

ALERT SERIES

TAJIKISTAN

**POLITICAL CONDITIONS
IN THE POST-SOVIET ERA**



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SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan is embroiled in a civil war caused by regional, ethnic and ideological divisions within Tajik society. Violations of human rights on grounds of political and ethnic identities are widespread throughout the country. The primary perpetrators and victims of the civil war are ethnic Tajiks. Political and ethnic or clan-based¹ divisions among Tajiks coincide roughly with Tajikistan's regions, or oblasts:² the northern oblast, Khojand (formerly Leninobod) identified with the Leninobod clan; the two central oblasts -- Kulyab and Kurgan-Tyube (identified with clans of the same names) -- which despite mutual hostility have recently been merged as the "Khatlon Oblast"; and Gorno-Badakhshan, identified primarily with the Garm clan, but also with the Pamir (Badakhshani) ethnic group.

Through most of the civil war, power has been retained in the Khojand and Kulyab oblasts by the hardline conservative ex-communist forces which had dominated Tajikistan through most of the Soviet era. The Kurgan-Tyube and Gorno-Badakhshan regions -- traditionally poorer and less influential -- are the base of most of Tajikistan's Islamic and democratic opposition parties: the Tajikistan Democratic Party, the Islamic Renaissance Party, Rastokhez, and Lal-i Badakhshan (Ruby of Badakhshan). Despite regional divisions, however, many Tajiks have lived for decades outside their "home" regions. Supporters of the Islamic and democratic parties exist in the communist strongholds, and vice versa. As a result of the civil war, opposition strongholds are

¹The term clan is used in this paper to describe the loose Tajik ethnic sub-groupings which have developed through common regional, familial, ideological and socio-economic identities. It should not be assumed that Tajik applicants would necessarily identify themselves as belonging to one of these "clans" -- they may describe their identity in regional or ideological terms. The term "clan" is used in the original Gaelic sense of common ancestry and affiliation -- the term does not imply that the Tajiks are a nomadic people. *Webster's II: New Riverside University Dictionary* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1984), p. 267.

²An oblast is an administrative-territorial unit roughly corresponding to an American state.

governed by forces loyal to the current Tajik government (the Kurgan-Tyube region has been incorporated into "Khatlon Oblast" and is effectively governed by the Kulyab). Given how complex and widespread the civil war is, human rights monitors maintain that almost all Tajiks -- particularly supporters of the opposition groups throughout Tajikistan, those living in the Gorno-Badakhshan and former Kurgan-Tyube regions, and those living outside their region of ethnic origin -- are at risk on grounds of political or clan (ethnic/national) affiliations.³

Ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyz are also targets of ethnic violence.⁴ Some religious-based hostility against members of the Islamic Revivalist Party and of the Pamirs (Badakhshanis), an Ismaili Muslim minority group, has been documented.⁵ There is some disagreement among human rights monitors about whether the "European" or "Russian-speaking" minorities -- Armenians, Jews, Germans, and Russians and other Slavs -- are leaving Tajikistan because they have been targets of ethnic hostility, or if they were "caught in the crossfire" and would have left in response to Tajikistan's independence even without the war. Well over half of the "Russian-

³"Comments on 'Tajikistan: Political Conditions in the Post-Soviet Era,'" letter from Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 30 June 1993. Letter from Hiram A. Ruiz, U.S. Committee For Refugees, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 24 June 1993. "Draft Copy Of Paper On Tajikistan," letter from Patricia Carley, Helsinki Commission (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe), to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 28 June 1993.

⁴"Comments on 'Tajikistan: Political Conditions in the Post-Soviet Era,'" letter from Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 30 June 1993, p. 5.

⁵"Comments on 'Tajikistan: Political Conditions in the Post-Soviet Era,'" letter from Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 30 June 1993, p. 5.

speaking" minorities have left Tajikistan (including almost all Jews and Germans), and most of those remaining are planning to leave, so the issue is unlikely to be resolved.⁶

BRIEF HISTORY

Prior to the Russian conquest of Central Asia, Tajikistan was never a unitary, national state. The Republic of Tajikistan is divided into oblasts, or administrative units -- Khojand (formerly Leninobod), Kulyab and Kurgan-Tyube (joined in 1993 as the "Khatlon Oblast"), and Gorno-Badakhshan -- each of which is dominated by a group with its own political, ethnic or clan traditions (often a combination of all three). Regional and ethnic loyalties and allegiances currently appear to be fueling Tajikistan's civil war as much as ideological differences are.

