940.html>.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Ibid.

⁴³⁵ OCHA. 2013. Humanitarian Bulletin – South Caucasus and Central Asia: Border incidents in Central Asian enclaves. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HB_ROCCA_20130709%20EN.pdf.

⁴³⁶ Other sources say the population is at 539. Khurshid Zafari, 20 July 2019. Resilience, prosperity and co-operation in Central Asia's enclaves: a role for the EU? Available at: <https://eucentralasia.eu/2019/07/resilience-prosperity-and-cooperation-in-central-asias-enclaves-a-role-for-the-eu/>.

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Волосевич А. 28 September 2005. Анклавы Ферганской долины становятся зонами все более рискованного проживания. Available at: <https://www.ferghananews.com/articles/3991>.

⁴³⁹ CA-portal.ru. 2018. Анклавы в Центральной Азии: история и современные проблемы. Available at: <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:45911>.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid.

Vorukh	Tajikistan	Kyrgyzstan	23,000 -30,000	130 km ² 96.7 km ² ⁴⁴² ⁴⁴³ (Region of Ferghana Valley and Isfara Valley)	95% Tajik, 5% Kyrgyz	Nothing.	Outstanding issue of border delimitation (agreement shall be reached on what cartographic material and sources to use to delineate the border ⁴⁴⁴). Tension around road construction (mid-March 2019 violence broke out during the construction of a Kyrgyz road bypassing Vorukh). Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). ⁴⁴⁵
Kairagach (Kayragach)	Tajikistan	Kyrgyzstan	150	Less than 1 km ² (Batken region)	100% Tajik		
Western Kalacha	Tajikistan	Kyrgyzstan	100	0.88 - less than 1 km ² (next to the Kyrgyz-Tajik border in the Leilek district)		Agriculture and gardening (irrigated by the Karavshin River).	
Sokh (capital Ravon)	Uzbekistan	Kyrgyzstan	25,000 – 70,000; Nearly 50,000 ⁴⁴⁶ Approx. 74,000 ^{447,448}	325 km ² ⁴⁴⁹ also 234 km ² ⁴⁵⁰ (Batken region, about 20 km from the border with Uzbekistan)	Ethnic Tajiks (99-99.3%) who are Uzbek citizens, 0.7-1% Kyrgyz (other sources say 0.7% ⁴⁵¹) and 0,1% Uzbek including any other ethnicities. Mother tongue for the majority is Tajik.	Sokh river. Water and rich pastureland ⁴⁵² . Economy remains largely agricultural, with potatoes and rice as its main products. ⁴⁵³	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) first appear in 1999 – 2000. Borders are mined, and these mines sometimes threaten the freedom of movement of shepherds. Water and border demarcation continue to constitute a source of tensions ⁴⁵⁴ . The population of the enclave is growing steadily which may turn into a problem due to limited land. Both states are at risk of border guards abusing their power in the Sokh area ⁴⁵⁵ . Continuity of water pipes and electricity cables pose conflict points. ⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁴² Zafari K. 20 July 2019. Resilience, prosperity and cooperation in Central Asia's enclaves: a role for the EU? Available at: <https://eucentralasia.eu/2019/07/resilience-prosperity-and-cooperation-in-central-asias-enclaves-a-role-for-the-eu/>.

⁴⁴³ Tajikistanfocus. March 2012. Central Asia – Enclaves of The World. Available at: <https://tajikistanfocus.wordpress.com/2012/03/30/central-asia-enclaves-of-the-world/>.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ International Crisis Group. 4th April 2020. 'Central Asia: border disputes conflict potential'. Report No 33.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ CA-portal.ru. 2018. Анклавы в Центральной Азии: история и современные проблемы. Available at: <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:45911>.

⁴⁴⁸ Zafari K. 20 July 2019. Resilience, prosperity and cooperation in Central Asia's enclaves: a role for the EU? Available at: <https://eucentralasia.eu/2019/07/resilience-prosperity-and-cooperation-in-central-asias-enclaves-a-role-for-the-eu/>.

⁴⁴⁹ The New Humanitarian. 2001. IRIN Focus on ethnic enclaves in Ferghana Valley. Available at: <http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/184171>.

⁴⁵⁰ Zafari K. 20 July 2019. Resilience, prosperity and cooperation in Central Asia's enclaves: a role for the EU? Available at: <https://eucentralasia.eu/2019/07/resilience-prosperity-and-cooperation-in-central-asias-enclaves-a-role-for-the-eu/>.

⁴⁵¹ October 2018. Анклавы в Центральной Азии: история и современные проблемы. Available at: <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:45911>.

⁴⁵² International Crisis Group. 4th April 2020. 'Central Asia: border disputes conflict potential'. Report No 33.

⁴⁵³ Globalsecurity.org. 2013. Sokh District Border Fence. Available at: <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/centralasia/sokh-border.htm>.

⁴⁵⁴ International Crisis Group. 2020.3 'Central Asia: border disputes conflict potential'. Report No 33.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁶ The Diplomat. 13 May 2015. More Trouble on the Kyrgyz-Uzbek Border. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2015/05/more-trouble-on-the-kyrgyz-uzbek-border/>.

Shahimar-dan	Uzbekistan	Kyrgyzstan	5000-6000 ⁴⁵⁷ (Other sources say 5000 to 10000 ⁴⁵⁸)	38.2 km ² ⁴⁵⁹ 90 km ² ⁴⁶⁰	91% Uzbek, 9% Kyrgyz. Tadjik culture and traditions prevail.	Tourism to the lake Kurban-Kul (Курбан-Куль - Russian: "маленький Саяз"). However, the devastating flooding in 1998 reduced the numbers of tourists ⁴⁶¹ .	Border disagreements and demarcation. Restricted intrapersonal contact. Complicated border-crossing procedures reduce the attractiveness of tourism in the enclave. The Kyrgyz authorities back the local administration, deteriorating relations between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan ⁴⁶² . In 2007 a visa free regime was agreed upon. The grave of the Abu Ali ibn Talib, the fourth "righteous" caliph of Islam and an important figure for modern Islamic radicals, is situated in the enclave.
Chon-Gara (Qalacha)	Uzbekistan	Kyrgyzstan	Shepherds 1000 ⁴⁶³	3 km ² (Rishtansky region, stands on the canal of the Sokh River close to the border)	The Kyrgyz population is slowly being pushed out. ⁴⁶⁴	Land used for pastures	
Dzangail (Jangail)	Uzbekistan	Kyrgyzstan	500 ⁴⁶⁵	Less than 1 km ²	uninhabited	Land used for pastures	

3. Causes of fragilities

There are various causes of fragility in the enclaves of Fergana Valley though similar trends in fragility points are detectable. Five systemic causes are identified.

The internationalization of borders. The internationalization of the borders between the enclaves in the Fergana Valley led to a greater militarisation of the area, frequent delays in cross-border movement, and an increase in harassment and shakedowns at the border.⁴⁶⁶ The mismanagement of natural and human-made resources in the Soviet era has significantly increased the interdependence and fragility of these enclaves.⁴⁶⁷

Limited resources. Overpopulation, increasing water, and land scarcity, as well as economic hardship, escalate tensions between different ethnic, social, and political groups in the Fergana valley. The existing social differentiations, which appeared during the political, economic, and social transformation following the Soviet Union's collapse, exacerbate these geographical and economic concerns.⁴⁶⁸ Residents in the enclaves and those close to the

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ CA-portal.ru. 2018. Анклавы в Центральной Азии: история и современные проблемы. Available at: <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:45911>.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁰ Varandej. 2019. Ферганские анклавы. Часть 2: Чон-Гара (Узбекистан в Киргизии). Available at: <https://varandej.livejournal.com/875940.html>.

⁴⁶¹ CA-portal.ru. 2018. Анклавы в Центральной Азии: история и современные проблемы. Available at: <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:45911>.

⁴⁶² Ibid.

⁴⁶³ Zafari K. 20 July 2019. Resilience, prosperity and cooperation in Central Asia's enclaves: a role for the EU? Available at: <https://eucentralasia.eu/2019/07/resilience-prosperity-and-cooperation-in-central-asias-enclaves-a-role-for-the-eu/>.

⁴⁶⁴ CA-portal.ru. 2018. Анклавы в Центральной Азии: история и современные проблемы. Available at: <http://www.ca-portal.ru/article:45911>.

⁴⁶⁵ Zafari K. 20 July 2019. Resilience, prosperity and cooperation in Central Asia's enclaves: a role for the EU? Available at: <https://eucentralasia.eu/2019/07/resilience-prosperity-and-cooperation-in-central-asias-enclaves-a-role-for-the-eu/>.

⁴⁶⁶ The New Humanitarian. 2001. IRIN Focus on ethnic enclaves in Ferghana Valley. Available at: <http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/184171>.

⁴⁶⁷ Baker N. 2011. The Ferghana Valley: A Soviet Legacy faced with Climate Change. Available at: <http://mandalaprojects.com/ice/ice-cases/ferghana.htm>.