The Tajiks are the only large group of ethnic Iranian people on the territory of former Soviet Central Asia. Today, Tajik historians believe that the Tajiks formed as a unique national group under the Samanid dynasty (903-993 A.D.), and that the modern Tajiks are the legitimate heirs of the Samanids. The Samanid dynasty was centered in Bukhara and ruled some of the region of present-day Tajikistan. The Tajik language is closely related to modern Persian and the Dari spoken in neighboring Afghanistan. The Tajik people are Sunni Muslims, converted to Islam in the Arab invasion of Central Asia during the 7th century.⁷

⁶"Comments on `Tajikistan: Political Conditions in the Post-Soviet Era,'" letter from Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 30 June 1993, p. 5. Letter from Hiram A. Ruiz, U.S. Committee For Refugees, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 24 June 1993, p. 2. "Draft Copy Of Paper On Tajikistan," letter from Patricia Carley, Helsinki Commission (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe), to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 28 June 1993, p. 3. Ian MacWilliams, "Departure Is Only Hope For Russians In Tajikistan" *Inter Press Service* (New York: 30 August 1993) - as reported in NEXIS database.

⁷Atkin, Muriel, "Tajikistan: Ancient Heritage, New Politics," *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 368.

After the period of Samanid rule, the Mongol invasions in the 13th century, and the conquest by Tamerlane, a series of Turkic khans ruled the Tajiks. Subsequently, the Tajiks were ruled by the Emirate of Bukhara (Bukhara is situated in present-day Uzbekistan), and much of what is called Tajikistan today constituted the eastern portion of the emirate. Following Russia's conquest of Central Asia, a Russian protectorate was established in 1868 over the area which had comprised the Emirate of Bukhara (which included part of present-day Tajikistan). Russian colonists began to settle in northern Tajikistan, especially in the Ferghana Valley which had always had a substantial Uzbek (Turkic) population. However, there was very little contact between the Russians and the native Muslim population. The revolutionary spirit which characterized much of the Russian Empire by the outbreak of World War I was largely absent in Tajikistan, although the Tajiks (and other Central Asians) did forcibly resist labor conscription for the war effort in 1916.

In Central Asia, Russians were the most active participants on both sides in the Russian Revolution; participation by the native intelligentsia was minimal. The 'Young Bukharans,' an anti-communist Uzbek-Tajik group, attempted a coup d'état in 1918; the Red Army responded with an armed attack from Tashkent in 1920 which appeared to quell resistance. However, the Soviet government's condescending and oppressive policies toward Muslims resulted in a major campaign of resistance, now called the Bismachi rebellion. The Bismachis were not brought under Soviet control until the outbreak of World War II. During the resistance to Soviet rule, many Tajiks migrated to Afghanistan.⁸

⁸"Comments on 'Tajikistan: Political Conditions in the Post-Soviet Era,'" letter from Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 30 June 1993, p. 5.

Although Tajikistan was not a nation-state until the 20th century, the ethnic designation "Tajik" has been used for many centuries to refer to Persian speakers to distinguish them from the various surrounding Turkic speakers.⁹ When the Soviet government subdivided its Central Asian holdings during the 1920s, Tajikistan was established as an autonomous republic within the Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic in 1924. It consisted of the eastern holdings of the emirate of Bukhara (now central and southern Tajikistan), and a part of the former governate [guberniya] of Turkestan. In 1925, the Pamir Mountain region, on the Afghan-Chinese border, was transferred to Tajikistan under the name Gorno-Badakhshan. In 1929, Moscow separated Tajikistan from Uzbekistan and made it a full Union Republic. At that time, the Ferghana Valley region (the area of Leninobod, now called Khojand) which had been part of Uzbekistan was transferred to Tajikistan's control.¹⁰ Many of Tajikistan's sizable Uzbek minority are from this area.

The concept of Tajik nationalism developed during the period of Soviet rule. Under communism, this concept was manifested in a concern for the development of the Tajik language and the preservation of the Tajik, hence Iranian, heritage, and the publication of articles and works dealing with Tajik national concerns. Although assertive about ethnic nationalism, the Tajik leadership was slow to embrace Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of glasnost, and held tight reins over the press until 1989.

⁹Atkin, Muriel, "Tajikistan: Ancient Heritage, New Politics," *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 364.