⁴⁶⁸ Sari Y. 2013. Identity-Conflict Relations: A Case-Study of the Ferghana Valley conflicts. Central Asia and the Caucasus Vol. 14(4).

borders experience problems when travelling, gaining access to water and land resources, and participating in weddings, burials, and other culturally significant ceremonies.⁴⁶⁹ Cross-border irrigation channels have been diverted or cut off, which has impacted irrigation. Those living directly on the border no longer have access to water resources.⁴⁷⁰

Strict border management policies. The introduction of strict border management policies and their enforcement obstructs freedom of movement for the local communities. Limited access to pastures and invasive border-crossing procedures appear as the most problematic issues.⁴⁷¹ Due to the scarcity of access routes to the enclaves, any incident leading to border-closure can result in thousands of people being cut off from medical services, food markets, work, and relatives, having a significant effect on the local population.⁴⁷²

Climate change. It has placed an additional strain on the region. Decreasing rainfall and rising temperatures increase the already existing need for expanded irrigation. Additionally, it is difficult to establish hydroelectric alternatives to fuel sources, which have become limited with the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁴⁷³ Other natural disasters such as mudflows threaten the primary sources of livelihood, being agriculture and livestock, in the Fergana Valley.⁴⁷⁴

Terrorism. Suspicions of affiliation with and support of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) among the populations of an enclave are additional sources of tension. Populations in both the Vorukh and Sokh enclaves are suspected of being empathetic towards the IMU.⁴⁷⁵

The causes of fragility vary in different enclaves, particularly in those that embrace the misconduct of security actors, terrorism, and discriminatory regulations.

3.1 Vorukh (Tajik enclave in Kyrgyzstan)

In the Vorukh enclave, road construction and disputed territory are two key causes of tension. Road construction has complicated bilateral relations. For example, there have been several incidents of Vorukh residents attacking Kyrgyz cars travelling through the enclave. The Kyrgyz government initiated road construction in 2013 in order to create a transportation route that bypassed Vorukh. Tajikistan did not approve the project and inhabitants of Vorukh rebelled by attacking the excavators. Tensions escalated when in response, the residents of the neighbouring village of Ak-Say attacked Tajik citizens travelling through their territory. The incident involved hostages, physical attacks on authorities, and damage to cars.⁴⁷⁶ In 2014, Tajik border guards fired mortars to respond to the road construction in the areas that remained under dispute.⁴⁷⁷ This resulted in the closure of all border-crossing

⁴⁶⁹ Gabdulhakov R. 2015. The highly securitized insecurities of state borders in the Ferghana Valley. Central Asia Program No. 9.

⁴⁷⁰ The New Humanitarian. 2001. IRIN Focus on ethnic enclaves in Ferghana Valley. Available at: <http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/184171>.

⁴⁷¹ OCHA. 2013. Humanitarian Bulletin – South Caucasus and Central Asia: Border incidents in Central Asian enclaves. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HB_ROCCA_20130709%20EN.pdf.

⁴⁷² OCHA. 2013. Humanitarian Bulletin – South Caucasus and Central Asia: Border incidents in Central Asian enclaves. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HB_ROCCA_20130709%20EN.pdf.

⁴⁷³ Baker N. 2011. The Ferghana Valley: A Soviet Legacy faced with Climate Change. Available at: <http://mandalaprojects.com/ice/ice-cases/ferghana.htm>.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ The New Humanitarian. 2001. IRIN Focus on ethnic enclaves in Ferghana Valley. Available at: <http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/184171>.

⁴⁷⁶ OCHA. 2013. Humanitarian Bulletin – South Caucasus and Central Asia: Border incidents in Central Asian enclaves. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HB_ROCCA_20130709%20EN.pdf.

⁴⁷⁷ Gabdulhakov R. 2014. Geographical Enclaves of the Fergana Valley: Do Good Fences Make Good Neigh-

points. Regular outbursts of violence are more likely to occur in Vorukh and Sokh due to these border insecurities.⁴⁷⁸

3.2. Sokh (Uzbek enclave in Kyrgyzstan)

In addition to territorially claiming the title of the largest enclave in the world, Sokh is the most populated Fergana valley enclave and the enclave at highest risk of conflict.⁴⁷⁹ The majority of incidents are caused by border crossing disputes but are exacerbated by the structural causes of tension. These include population pressures, distribution of resources, such as land, water and road construction.⁴⁸⁰ Geographically, Sokh is almost completely landlocked. While it is an Uzbek enclave, its relationship with mainland Uzbekistan is rife with tension. Further, its communication with Tajikistan was severely limited due to tense Tajik-Uzbek relations (caused by strict visa requirements, lack of transport links, etc.).⁴⁸¹ The situation has changed with new leadership in Uzbekistan.

Despite the 1996 Memorandum of Eternal Friendship between Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, the two states had long-standing disagreements over trade, access to water, border demarcation, and inter-ethnic conflict.⁴⁸² In the 1990s, an attempt by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan to enter Kyrgyzstan by way of the Sokh enclave increased suspicions towards Sokh. Uzbek authorities prioritized border security and lined the borderline with anti-personnel mines in order to prevent IMU incursions.⁴⁸³ Uzbekistan's distribution of landmines along the northern Sokh border, sometimes within Kyrgyz territory, has further aggravated state relations and incited violence, resulting in two casualties in 2001.⁴⁸⁴ Uzbekistan did attempt to offer this enclave to Kyrgyzstan in return for other land, likely seen as a viable option for Uzbekistan because the majority of the population inhabiting Sokh is Tajik. During the ethnic clashes in Osh in 2010, 200 Kyrgyz residents fled Sokh out of fear that the violence would spread to the enclave.⁴⁸⁵

In 2013, a conflict began in January over a road construction project and its legitimacy. The conflict quickly escalated into hostage-taking and the burning of cars, resulting in the closure of the border around the enclave. This led to a humanitarian crisis in which 80,000 people could not leave the enclave. Over 2000 Uzbeks could not return to their homes in the enclave and had to be accommodated by the Uzbek Government. Due to a lack of food, water, and medical assistance, a state of emergency was declared in five Kyrgyz villages. This situation was resolved by 1 February 2013.⁴⁸⁶

Water issues have been a further source of tension. Villagers from Sokh have diverted water from the river flowing through the enclave leading to the Kyrgyz villages of Boz-Adyr and

bors. Available at: http://osce-academy.net/upload/Policy_briefs/Policy_Brief_14.pdf.

⁴⁷⁸ Gabdulhakov R. 2015. The highly securitized insecurities of state borders in the Fergana Valley. Central Asia Program No. 9.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid.

⁴⁸² Gabdulhakov R. 2014. Geographical Enclaves of the Fergana Valley: Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbors. Available at: http://osce-academy.net/upload/Policy_briefs/Policy_Brief_14.pdf.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ The New Humanitarian. 2001. IRIN Focus on ethnic enclaves in Ferghana Valley. Available at: <http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/184171>.

⁴⁸⁵ Gabdulhakov R. 2014. Geographical Enclaves of the Fergana Valley: Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbors. Available at: http://osce-academy.net/upload/Policy_briefs/Policy_Brief_14.pdf.

⁴⁸⁶ OCHA. 2013. Humanitarian Bulletin – South Caucasus and Central Asia: Border incidents in Central Asian enclaves. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HB_ROCCA_20130709%20EN.pdf.

Kara-Tokoi, which are located downstream. This left the latter villages only able to cover less than half of their water needs and led to greater animosity between the two groups.⁴⁸⁷

3.3 Shahimarand (Uzbek enclave in Kyrgyzstan)

In general, Shahimarand enclave is less prone to tensions. The main threat to stability appears to be damage to the tourist-dependent economy arising from disagreements over border demarcation and related incidents. Despite the presence of little tourist infrastructure and complex border crossing procedures, the enclave promotes itself as a tourist destination.⁴⁸⁸ As no major roads run through the enclave, its presence is not a significant inconvenience for Kyrgyzstan.⁴⁸⁹ In 2004, Kyrgyz lawmakers demanded the annexation of Shahimarand. Following this, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan reached an agreement that allows for visa free travel into the enclave.⁴⁹⁰ The aforementioned 2013 conflict led to the closure of borders, which affected surrounding Kyrgyz villages that are connected to Kyrgyzstan by a single road passing through the enclaves.⁴⁹¹

3.4 Barak (Kyrgyz enclave in Uzbekistan)

The primary causes of fragility in Barak center around residents' demands for resettlement. The Kyrgyz population demanded resettlement into southern Kyrgyzstan in response to rising tensions in other enclave regions and fears of being held hostage.⁴⁹² Issues also arise from the strict border crossing procedures and custom charges, both of which are a hindrance to the local economy (for example, the sale of cattle). After the 2013 Sokh enclave incident, Uzbekistan blocked Barak's access to mainland Kyrgyzstan.⁴⁹³ As a result of the population relocating, the enclave is nearly uninhabited.⁴⁹⁴

4. Mapping Security Actors in Vorukh, Sokh, Shahimardan, and Barak

Sokh. A variety of security actors are involved in ongoing border disputes concerning enclaves in Central Asia. In Sokh, these include the Armed Forces and Border Guards of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. In Uzbekistan, the Border Guards are subordinated to the state security service, while in Kyrgyzstan, they are a public service department, and not part of any ministry.⁴⁹⁵ The Border Guards of each state are deployed along contested borders, and in cases of violence within Sokh, such as the 1999 incident involving the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, the military may also be deployed. In 2010, Uzbekistan agreed to remove all military equipment from Sokh,⁴⁹⁶ while, in accordance with an agree-

⁴⁸⁷ The New Humanitarian. 2001. IRIN Focus on ethnic enclaves in Fergana Valley. Available at: <http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/184171>.

⁴⁸⁸ Gabdulhakov R. 2015. The highly securitized insecurities of state borders in the Ferghana Valley. Central Asia Program No. 9.

⁴⁸⁹ Gabdulhakov R. 2014. Geographical Enclaves of the Fergana Valley: Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbors. Available at: http://osce-academy.net/upload/Policy_briefs/Policy_Brief_14.pdf.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁹¹ OCHA. 2013. Humanitarian Bulletin – South Caucasus and Central Asia: Border incidents in Central Asian enclaves. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HB_ROCCA_20130709%20EN.pdf.

⁴⁹² Gabdulhakov R. 2014.

⁴⁹³ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁴ Gabdulhakov R. 2015.

⁴⁹⁵ Inoyatov R. 2013. SNB vs MVD. Available at: <http://registan.net/2013/07/30/rustam-inoyatov-snb-vs-mvd-2/> and State Border Guard Service. Government of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <http://www.gps.gov.kg/>.

⁴⁹⁶ Eurasianet. 4 June 2010. What's behind the pullout of the Uzbek forces from Sokh? Available at: <https://eur->

ment signed in 2010, Kyrgyz border posts around Sokh are manned by border guards.⁴⁹⁷ The executive branches of the Uzbek and Kyrgyz governments are other important actors. They are responsible for the Armed Forces of their respective countries, and for formal negotiation processes, including the intergovernmental commission on the delimitation and demarcation of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border. In recent years, the Presidents of both states have committed to resolving the ongoing dispute regarding Sokh and have agreed on the demarcation of 92% of disputed borders, including in Sokh.⁴⁹⁸ Ethnic Tajik's living in Sokh (who are also Uzbek citizens) are another key actor involved in the conflict. Many of them are agricultural workers. Despite agreements on border demarcations, little progress has been made regarding the division of pastureland, which is still a key source of tension between ethnic Tajiks and ethnic Kyrgyz.⁴⁹⁹ As such, agricultural workers constitute another key actor in the conflict, and were involved in the most recent episode of violence in 2019, when they reportedly occupied pastures on Kyrgyz land to graze their cattle, leading to a violent confrontation with Kyrgyz border guards.⁵⁰⁰

Vorukh. As with the Sokh enclave, the primary actors involved in Vorukh include the Armed Forces and Border Guards of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. In contrast to Sokh, however, the Armed Forces have no permanent presence within Vorukh. The Armed Forces and Border Guards of Tajikistan patrol the Tajik-Kyrgyz border, approximately 20 miles north of the disputed Vorukh enclave. As with Sokh, the border guards of Kyrgyzstan patrol checkpoints surrounding Vorukh, and, along with the Armed Forces, often close the main road leading from Vorukh to Tajikistan when violence flares up.⁵⁰¹ Given the proximity of Vorukh to the official Tajik-Kyrgyz border, inter-communal violence between ethnic Tajiks living in Vorukh and Kyrgyz nationals living around it often results in direct confrontations between the border guards of opposing sides. This was the case in 2014, when communal violence over water resources and the construction of road led to confrontations between the Tajik and Kyrgyz border guards.⁵⁰² The executive branches of the Tajik and Kyrgyz governments are other important actors. They are responsible for the Armed Forces of their respective countries, and for formal negotiation processes, including the intergovernmental commission on the delimitation and demarcation of the Kyrgyz-Tajik border. In recent years, the Presidents of both states have committed to resolving the ongoing dispute regarding Vorukh, meeting directly to address the problem in 2019.⁵⁰³ Despite this, some 472km of the Tajik-Kyrgyz border remain disputed, including in Vorukh.⁵⁰⁴ Ethnic Tajik's living in Vorukh

asianet.org/whats-behind-the-pullout-of-the-uzbek-forces-from-sokh.

⁴⁹⁷ The New Humanitarian. 2001. IRIN Focus on ethnic enclaves in Ferghana Valley.

⁴⁹⁸ Novastan. 24 April 2017. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan reach agreement on a thousand kilometers of borders. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/louzbekistan-et-le-kirghizstan-parviennent-a-un-ac-cord-sur-mille-kilometres-de-frontieres/> and Novastan. 7 May 2020. Uzbek villagers throw stones at Kyrgyz border guards. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/des-villageois-ouzbeks-lancent-des-pierres-sur-des-garde-frontieres-kirghiz/>.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁰¹ Novastan. 24 July 2014. One more dead in Vorukh border conflict between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/un-mort-de-plus-dans-le-conflit-frontalier-de-vorukh-entre-tadjikistan-et-kirghizstan/>.

⁵⁰² Radio Liberty Europe. 16 January 2014. Small Exclave Spells Big Problems For Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/asie/frictions-entre-tadjikistan-et-kirghizistan-autour-dune-frontiere-en-poin-tille_3069819.html.

⁵⁰³ Novastan. 26 July 2019. "No more unresolved problems" in Vorukh between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/plus-de-problemes-irresolus-a-vorukh-entre-tadjikistan-et-kirghizstan/>.

⁵⁰⁴ Sputnik News. 24 February 2020. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan agreed on measures to resolve the cross-border issue. Available at: <https://tj.sputniknews.ru/country/20200224/1030766078/Tajikistan-Kyrgyzstan-soglasova-li-mery-prigranichnogo-voprosa.html>.

(who are also Tajik citizens) are another key actor involved in the conflict. While neither organized nor formally armed, they often come together to advocate for grazing right of cattle, the use of water resources and the right to conduct agricultural work. They further advocate for freedom of movement along the Isfara-Vorukh road into Tajikistan and humane treatment at the hands of security actors, sometimes through violent means.⁵⁰⁵ In recent years, inter-ethnic violence between ethnic Tajiks residing in Vorukh and Kyrgyz nationals living around it has been commonplace. In 2019, these outbreaks of violence led to the deaths of border guards on both sides, and the evacuations of towns surrounding Vorukh.⁵⁰⁶ Despite numerous high-level meetings between representatives of both states, in 2020 the violence continued, with the most recent episode occurring in May including the use of mortars by Tajik border guards.⁵⁰⁷

Barak. Barak is close to the Kyrgyz border, but the border crossing point was closed in 2013 by Uzbek authorities. Following this development, residents of Barak had to make a 300-kilometer detour to the border point “Kyzyl-Kiya-road” to get to Osh.⁵⁰⁸ This isolation continued until 2018, due to extensive border controls and roads to nearby villages specifically blocked for Barak residents. Many families independently decided to relocate from the enclosed territory, out of the pressures that consistently closed borders and an inability to travel to the “mainland” bring. During the 5-year isolation period, Kyrgyz authorities launched an initiative to resettle Barak’s population to other parts of Kyrgyzstan. About 75 inhabitants remain in the village out of the former 600.⁵⁰⁹ Extensive border checks remain a daily reality. Access to the enclave is severely limited, except for residents of the area. There have been reports of medical supplies being held at the border, despite a lack of proper medical facilities inside the confines of Barak.⁵¹⁰

Shahimardan. In 2017, the Uzbek Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) stated that the territory of Shahimardan had featured in talks with Kyrgyz authorities on possible further territorial demarcation. However, no formal agreement has been reached, aside from the current understanding of touristic freedom in Shahimardan area.⁵¹¹ In July 2018, an incident occurred between Kyrgyz citizens travelling through Shahimardan and Uzbek nationals residing in the enclave. According to the Kyrgyz state border service, three Kyrgyz citizens, returning to the village of Kotormo through the enclave of Shahimardan, encountered a group of young Uzbek citizens who initiated a fight and injured two of the Kyrgyz travelers. Kyrgyz authorities stated that the violent encounter did not qualify as a border incident as it occurred on the territory of a neighboring state. Law enforcement agencies of both regions

⁵⁰⁵ Novastan. 24 July 2014. One more dead in Vorukh border conflict between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan; Novastan. 6 January 2020. Conflicts on the border between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan continue. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/les-conflits-a-la-frontiere-entre-tadjikistan-et-kirghizstan-continuent/>; Novastan. 25 October 2019. Lack of communication, political interests... political scientist Alibek Moukambayev deciphers the border conflict between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/manque-de-communication-interets-politiques-le-politologue-alibek-moukambaiev-decrypte-le-conflit-frontalier-entre-kirghizstan-et-tadjikistan/>.

⁵⁰⁶ 24kg. 23 July 2019. Conflict at the border. More than 300 residents of Ak-Sai village evacuated to Batken. Available at: https://24.kg/proisshestviya/124183_konflikt_nagranitse_bolee_300_jiteley_sela_ak-say_evakuirovanyi_ybatken/.

⁵⁰⁷ Eurasianet. 8 May 2020. Fighting flares again on Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan border. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/fighting-flares-again-on-kyrgyzstan-tajikistan-border>.

⁵⁰⁸ StanRadar - Central Asia News. 27 August 2014. The Barack Enclave: A Bitter Taste of Uselessness. Available at: <https://stanradar.com/news/full/12028-anklav-barak-gorkij-privkus-nenuzhnosti.html>.

⁵⁰⁹ Fergana Agency. 12 December 2018. In the Kyrgyz enclave Barak, after five years of isolation, earned a checkpoint. Available at: <https://fergana.agency/news/103914/>.

⁵¹⁰ Eurasianet. 6 June 2003. Residents of Kyrgyz Enclave in Uzbekistan Feel Like Castaways. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/residents-of-kyrgyz-enclave-in-uzbekistan-feel-like-castaways>.

⁵¹¹ Sputnik News. 7 August 2018. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan define a border line at two more sites. Available at: <https://uz.sputniknews.ru/politics/20180807/9062310.html>.

met first and then met again the with delegations of the two countries, including heads of district administrations, local authorities, law enforcement officials, and border representatives of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan to discuss this incident. Based on the results of the meetings, a decision was made to conduct unilateral investigations. While the two affected Kyrgyz travelers made a full recovery,⁵¹² the diplomatic response on both sides suggests a concerted effort to maintain peaceful relations in the region.