¹⁰Atkin, Muriel, "Tajikistan: Ancient Heritage, New Politics," *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 364.

Nevertheless, a feeling of the need for change shared by many in the Soviet intelligentsia also began to take root in Tajikistan. Certain sectors of the population, influenced by the Soviet dissent movement, began to work for democratic changes. Some sectors, possibly influenced by the perception that the Soviet war in Afghanistan had pitted Soviet Muslim against Afghan Muslim, sought a revival of Islam, the practice of which had been practically banned under Soviet rule. Others, however, sought to preserve positions they had achieved under Soviet rule and maintain their dominant political power. As the Soviet Union began to crumble, a struggle for position between these various factions began to develop. Political blocs began to take shape: democratic, Islamic revivalist and regionalist agendas began to crystalize, and conflicts between these factions broke into the open.

INDEPENDENCE

In February 1990, a government crackdown on large demonstrations in Dushanbe, Tajikistan's capital, led to 21 deaths.¹¹ The Soviet government, falsely depicting the rioters as mobs of Tajik nationalists against the "Europeans," used the demonstrations as an excuse to ban opposition candidates from taking part in the Supreme Soviet elections in March 1990. Tajikistan's president, then Kakhar Mahkamov, openly expressed his support for the August 1991 coup attempt against Gorbachev. After the coup's failure, demonstrators took to the streets once again, this time to demand Mahkamov's resignation. On September 9, 1991, Tajikistan declared its independence.

¹¹Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Tajikistan," *Implementation of the Helsinki Accords: Human Rights and Democratization in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1993), p. 222.

Despite this declaration, Tajikistan did not gain independence until the Soviet Union was formally dissolved at the end of December 1991. By this time, a split between three political forces became evident: "Rastokhez" (Renaissance), which had emerged from the nationalist awakening brought on by glasnost, emphasizes the revival of Tajik culture and tradition, and wide political and economic reforms; the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT), which also included (or did include at the beginning) Uzbek and Russian members and advocated political pluralism and secularism in the government; and the Islamic Renaissance Party (sometimes called the Islamic Revival Party, Islamic Revivalist Party or Islamic Rebirth Party), which was legalized only in October 1991 and advocated an Islamic state.¹²

Ideological factions were not the only source of tension in Tajikistan. Disputes between Tajiks and Kyrgyz which erupted in 1989 over irrigation water resulted in ethnic violence.¹³ Also, a long-simmering conflict between Tajiks and Uzbeks (Uzbeks total almost 25 percent of Tajikistan's population) had been breaking out sporadically over the last several years.¹⁴

There are also serious regional differences and antagonisms among the Tajiks themselves. The Leninobod (or Khojand) clan in the northern part of the country has controlled power in the capital for more than 40 years; it had produced virtually all the recent communist leadership in the

¹²Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Tajikistan," *Implementation of the Helsinki Accords: Human Rights and Democratization in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1993), pp. 223-224.

¹³Atkin, Muriel, "Tajikistan: Ancient Heritage, New Politics," *Nations and Peoples in the Former Soviet Union*, Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 372. "Conflict Between Tajikistan And Kyrgyzstan" *Turkestan* (Tallinn, Estonia: January-February 1990), No. 1, p. 5. "KirTAG" *Sovettik Kyrgyzstan* (Frunze: 16 July 1989), p. 1.

¹⁴Atkin, Muriel, "Tajikistan: Ancient Heritage, New Politics", *Nations and Peoples in the Former Soviet Union*, Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 372-373.

republic. The Garm clan in Gorno-Badakhshan is one of the poorest and most poorly represented in power in Tajikistan: members of the Garm clan have rarely held high posts in the government. Gorno-Badakhshan has been a stronghold of the Islamic Renaissance Party. The Kulyab clan opposed the Tajik government's efforts before the civil war to form a more inclusive political base, but has remained loyal to and increasingly powerful in the current government. The Kurgan-Tyube region has been a source of opposition to the conservative ex-communist Tajik government: many of the present opposition leaders -- Shadmon Yusuf, head of the Democratic Party, Davlat Usmon, deputy chairman of the Islamic Renaissance Party, and Abdujabbor, leader of "Rastokhez," are from the Kurgan-Tyube region. Much of the fighting during the civil war took place between the Kulyab and Kurgan-Tyube regions: these two oblasts have recently been merged as the "Khatlon Oblast," largely dominated by the Kulyab clan.¹⁵