5. Current Developments and the Stage of Fragility in Vorukh, Sokh, Shahimardan, and Barak

Enclaves within the Fergana Valley exhibit a wide array of fragilities relating to many factors, including the actors present, geographical location, and demography. Whilst it is therefore not possible to identify a distinct stage of fragility for each enclave, through providing an overview of recent developments in Vorukh, Sokh, Shahimardan and Barak, it is possible to better understand the propensity for the onset, continuation, and cessation of violence in each.

Sokh. Border negotiations between Uzbek and Kyrgyz increased in 2016. This coincided with the appointment of Shavkat Mirziyoyev as the President of Uzbekistan, who embraced a different foreign policy to that of his predecessor.⁵¹³ As the vice-president of the Upper House of the Uzbek Parliament commented in 2016, “for the past few months, we have been tackling what must have been so forever. Uzbekistan is ready for dialogue on the most difficult issues. Of course disagreements exist between neighbors, it’s natural. But we must not be ostriches and we must resolve ourselves to thoughtful compromises. I think that is what differentiates the foreign policy of the new Uzbek authorities from those of their predecessors, prompted by new Uzbek President, who took different approach to previous one.”⁵¹⁴

By September 2016, 9 border demarcation talks had been held between Kyrgyz and Uzbek officials, generally at the deputy prime minister level.⁵¹⁵ An intergovernmental commission on the delimitation and demarcation of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border was also established and met regularly. In April 2017, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan reached an agreement on demarcating almost 1000 kilometers of their shared border,⁵¹⁶ equaling nearly 85% of its 1270km length.⁵¹⁷ In late 2018, representatives on both sides agreed on the demarcation of a further 10% of their shared border.⁵¹⁸ By 2019, Kyrgyz authorities claimed that 92% of the border had been successfully demarcated, and that only a handful of sites were still being negotiated.⁵¹⁹

⁵¹² Ozodagon. 21 July 2018. The State Fire Service of the Kyrgyz Republic commented on the incident in the enclave of Shahimardan. Available at: <https://catoday.org/centrasia/v-gps-kr-prokommentirovali-incident-v-an-klave-shahimardan>.

⁵¹³ Novastan. 24 April 2017. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan reach agreement on a thousand kilometers of borders.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

⁵¹⁵ Radio Free Europe. 16 August 2017. Uzbek-Kyrgyz Reset Is A Success, So Far. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/QishloqOvozi/2018/8/19?p=57>.

⁵¹⁶ Novastan. 24 April 2017. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan reach agreement on a thousand kilometers of borders.

⁵¹⁷ Novastan. 22 September 2018. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan agree on a new route for their common border. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/le-kirghizstan-et-louzbekistan-sentendent-sur-un-nouveau-trace-de-leur-frontiere-commune/>.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

⁵¹⁹ Novastan. 2 August 2019. Kyrgyzstan no longer wants to transfer Barak enclave to Uzbekistan. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/le-kirghizstan-ne-veut-plus-transferer-lenclave-de-barak-a-louzbekistan/>.

Despite the clear efforts of both sides to reach consensus on the matter, cross-border incidents near Sokh still occur. These often relate to disagreements over pastureland. In particular, a violent confrontation arose between Uzbek citizens of Sokh and Kyrgyz border guards in 2019, when the former reportedly occupied pastures on Kyrgyz land to graze their cattle.⁵²⁰ Thus, despite a reduction in the number of border disputes since 2016, tensions still remain. In addition, disagreements over the border demarcation processes and the implementation of the 2017 and 2018 agreements continue to exist.

Vorukh. Inter-ethnic clashes and cross-border incidents have been common in Vorukh in recent years. In 2014, violence intensified between ethnic Tajiks living in Vorukh and Kyrgyz nationals living nearby.⁵²¹ The violence stemmed from disagreements over the construction of a road around the territory of Vorukh, which ethnic Tajiks living in Vorukh claimed would enter their territory.⁵²² The violence resulted in the hospitalization of seven Kyrgyz security personnel. In the same year, tensions flared again over claims that Tajik nationals were diverting water resources towards the residents of Vorukh. The violence resulted in direct confrontation between the border guards of opposing sides.⁵²³

Admittedly, some efforts have been made to ease tensions. As with other Central Asian enclave disputes, opposing sides established an Intergovernmental Commission to formalize negotiations over the border demarcation process.⁵²⁴ On the basis of discussions conducted in this forum, Kyrgyz President Sooronbay Jeenbekov and his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rahmon met in July 2019 to discuss the situation in Vorukh.⁵²⁵ Only days before, however, confrontation over the placement of a Tajik flag in disputed territory led to the most serious incident of inter-ethnic violence that has occurred in many years.⁵²⁶ The violence resulted in the Kyrgyz authorities evacuating 300 Kyrgyz citizens living in the village of Ak Say, which borders Vorukh,⁵²⁷ as well as the shooting of a Kyrgyz soldier and Tajik police officer. Similar violent incidents occurred in early 2019 over the continued efforts of the Kyrgyz government to build a road bypassing Vorukh.⁵²⁸ In a sign of efforts to resolve these tensions, Deputy Minister of the Interior of Kyrgyzstan Almazbek Orozaliyev and his Tajik counterpart Abdullo Navjuvonov were immediately dispatched to Vorukh to conduct negotiations, accompanied by their respective border guard chiefs.⁵²⁹ A few days later, Kyrgyz President Sooronbay Jeenbekov and his Tajik counterpart Emomali Rahmon met in Vorukh to discuss the situation. The former declared that “there are no longer any unresolved problems” and that “we want to make our (common) border a gateway to peace, friendship, and good neighborly behavior”. Jeenbekov delivered this speech against a backdrop of an image with the Russian words “the Tajik and Kyrgyz peoples are brotherly peoples”.⁵³⁰ Despite these statements, no comment was made on the status of the road in question, despite it appearing as an ongoing source of conflict between the states.⁵³¹ While these negotiations did not conclude in an official agreement, in October 2019, the Kyrgyz Parliament signaled that it

⁵²⁰ Novastan. 7 May 2020. Uzbek villagers throw stones at Kyrgyz border guards.

⁵²¹ France Info. 8 January 2014. Friction between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan around a dotted border. Available at: https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/asie/frictions-entre-tadjikistan-et-kirghizistan-autour-dune-frontiere-en-poin-tille_3069819.html.

⁵²² Radio Liberty Europe. 16 January 2014. Small Exclave Spells Big Problems For Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/kyrgyzstan-tajikistan-exclaves-vorukh-tensions/25232311.html>.

⁵²³ France Info. 8 January 2014. Friction between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan around a dotted border.

⁵²⁴ Ibid.

⁵²⁵ Novastan. 26 July 2019. “No more unresolved problems” in Vorukh between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

⁵²⁶ Novastan. 24 July 2014. One more dead in Vorukh border conflict between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

⁵²⁷ 24kg. 23 July 2019. Conflict at the border. More than 300 residents of Ak-Sai village evacuated to Batken.

⁵²⁸ Novastan. 24 July 2014. One more dead in Vorukh border conflict between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Novastan. 26 July 2019. “No more unresolved problems” in Vorukh between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

was intensifying efforts to demarcate disputed territories including Vorukh.⁵³² In a further symbol of solidarity, both sides jointly funded the construction of a “Friendship Bridge” between the Tajik district of Gafurov and the Kyrgyz district of Leilek.⁵³³ In December 2019, the heads of state once again met to discuss border issues, with the President of Kyrgyzstan declaring that “Kyrgyzstan is ready for this work. A commission in Kyrgyzstan, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Razakov, as well as the Prime Minister and I, has already paved the way.” However, he concluded that “To be honest, the work is not going as we would like”, indicating that many issues remain unresolved. In February 2020 efforts continued, with Tajik Deputy Prime Minister, Azim Ibrom, and his Kyrgyz counterpart, Akram Madoumarov, meeting in Batken in an attempt to agree on the demarcation of the remaining 472km of border, including Vorukh. Sources reported that a plan to resolve cross-border issues, including a protocol on further cooperation for demarcating the borders, as well a separate agreement for enhanced economic cooperation between the Sughd region of Tajikistan and the Batken region of Kyrgyzstan, had been reached.

Despite this, further cross-border incidents between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan occurred in the southern Batken region in May 2020, resulting in the use of mortars by the Tajik border service.⁵³⁴ These incidents indicate that unless a bilateral treaty on the demarcation of the remaining disputed land borders is agreed upon, including agreements on freedom of travel for Tajiks living in Vorukh, on pasture land for grazing cattle, on the fair use of water resources, and on socio-economic support,⁵³⁵ violence is likely to continue. This is further complicated by the fact that Kyrgyzstan has experienced turbulences after the parliamentary elections in 2020. With the border negotiation process easily politicised, sources suggest that neither government nor respective opposition parties are likely to make any concessions in 2020 for fear of being accused of “...giving away Kyrgyz [or Tajik] land.”⁵³⁶

Shahimardan. Transportation routes between Shahimardan and Fergana city reopened in April 2017, having been closed since 2013. Shahimardan residents were relieved at the opening of transfer and connection routes to nearby regions, allowing relatives to freely visit, sparking a steady flow of tourists to the mountainous area, and easing every-day life.⁵³⁷ In August 2016, the governments of Uzbekistan and Switzerland reached an accord over the funding of a project designed to manage national water resources in Uzbekistan. Switzerland granted funds of up to 2,66 million US dollars to the project,⁵³⁸ aiming to establish an early community warning system for the local population residing around the Shahimardan-Sai river basin in Fergana Oblast. The project, whose mandate spanned from 2016 to 2018, also aimed to strengthen the institutional capacity of water management organizations in several regions of Uzbekistan. The Shahimardan-sai river basin, which flows through the highlands of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, is an extremely dangerous region due to natural disaster. In addition to floods, debris flows have been regularly recorded in this area. In July 1998 for example, an entire village fell during a landslide in the territory of the Uzbek exclave of Shahimardan, which led to the deaths of more than 100 people and caused significant damage to infrastructure and the tourist economy in the region.

⁵³² Novastan. 14 October 2019. Calming on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/apaisement-a-la-frontiere-entre-le-kirghizstan-et-le-tadjikistan/>.

⁵³³ Ibid.

⁵³⁴ Eurasianet. 08-05-2020. Fighting flares again on Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan border. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/fighting-flares-again-on-kyrgyzstan-tajikistan-border>.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Ibid.

⁵³⁷ Газета.uz. 10-05-2017. Из Ферганы в Шахимардан возобновлено движение автобусов. Available at: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2017/05/10/shohimardon/>.

⁵³⁸ RiaRu. 19 August 2016. Switzerland will help Uzbekistan establish flood warning system. Available at: <https://ria.ru/20160819/1474780589.html>.

In August 2018, Uzbek border guard authorities specifically defined the requirements for entering the settlement of Shakhimardan through the checkpoint “Akkiya.” Allowances are made for two broad categories:

- 1) Citizens of Uzbekistan permanently residing in Shakhimardan, as well as citizens of Kyrgyzstan traveling in transit through the territory of the locality are both allowed to pass in a simplified manner - without receiving a date stamp on their documents;
- 2) Citizens of Uzbekistan, travelling to Shakhimardan for official, tourist, and other purposes, are allowed to enter with a date stamp in their passports.⁵³⁹ A Memorandum of Understanding exists between travel agencies of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan regulating and simplifying the organization of trips of Uzbek citizens to the Blue Lake tourist zone, the Dugoba alpine camp, and the Khaidarkan winter recreation area located on the territory of Kyrgyzstan.

Barak. Mostly ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek residents live in the enclave of Barak village: it is a tiny Kyrgyz village on Uzbek territory, and de facto enclave only 1.5 km away from the shifted main border. Administratively, the village belongs to the Ak-Tash Ayil okrug of Kara-Suu district of Osh region in Kyrgyzstan, however it is surrounded by the Kurgantepa district of Andijan region of Uzbekistan. In August 2018, news sources reported of meetings and talks between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek authorities having resulted in an agreement. Under the auspices of this agreement, in August 2018,⁵⁴⁰ Kyrgyz and Uzbek authorities agreed to exchange the Kyrgyz exclave of Barak in the Kara-Suu district of Osh region (southern Kyrgyzstan) to Uzbekistan.⁵⁴¹ In return, Uzbekistan would hand over control of an equivalent piece of land in the Ak-Tash village administration of the Kara-Suu district of Osh region to Kyrgyzstan.⁵⁴² However, a year later in August 2019, public statements made by the Kyrgyz Prime Minister to the news agency Sputnik stated that land swap negotiations were not taking place between the two countries.⁵⁴³ In 2019, Kyrgyzstan authorities unilaterally reneged on their promise to cede the enclave of Barak to Uzbekistan.⁵⁴⁴

6. Confidence building and conflict resolution initiatives

There is almost no record of any confidence building work coming from international organizations and CSOs of the region. On 16 April 1996, the heads of state of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the People’s Republic of China signed an agreement on confidence building in the military field in the border area.⁵⁴⁵ This document remains in effect, with multiple articles directed at reducing military conflict in Central Asian border regions but makes no direct reference to the enclaves in Fergana Valley. The OSCE High Commission on National Minorities appears to

⁵³⁹ Газета.uz. 23-08-2018. Погранслужба разъяснила порядок выезда в Кыргызстан через Шахимардан. Available at: <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2018/08/23/shahimardan/>.

⁵⁴⁰ Novastan. 18 August 2018. Kyrgyzstan to donate enclave to Uzbekistan in Ferghana valley. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/le-kirghizstan-va-donner-une-enclave-a-louzbekistan-dans-la-vallee-du-ferghana/>.

⁵⁴¹ Interfax. 14 August 2018. Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan agree to exchange border land. Available at: <https://interfax.az/view/741241>.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ SputnikNews. 01-08-2019. Will Kyrgyzstan change disputed areas with Uzbekistan? Razakov’s answer. Available at: <https://ru.sputnik.kg/asia/20190801/1045255149/kyrgyzstan-uzbekistan-granica-uchastok-obmen.html>.

⁵⁴⁴ Novastan. 2 August 2019. Kyrgyzstan no longer wants to transfer Barak enclave to Uzbekistan.

⁵⁴⁵ A/51/137, 17 May 1996 – UN General Assembly, Letter dated 13 May 1996 from the representatives of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation, and Tajikistan to the UN addressed to the Secretary General. Available at: https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/960426_AgreementConfidenceBuildingMilitaryFieldinBorderArea.pdf.

be the most relevant international involvement in the Fergana Valley. It has not, however, produced any publicly available reports. This lack of international attention contributes to the frozen state of the enclave issues in the Fergana Valley and represent a terra incognita for policymakers and academia. Attempts to resolve the question of borders and to rebuild trust between different ethnic communities have been made by the respective governments of each enclave and some efforts have been made by the EU.⁵⁴⁶

Some information about governmental approaches to enclaves is available. In 2010, during clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyz authorities discussed the resettlement of the Barak people for the first time since the collapse of the USSR. But a one-time mass resettlement, similar to Arnasay, did not take place. In 2011, the inhabitants of Barak received global attention after turning to Barack Obama, the President of the United States at the time. They asked him, as courtesy to his “namesake,” to support the Barak population and intervene to solve the problems of the village. Obama replied that he could not interfere in the affairs of other states, but was ready to help the villagers with money.⁵⁴⁷ In 2007, an agreement was reached that, in order to support tourism, residents of both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan had the right to visit Shahimardan without a visa for up to two months. On 7 August 2018, it was announced that within the framework of the current work on the demarcation of borders, Shahimardan was marked as Uzbek territory.

Tajik officials very cautiously express their opinion on the Sokh issue. They do not consider the enclave as their territory, and if they discuss the problems of its inhabitants, the discussion centers only around the difficulties of compatriots living abroad. In 2001, the possibility of creating a special “corridor” from Sokh to the territory of Uzbekistan was discussed, but these plans were never implemented. However, since the enclave is large, life in it is far from fading and the enclave’s population is growing steadily. This population growth creates new problems, with inhabitants becoming crowded in the limited geographical area. A variety of initiatives have been undertaken in Sokh, including the demarcation of the Uzbek-Kyrgyz land border, in line with the 2017 and 2018 agreements,⁵⁴⁸ an agreement on the use of pastures,⁵⁴⁹ the removal of all Uzbek military equipment and personnel,⁵⁵⁰ residents ceasing to divert water resources,⁵⁵¹ the protection of the remaining Kyrgyz minority living in Sokh,⁵⁵² compensation for damages caused by Uzbekistan during 2013 violence,⁵⁵³ the

⁵⁴⁶ European External Action Service. Peaceful Villages Evolvement (PVE). Available at: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/peaceful_villages.pdf; https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kyrgyz-republic/85032/instrument-contributing-stability-and-peace_en.

⁵⁴⁷ Golos Ameriki. 14 January 2011. Письмо Обаме из Барака. Available at: <https://www.golos-ameriki.ru/a/letter-to-obama-2011-01-14-113610399/192256.html>.

⁵⁴⁸ Eurasianet. 4 June 2010. What’s behind the pullout of the Uzbek forces from Sokh?. Available at: <https://eurasianet.org/whats-behind-the-pullout-of-the-uzbek-forces-from-sokh>; Novastan.org. 24 April 2017. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan reach agreement on a thousand kilometers of borders. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/le-kirghizstan-ne-veut-plus-transferer-lenclave-de-barak-a-louzbekistan/>.

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁵¹ The New Humanitarian. 2001. IRIN Focus on ethnic enclaves in Ferghana Valley. Available at: <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/fr/node/184171>.

⁵⁵² In 2010 during the ethnic clashes in Osh, 200 Kyrgyz residents fled in fear that the violence would spread to the enclave. A small number however still remain. OCHA. 2013. Humanitarian Bulletin – South Caucasus and Central Asia: Border incidents in Central Asian enclaves. Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/HB_ROCCA_20130709%20EN.pdf.

⁵⁵³ Radio Free Europe, 9 January 2013. Uzbekistan’s Sokh Exclave Remains Sealed After Clashes. Available at: <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/1342837.html>.

right to graze cattle,⁵⁵⁴ the freedom of movement into Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan,⁵⁵⁵ encouraging humane treatment of inhabitants by Kyrgyz border guards and the elimination of corruption,⁵⁵⁶ as well as attempts to enhance economic opportunities.⁵⁵⁷ In Vorukh, multiple initiatives similarly appear, including an Agreement on demarcating the remaining 472km of disputed land borders, an Agreement on fair use of water sources and pasture lands, and an Agreement of building a bypass around Vorukh.⁵⁵⁸ Further activity includes initiatives to increase the humane treatment of Kyrgyz nationals living near or in disputed regions by Tajik security personnel, in particular in the town of Ak Say⁵⁵⁹ and an Agreement on sharing water resources.⁵⁶⁰ These are limited in scope and often initiated for the rapprochement of relations between state governments, rather than out of a sincere wish to support the population of those enclaves.