The Communist Party-based government of Tajikistan was forced to resign after the Party's leadership supported the August 1991 coup against Gorbachev. Kadreddin Aslonov, named Acting President, quickly suspended Communist Party activity. Thousands of demonstrators supporting him took to the streets of the capital, alarming hardline deputies in the Parliament, which was still dominated by former Communist Party members. To restore order,

¹⁵Kadyr, Timur, "Powder-Keg Under The Roof Of The World: Tajikistan Cracking At The Seams," *Megapolis-Express* (Moscow: 15 September 1992), No. 37, as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: Central Eurasia*, 28 October 1992, p. 20. "Comments on `Tajikistan: Political Conditions in the Post-Soviet Era,'" letter from Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 30 June 1993, p. 5. Bess Brown, "Tajikistan: The Conservatives Triumph," (Munich, Germany: *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 2, No. 7, 12 February 1993), p. 10.

the deputies forced Aslonov's resignation and elected former Party First Secretary Rakhmon Nabiyev President. Nabiyev immediately reinstated the Communist Party.¹⁶

This act was met by furious protests from opposition forces, and Nabiyev was forced to resign in October 1991. However, a popular election was held in November 1991, and Nabiyev won. Together with the Communist Party-dominated parliament, Nabiyev rolled back changes which had occurred under glasnost: he restored censorship and introduced new, more punitive amendments to the Criminal Code directed at any opposition to the government. When Nabiyev tried to fire his Minister of Internal Affairs, who was from Gorno-Badakhshan, the Minister's supporters, from the same region, protested in the square in front of the Parliament. The protesters were joined by a coalition of three opposition parties: the Islamic Renaissance Party, the Democratic Party and "Rastokhez," but the Parliament refused to make any concessions to the opposition.¹⁷

Demonstrations continued and reached a renewed intensity in the spring of 1992. In May, 1992, the government gave in to opposition demands, and a Government of National Reconciliation was formed, limiting the power of the President and putting opposition nominees in prominent parliamentary and ministerial positions.¹⁸

¹⁶Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Tajikistan," *Implementation of the Helsinki Accords: Human Rights and Democratization in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1993), p. 223.

¹⁷Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Tajikistan," *Implementation of the Helsinki Accords: Human Rights and Democratization in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1993), p. 225.

¹⁸U.S. Department of State, "Tajikistan," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 923.

However, in September 1992, the Nabiyeu government was forced to resign, and was eventually replaced by a regime of hardline ex-communists led by President Imamali Rakhmonov. During 1993, although the worst fighting of the civil war has ended, negotiations for a settlement have been underway for months, and some refugees are returning from neighboring countries, fighting continues. The four major opposition parties, the Tajikistan Democratic Party, the Islamic Renaissance Party, Rastokhez, and Lal-i Badakhshan, have been banned, although they technically still hold seats in the Tajikistan parliament. Russia, and Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, are currently supporting the ex-communist Tajik government with troops and materiel. Afghanistan is also involved, both as a base for rebels from Gorno-Badakhshan, and as a haven for refugees from that area. By September 1993, the worst fighting seems concentrated in the Gorno-Badakhshan region on the Afghan border. However, sporadic incidents of violence continued in other regions, and credible allegations of serious human rights violations on ethnic, regional and political grounds continued throughout Tajikistan. For instance, media report of continued rebel activity in the capital, Dushanbe, and of politically motivated murders, arrests, attacks and "disappearances" of opposition party members, ethnic minorities, and some government supporters, have been common.¹⁹

HUMAN RIGHTS IN TAJIKISTAN

¹⁹"Moscow Summit Addresses Tajik Border Crisis; Tajik Forces Fight in Gorno-Badakhshan," *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press* (Moscow: 8 September 1993), Volume XLV, No. 32, p. 16 -- as reported on NEXIS database. "Reports Of Fighting In Tajikistan," *British Broadcasting Service* (London: 31 August 1993) -- as reported on NEXIS database. Ian MacWilliams, "Departure Is Only Hope For Russians In Tajikistan," *Inter Press Service* (New York: 30 August 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. Mark Trevelyan, "Returning Tajik Refugees Fearful After Killings," *Reuters* (London: 12 August 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. Jonathan Steele, "Slim Hopes For An End To Civil War In Tajikistan," *The Guardian* (London: 6 August 1993), p. 8. Cherif J. Cordahi, "Ex-President Dies, Cross-Border Muslim Raids Continue," *Inter Press Service* (New York: 12 April 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database.