Some of the above-mentioned initiatives are supported by external actors. For example, OSCE's Transnational Threats Department and Border Security Management Unit (TNTD/BSMU) organizes meetings between representatives of the national boundary commissions of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. With the first occurring in 2011, these meetings encourage the three states to share national delimitation and demarcation experiences and discuss challenges. However, there is no evidence that the enclaves are a specific point of discussion.⁵⁶¹ The Central Asian Border Management Initiative (CABMI), under the TNTD/BSMU, held a conference in November 2019, engaging officials from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Austria as well as international actors from European External Action Service, EU's Border Management in Central Asia Programme (BOMCA), EU's Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI), IOM, International Centre for Migration Policy, and UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia. Again, although it is reported that international actors agreed during this conference to coordinate their 2020-2021 programmes in Central Asia, there is no evidence that Barak, Sokh, Shahimardan, or Vorukh were addressed as high priority issues.⁵⁶² Further reference has been made to initiatives such as the joint Uzbek-Tajik Demarcation Commission,⁵⁶³ who met for the first time in January 2020, but as of

⁵⁵⁴ Novastan.org. 7 May 2020. Des villageois ouzbeks lancent des pierres sur des gardes-frontières kirghiz. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/des-villageois-ouzbeks-lancent-des-pierres-sur-des-garde-frontieres-kirghiz/>.

⁵⁵⁵ Radio Azattyq. 14 June 2010. Узбекский анклав Сох в Кыргызстане, населенный таджиками. Available at: <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/Sokh/2068831.html>, Radio Free Europe. 7 January 2013. All Kyrgyz Hostages Released From Uzbek District Following Rioting. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbekistan-kyrgyzstan-hostages-sokh/24817219.html>.

⁵⁵⁶ Radio Azattyq. 14 June 2010. Узбекский анклав Сох в Кыргызстане, населенный таджиками. Available at: <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/Sokh/2068831.html>.

⁵⁵⁷ Geographical Enclaves of the Fergana Valley: Do Good Fences Make Good Neighbors? Central Asia Security Policy Briefs #14 1.

⁵⁵⁸ Radio Liberty Europe. 16 January 2014. Small Exclave Spells Big Problems For Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan.

⁵⁵⁹ News.tj. 23-07-2019. Kirgizstan i Tadjikistan nachali sovmestnoe patrulirovanie na granitse. Available at: <https://news.tj/ru/news/tajikistan/security/20190723/kirgizstan-i-tadjikistan-nachali-sovmestnoe-patrulirovanie-na-granitse>.

⁵⁶⁰ Novastan.org. 25 October 2019. Manque de communication, intérêts politiques... le politologue Alibek Moukambaïev décrypte le conflit frontalier entre Kirghizstan et Tadjikistan. Available at: <https://www.novastan.org/fr/kirghizstan/manque-de-communication-interets-politiques-le-politologue-alibek-moukambaïev-decrypte-le-conflit-frontalier-entre-kirghizstan-et-tadjikistan/>.

⁵⁶¹ OSCE. Kyrgyzstan hosts OSCE-supported Central Asian regional seminar on delimitation and demarcation practices. 8 August 2019. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/427388>.

⁵⁶² OSCE. Achievements, threats and challenges in border management focus of Central Asian Border Management Initiative concludes in Almaty, Kazakhstan, 7 November 2019. Available at: <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/438275>.

⁵⁶³ The Diplomat, January 10 2020, Uzbekistan Reportedly Completes Demining Work on Tajik Border, Available at: <https://www.osce.org/secretariat/438275>.



May 2020, it is difficult to find evidence of legal confidence-building documents released by this group.

VI. THE CASE STUDY OF BAGYS AND TURKESTANETS



Located in Central Asia, the villages of Bagys and Turkestanets were historically part of Bostandyk district of the Kazakh Soviet Republic. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Turkestan Military District was dissolved, revealing a 54-km-long stretch of land straddling the borders between the newly formed Republic of Uzbekistan and Republic of Kazakhstan, in which the villages of Bagys and Turkestanets were also located. According to the 1999 census in Bagys village, the ethnic Kazakhs made up 98% of the population. In the village of Turkestanets, the ethnic Kazakhs made up 78% of the population, and Uzbeks 10%. On 29 December, tensions reignited in Bagys, with residents declaring unilateral independence and establishing the so-called “Bagys Kazakh Republic”. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan signed an agreement; Bagys and five other disputed Kazakhs settlements remained under the control of Kazakhstan, while Turkestanets was handed over to Uzbekistan.

1. Historical developments

Located in Central Asia, the villages of Bagys and Turkestanets were historically part of Bostandyk district of the Kirghiz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), which was later renamed the Kazakh ASSR. In 1929, 500 residents of the Bostandyk district rebelled against soviet power, but with no success. Later, on 13 February 1956, the Supreme Council of the USSR (SC USSR) took a decision authorizing partial changes to the border be-

tween what was then the Uzbek Socialist Soviet Republic (SSR) and the Kazakh SSR.⁵⁶⁴ Historical records suggest that some 200'000 hectares of the Bostandyk district, including the villages of Bagys and Turkestanets, were transformed into the Turkestan Military District training ground, which cut through the border between the Uzbek SSR and Kazakh SSR.⁵⁶⁵

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Turkestan Military District was dissolved, revealing a 54-km-long stretch of land straddling the borders between the newly formed Republic of Uzbekistan and Republic of Kazakhstan, in which the villages of Bagys and Turkestanets were also located. Discrepancies between the geographical description of the villages, and their location on maps meant that confusion continued over which of the two republics had jurisdiction over the villages.⁵⁶⁶ For their part, Kazakh sources claim that while the 1956 decision of SC USSR transferred certain areas within the Bostandyk district to what was then the Uzbek SSR, in accordance with the agreement, the Kazakh SSR should have retained control over 121,000 hectares of the Bostandyk, including the villages of Bagys and Turkestanets. Relying on a map produced in 1941, Kazakh sources, including residents of Bagys, claim the villages of Bagys and Turkestanets were located in the Saryagash municipality, belonging to Kazakh SSR.⁵⁶⁷ Despite this, Kazakh sources claim that entire territory of the Bostandyk district (in which the Saryagash municipality was located) was in-fact transferred to the neighboring Republic, in violation of the 1956 agreement.⁵⁶⁸ On the other hand, Uzbek sources claim that a map produced in 1963 clearly indicates that the villages of Bagys and Turkestanets were in-fact located in the Bostandyk municipality, and therefore subject to the 1956 decision.⁵⁶⁹

This question regained significant attention after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. During the immediate aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, constructive discussions on border delimitations did not take place, with both countries blaming the other for failing to reach a compromise. Tensions rose in spring 1999. Sources claim that Uzbekistan began moving significant numbers of military personnel and equipment into Bostandyk with the aim of finalizing de facto Uzbek jurisdiction over the Kazakh territorial segments that were transferred to Tashkent from 1956 to 1962.⁵⁷⁰ In July 1999, the Shymkent newspaper "Aigak" published a letter from the residents of Bostandyk addressed to Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev. The letter demanded the immediate return of the Bostandyk district to Kazakhstan, claiming that the 1956 agreement specified that its transfer to Uzbekistan would only be temporary, and that it should be returned no later than 1991.⁵⁷¹ Despite these claims, an analysis of the 1956 document shows that it did not make any specific reference to timelines or temporary control.⁵⁷²

⁵⁶⁴ Сборник законов СССР и указов Президиума Верховного Совета СССР. 1938 г. — июль 1956 г. / под ред. к. ю. н. Мандельштам Ю. И — Москва: Государственное издательство юридической литературы, 1956. — С. 36—37.

⁵⁶⁵ Rongxing, G. 2007. Territorial Disputes and Resource Management: A Global Handbook. UK ed. Auflage.

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁷ Dosybiev D., 21 February 2005. Village Defies Uzbek Government Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan lock horns over border village. Available at: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/village-defies-uzbek-government>.

⁵⁶⁸ Лебедев А. 29.05.2002. Приграничные проблемы Казахстана и Узбекистана. Доступно на: <https://www.caravan.kz/articles/prigranichnye-problemy-kazakhstana-i-uzbekistana-369370/>.

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁰ Трофимов Д. 2002. К вопросу об этнотерриториальных и пограничных проблемах в Центральной Азии. Доступно на: https://www.ca-c.org/journal/2002/journal_rus/cac-01/07.trofru.shtml.

⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

⁵⁷² Сборник законов СССР и указов Президиума Верховного Совета СССР. 1938 г. — июль 1956 г. / под ред. к. ю. н. Мандельштам Ю. И — Москва: Государственное издательство юридической литературы, 1956. — С. 36—37.

According to the 1999 census in Bagys village, the ethnic Kazakhs made up 98% of the population. These ethnic Kazakhs, along with four ethnic Uzbeks, all had Kazakh citizenship. In the village of Turkestanets, a separate census indicated that ethnic Kazakhs made up 78% of the population, and Uzbeks 10%. Of these, 253 held Kazakh citizenship (approx. 80% of the total population of Turkestanets), 173 Uzbek citizenship, and a further 98 an Uzbek residence permit.⁵⁷³ Despite this, following the independence of Uzbekistan, the people of Bagys and Turkestanets were ordered to replace their Soviet passports for Uzbek ones.

In the summer of 1999, tensions spilled over in the area, with both Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan reinforcing border positions and checkpoints. Later in the same year, Kazakh and Uzbek authorities began formal discussions on the delimitation of the border, which continued in 2000, despite the fact that Uzbek authorities had in the meantime unilaterally installed checkpoints around the village of Bagys and increased their military presence within it. After Tashkent decided to withdraw its security personnel (border guards and officials from the Ministry of Internal Affairs) from Bagys, residents unilaterally removed border signs and dismantled border posts. In response, Kazakh and Uzbek re-deployed significant numbers of armed units to their respective positions, although no direct military engagement followed.⁵⁷⁴ Only after discussions were held at the presidential level did opposing forces withdraw, and new negotiations on delimitation begin. Despite this progress, Uzbek authorities continued to settle Uzbek citizens in Bagys, and restricted visits by ethnic Kazakhs living in Bagys to Kazakhstan. In addition, they ordered the closure of Kazakh-language schools in Bagys and opened several Uzbek-language schools in their place.⁵⁷⁵ By late 2001, the population of Bagys had been left without running water, healthcare, postal services, schools, pastures or agricultural land.⁵⁷⁶

On 16 November 2001, an agreement on delimiting 96% of the Kazakh-Uzbek border was reached between opposing parties. Only months later, however, on 29 December, tensions reignited in Bagys, with residents taking the unprecedented step of declaring unilateral independence and establishing the so-called “Bagys Kazakh Republic”.⁵⁷⁷ According to Batyrkhan Darimbet, special correspondent for Radio Freedom, residents were disappointed with the perceived inability of Kazakh authorities to resolve the problem and advocate for the needs of ethnic Kazakhs living in Bagys and Turkestanets.⁵⁷⁸ Residents elected a ten-member parliament, with school teacher Aidar Abdramanov chosen as president. Uzbek security forces responded by imposing a curfew in Bagys and Turkestanets and establishing a permanent military garrison.⁵⁷⁹ They arrested numerous supporters of the newly created republic. Aidar Abdramanov escaped Bagys, and was declared wanted by Uzbek authorities. He was arrested in 2002 by Kazakh authorities and extradited later to Uzbekistan.⁵⁸⁰

⁵⁷³ Обращение Казахской общественности в защиту аулов Багыс и Туркестанец. 2002. Доступно на: http://ddp-main.narod.ru/2002/nomer_20/granica.htm.

⁵⁷⁴ Трофимов Д. 2002. К вопросу об этнотерриториальных и пограничных проблемах в Центральной Азии. Доступно на: https://www.ca-c.org/journal/2002/journal_rus/cac-01/07.trofru.shtml.

⁵⁷⁵ Rongxing G. 2007. Territorial Disputes and Resource Management: A Global Handbook. UK ed. Auflage, p.60.

⁵⁷⁶ The Open Asia. 2015. Багыс – непризнанное государство Центральной Азии. Available at: <https://theopenasia.net/ru/post/bagys-nepriznannoe-gosudarstvo-tsentralnoy-azii>.

⁵⁷⁷ Razumov Y., 26 February 2002. Kazakhstan-Uzbek border flap threatens to stoke regional tension. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/46c58edd465.html>.

⁵⁷⁸ Conflict on Kazakh-Uzbek border The United Democratic Party has some concrete steps to suggest Almaty, 5 January 2002. Available at: https://www.neweurasia.info/archive/2002/dial_en/01_05_01_05_pressconferenceen.htm

⁵⁷⁹ Refworld. 26 February 2002. Kazakhstan-Uzbek border flap threatens to stoke regional tension. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/46c58edd465.html>.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid.

At a news conference held on 4 January 2002 in the office of the Kazakh Republican People's Party, the Organizing Committee of the United Democratic Party (UDP) addressed the ongoing plight of those living in Bagys and Turkestanets, claiming that the constitutional rights of ethnic Kazakhs had been violated. UDP member Amirzhan Kosanov, declared that "Kazakhstan greeted the New Year by displaying absolute failure in both the home and foreign politics", continuing that "A purely geographic problem has turned into a political one, which proves this very well."⁵⁸¹ Some sources suggest that the inaction of Kazakh authorities to address the needs of ethnic Kazakhs living in Bagys and Turkestanets was related to their reliance of Uzbekistan for cheap gas supplies.⁵⁸² For their part, residents of Bagys and Turkestanets continued to protest at what they felt was discrimination at the hands of Tashkent, claiming that their culture was under attack, and that they continued to be penalized in schools and at the workplace.⁵⁸³ They were also denied the right to privatize their homes and purchase land, which prevented them from registering new-born children and marriages.⁵⁸⁴ To complicate matters, residents in Bagys and Turkestanets were still governed by Uzbek laws, despite the majority of them holding Kazakh passports.⁵⁸⁵ Protests continued throughout 2002, with at one stage residents blocking a regional highway. Fearing reprisal from Uzbek authorities, the majority of ethnic Kazakhs living in Turkestanets relocated to mainland Kazakhstan.⁵⁸⁶ Other sources claim this fear was unfounded, and that any repressive measures taken in response to the declaration of independence would "only be... against politically active people".⁵⁸⁷

Negotiations between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan resumed at the highest political level and culminated in the signing of new agreement between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, which addressed remaining disputed border areas, including Bagys and Turkestanets. The agreement entered into force on 5 September 2003. Bagys and five other disputed Kazakhs settlements would remain under the control of Kazakhstan, while Turkestanets would be handed over to Uzbekistan.⁵⁸⁸ Some sources claim that the 2002 agreement failed to regulate the fate of all border settlements, and the process of demarcation continued into 2004. Intriguingly, in the early 2003, the governments, by mutual agreement, redefined their borders, with a parcel of land around the villages of Bagys and Turkestanets transferred to Uzbekistan. In the meantime, Kazakhstan was given the land of the isthmus, between the Chardara reservoir and lake Arnasay, meaning its "enclave" was now connected to the rest of the country.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² Jumagulov E., 21 February 2005. Kazak Villagers Go It Alone. Available at: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/kazak-villagers-go-it-alone>.

⁵⁸³ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁴ Openasia.net. 29-12-2015. Багыс – непризнанное государство Центральной Азии. Available at: <https://theopenasia.net/ru/post/bagys-nepriznannoe-gosudarstvo-tsentralnoy-azii>.

⁵⁸⁵ Kazakh-Uzbek border agreement signed. 2001 November. Available at: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/7333-field-reports-caci-analyst-2001-11-21-art-7333.html>.

⁵⁸⁶ Institute for War & Peace Reporting. 25 February 2005. Uzbekistan: Ethnic Kazaks Set to Leave. Available at: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/uzbekistan-ethnic-kazaks-set-leave>.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁸ Ханова И.Е. 2017. Казахстан – Узбекистан: история сотрудничества и перспективы взаимодействия. Вестник РГГУ. Серия "Политология. История. Международные отношения." (4/1):79-89.

⁵⁸⁹ Карабекова Ж. 2014. Установление границ независимого Казахстана. Узбекистан. Доступно на: <https://e-history.kz/media/upload/1466/2014/06/26/a85af947d9dc47afa7eb13dc1811dc6b.pdf>.

2. Structural and Proximate Causes of Fragility in Bagys and Turkestanets

While the villages of Bagys and Turkestanets have not suffered any serious incidents of conflict in recent years, there remain a number of structural and proximate factors which impact their fragility. These factors were both a result and cause of tensions between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan and emerged primarily in response to the collapse of the Soviet Union, the creation of international borders, and discrepancies over the use and understanding of maps. Proximate causes relate primarily to the 'Uzbekization' of the villages. These factors will be addressed in turn below.

Socio-Political Causes. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the resulting creation of international borders between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan continues to impact the fragility of the republics that emerged in its absence. This is also the case for the villages of Bagys and Turkestanets. While, since 2002, Bagys has been governed by Kazakhstan, its inhabitants have had a fractious relationship with Kazakh authorities, claiming that they were historically neglected.⁵⁹⁰ Some sources suggest that Astana (currently Nursultan) may have turned a blind eye to the actions of Uzbekistan in and around Bagys due to its reliance on cheap gas and labor from Uzbekistan.⁵⁹¹ Notwithstanding these possible motivations, the underlying structural causes of fragility in Bagys primarily relate to the way in which borders between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were drawn-up during and after the collapse of the Soviet Union. While the agreement of 2002 resolved these difficulties on paper by transferring Bagys to Kazakhstan and Turkestanets to Uzbekistan,⁵⁹² several tense confrontations occurred between opposing security forces. This created a somewhat peculiar situation whereby the inhabitants of Bagys, of whom 98% are ethnic Kazakhs,⁵⁹³ have had an historically fractious relationship with both Kazakh and Uzbek authorities.

While there have been no recorded incidents of serious violence related to Bagys in recent years, historical grievances do increase the chances that, under the right conditions, violence may once again occur. This could for example be triggered by the actions of opposing security forces in or around Bagys, or by the re-emergence of the movement for an independent Bagys. However, the latter case looks unlikely, in part because the ex-leaders of the movement have made no public statements since their release from jail. In addition, some of the key demands of the protestors have been met – since the 2002 agreement, inhabitants of Bagys are no longer governed by Uzbek laws;⁵⁹⁴ while the village has been directly connected to Kazakhstan under a revised agreement between Kazakh and Uzbek authorities in 2003, thereby increasing trade and commerce to the region.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹⁰ Neweurasia.info. 5 January 2002. Conflict on Kazakh-Uzbek border The United Democratic Party has some concrete steps to suggest Almaty. Available at: https://www.neweurasia.info/archive/2002/dial_en/01_05_01_05_pressconferenceen.htm.

⁵⁹¹ Yermukanov M. 2001. Kazakh-Uzbek Border Agreement signed. Available at: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/7333-field-reports-caci-analyst-2001-11-21-art-7333.html?tmpl=component&print=1>.

⁵⁹² Ханова И.Е. 2017. Казахстан – Узбекистан: история сотрудничества и перспективы взаимодействия. Вестник РГТУ. Серия "Политология. История. Международные отношения". (4/1):79-89.

⁵⁹³ Обращение Казахской общественности в защиту аулов Багыс и Туркестанец. 2002. Доступно на: http://ddp-main.narod.ru/2002/nomer_20/granica.htm.

⁵⁹⁴ Yermukanov M. 2001. Kazakh-Uzbek Border Agreement signed. Available at: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/7333-field-reports-caci-analyst-2001-11-21-art-7333.html?tmpl=component&print=1>.

⁵⁹⁵ Карабекова Ж. 2014. Установление границ независимого Казахстана. Узбекистан. Доступно на: <https://e-history.kz/media/upload/1466/2014/06/26/a85af947d9dc47afa7eb13dc1811dc6b.pdf>.

In terms of proximate causes, the most notable are the actions of security forces in and around Bagys and Turkestanets, which are themselves driven by the long-term structural causes noted above – the collapse of the Soviet Union, the creation of international borders, and discrepancies over the use and understanding of maps. Sources alleged that a process of “creeping Uzbek expansion” occurred in the early 2000’s,⁵⁹⁶ illustrated most notably by the actions of Uzbek security forces around Bagys and the relocation of Kazakh residents of Turkestanets to Kazakhstan after it was transferred to Uzbekistan in the 2002 agreement.⁵⁹⁷ For example, the majority of ethnic Kazakhs residing in Turkestanec, fearing reprisals for unilaterally declaring independence from Uzbek authorities in 2001, relocated en masse to Kazakhstan after the prosecutor’s office of Uzbekistan opened a criminal case, accusing the leaders of the self-proclaimed “republic” of violating the territorial integrity of the country.⁵⁹⁸

3. Security Actors

Very limited information exists on security actors present in and around Bagys and Turkestanets. Sources do however indicate that border guards are stationed on outposts along the borders of Bagys, as well as electronic surveillance systems. Cameras located every 200-250 meters, installed since 2011 on the Kazakh border, monitor movements in and out of the village of Bagys.⁵⁹⁹ The official Kazakh Bagys-outpost has been in operation since 2014, and is manned by Kazakh border guards. It includes a headquarters building, a dormitory, military barracks, a nursery, canteen, stables, and storage units.⁶⁰⁰ Due to the mountainous terrain along the border and limited transport infrastructure, Kazakh border units generally patrol the area on horseback. Reports indicate that border patrols along the Bagys territory regularly encounter citizens of both states attempting to illegally cross the border, who are then handed over to the relevant authorities for questioning.⁶⁰¹

4. Conflict resolution and recent developments

Local political observers state that the attempt to create an Independent Republic of Bagys was not meant as a genuine attempt at self-government, but rather to draw attention to the plight of ethnic Kazakhs in Uzbekistan.⁶⁰² While the declaration of independence clearly drew attention to the issue, both at the regional and international level, residents of Bagys remained highly critical of the way in which Kazakh authorities responded to the incident. Although both countries celebrated the signing of the 2002 agreement, with one press release declaring “...everything was resolved taking into account the interests of those who live in these areas”,⁶⁰³ the decision to transfer Turkestanets to Uzbekistan caused serious

⁵⁹⁶ Yermukanov M. 2001. Kazakh-Uzbek Border Agreement signed. Available at: <http://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/field-reports/item/7333-field-reports-caci-analyst-2001-11-21-art-7333.html?tmpl=compoment&print=1>.

⁵⁹⁷ Dosybiev D. 2005. Жители поселка Туркестанец предпочитают казахстанское гражданство. Available at: <https://iwpr.net/ru/global-voices/жители-поселка-туркестанец-предпочитают-казахстанское-гражданство> and Трофимов Д. 2002. К вопросу об этнотерриториальных и пограничных проблемах в Центральной Азии. Доступно на: https://www.ca-c.org/journal/2002/journal_rus/cac-01/07.trofru.shtml.

⁵⁹⁸ Dosybiev D. 2005. Жители поселка Туркестанец предпочитают казахстанское гражданство. Available at: <https://iwpr.net/ru/global-voices/жители-поселка-туркестанец-предпочитают-казахстанское-гражданство>.

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁰ Часовой Родины. 2020. Available at: https://www.gov.kz/api/v1/public/assets/2020/4/17/4336d29935344ea123046c71f3999df4_original.3733169.pdf.

⁶⁰¹ Turantimes.kz. 20-09-2019. Легкие деньги или «высокие понятия»: Пограничники задержали незаконных мигрантов. Available at: <https://turantimes.kz/obschestvo/9668-legkie-dengi-ili-vysokie-ponyatiya-pogranichniki-zaderzhali-nezakonnyh-migrantov.html>.

⁶⁰² Refworld. 26 February 2002. Kazakhstan-Uzbek border flap threatens to stoke regional tension. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/46c58edd465.html>.

⁶⁰³ Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 9 September 2002. President N. Nazarbayev met with the

discontent. Although both sides seemed aware that the announcement would drive ethnic Kazakhs living in Turkestanets, who constituted most of its inhabitants, to abandon the village and apply for Kazakh citizenship, the decision was still taken. However, to ease tensions, former Kazakh President Nazarbayev granted those applying for Kazakh citizenship the special status of “Oralmans”,⁶⁰⁴ and promised to provide financial support, as well as assist with repatriation. Those who received the “Oralman” status were permitted to move to any area of Kazakhstan, and were provided housing and guaranteed work.⁶⁰⁵ This was seen as particularly attractive to the inhabitants of Turkestanets, in part because living standards in Kazakhstan were higher.⁶⁰⁶ Karimov, in turn, promised that the delimitation treaty “does not mean that barbed wire will be on the border”.⁶⁰⁷

Despite the attempts of both administrations to ease tensions, many still argued that a referendum should have been held to determine which nationality the residents of the disputed villages would prefer to hold.⁶⁰⁸ Moreover, border-related incidents following the signature of the boundary demarcation agreement did not cease as local residents were not accustomed to the new boundaries, and often became victims of strict border controls when searching for stray cattle as traditional pastures did not respect the new borders.⁶⁰⁹

As of 2015, a number of issues regarding Bagys and Turkestanets still persist. These primarily relate to the fact that Kazakh authorities have still not assigned cadastral numbers to land plots in Bagys, meaning that residents have not been permitted to build schools, and dwellings remained largely unregistered. In addition, villagers continue to complain about having to pay taxes on property which they do not have the legal right to reside in, and also encounter problems obtaining identity cards, birth and marriage certificates. This is primarily because Kazakh authorities are yet to decide which region of south Kazakhstan Bagys will belong to.⁶¹⁰

While some of these problems have since been resolved, residents remain unable to legally construct houses or purchase land, while the construction of a promised gas pipeline leading to village has not yet begun. There is also a shortage of water and the residents suffer from high unemployment rates. By 2018, 90% of the houses in Bagys village remained unregistered, and do not appear on the Kazakh map.⁶¹¹ Despite this, there is currently no active violence linked to the events of 2002. Indeed, most of the related literature frames the unrest in 2001 and 2002 as exceptional,⁶¹² and suggests that the aforementioned agreements have successfully resolved underlying tensions. The evidence collected therefore suggests that the level of fragility in Bagys and Turkestanets is at the ‘normalization’ stage.

President of Uzbekistan I. Karimov, who has arrived to Kazakhstan with an official visit. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20070222014132/http://missions.itu.int/~kazaks/eng/archive/0209/n0209a.htm>.

⁶⁰⁴ RFERL. 2002. Central Asia Report: September 13, 2002. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1342271.html>.

⁶⁰⁵ Institute for War & Peace Reporting. 25 February 2005. Uzbekistan: Ethnic Kazaks Set to Leave. Available at: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/uzbekistan-ethnic-kazaks-set-leave>.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ RFERL. 2002. Central Asia Report: September 13, 2002. Available at: <https://www.rferl.org/a/1342271.html>.

⁶⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Dadabaev. T. 2015. ‘We Want a State of Our Own! Reconstructing Community Space in Bordering Areas of Central Asia’. Available at: http://static-curis.ku.dk/portal/files/151388643/JTMS_2_2.pdf#page=9.

⁶¹⁰ The Open Asia. 2015. Багыс – непризнанное государство Центральной Азии. Available at: <https://theopenasia.net/ru/post/bagys-nepriznannoe-gosudarstvo-tsentralnoy-azii>.

⁶¹¹ Dilara Isa. 2018. В селе Багыс до сих пор живут без регистрации. Available at: <https://rus.azattyq.org/a/bagys-prigranichnoye-selo/29241438.html>.

⁶¹² Geopolitical Monitor. 25 May 2018. Geopolitics and Conflict Potential in Central Asia and South Caucasus. Available at: <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/geopolitics-and-conflict-potential-in-central-asia-and-south-caucasus/>.



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