The Tajik Constitution

The first draft of the Constitution of Tajikistan was published in the spring of 1992. Its Preamble begins with the words "We Tajiks..." and Article Two states that, "the official language of the Republic of Tajikistan will be the Tajik (Farsi) language."²⁰ The entire draft, and especially the language provision, which reinforced the Language Law of 1989, drew immediate protests from members of Tajikistan's national-ethnic communities. These communities, including Armenians, Georgians, Jews, Germans, Koreans, Ossetins, Russians, Tatar-Bashkirs, Uzbeks and Uighurs, are represented by the Coordinating Council of National Association (Communities) of the Republic of Tajikistan. As the Council pointed out, "[a]s is clear from the Preamble, over 40 percent of the non-Tajik population is not recognized by the authors of the draft of the new Constitution of Tajikistan."²¹ The Council also noted that "the higher state positions of President and Vice President can be held only by Tajiks."²²

²⁰"Republic Draft Constitution Published," *Narodnaya Gazeta* (Dushanbe: 30 May 1992), as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: Central Eurasia*, 1 September 1992, pp. 64-73.

²¹"Draft Constitution Called Discriminatory," *Narodnaya Gazeta* (Dushanbe: 25 June 1992), as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: Central Eurasia*, 26 July 1992, p. 82.

²²"Draft Constitution Called Discriminatory" *Narodnaya Gazeta* (Dushanbe: 25 June 1992) as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: Central Eurasia*, 26 July 1992, p. 82.

The Language Law

Shortly before the collapse of Soviet rule, Tajik public organizations called "informals" -- organizations separate from the Communist Party -- began expressing specifically nationalistic concerns.²³ The regime's most important concession to the nationalists was the enactment of a language law in 1989 which would made Tajik the sole state language by 1996, with Russian used only as a language of interethnic communication. The draft Constitution of Tajikistan, published in the spring of 1992, affirmed Tajik's sole status as the language of state (see section on Constitution above). An amended version of the language law drafted in the summer of 1992 eliminated altogether the status of Russian as a language for conducting official business. While the educational system will continue to conduct classes in Tajik, Russian and Uzbek, government workers must conduct all written and oral work in Tajik by 1994. This modified version of the language law has not yet been reviewed by the National Assembly.²⁴

These proposed changes in the language law would have a serious negative impact on a large portion of the population, as Russian had been the dominant language used in official institutions in Tajikistan since the imposition of the Soviet government in the 1920s. Not only ethnic Russians and others for whom Russian is the primary language would be disadvantaged: more than 25 percent of the population are Uzbeks, and there are other sizable minorities in

²³Atkin, Muriel, "Tajikistan: Ancient Heritage, New Politics," *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, Ian Bremmer and Ray Taras, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 365.

²⁴U.S. Department of State, "Tajikistan," *Country Reports On Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 930.

Tajikistan who speak little or no Tajik.²⁵ However, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe maintains that as long as Russian-speakers are given the opportunity to learn the local language during the transition, "the language laws passed in all of the former Soviet republics are not in and of themselves violations of anyone's human rights."²⁶

Religion: The Role Of Islam

In the late 1980s, the state attitude towards Islam was liberalized. Mosques which had sat vacant or had been destroyed or vandalized were refurbished and new mosques were built. Muslims were permitted once again to make the obligatory journey to Mecca (the hajj). The Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan gained a large following. Although Kazikalon Akbar Turajonzoda, who assumed leadership of Tajikistan's Muslim community in 1990, is not a member of the Islamic Renaissance Party, he has acted as an intermediary between the IRP and other political forces inside Tajikistan and in neighboring states who are involved in Tajikistan's civil war.²⁷

Despite liberalization, however, certain Muslim groups continue to experience difficulties. According to the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, an Ismaili Muslim minority, the Pamirs

²⁵According to one source, most Uzbeks and Armenians speak Tajik, while some young Tajik professionals speak Russian better than Tajik. "Comments on `Tajikistan: Political Conditions in the Post-Soviet Era,'" letter from Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 30 June 1993.

²⁶"Draft Copy Of Paper On Tajikistan," letter from Patricia Carley, Helsinki Commission (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe), to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 28 June 1993.

²⁷U.S. Department of State, "Tajikistan," *Country Reports On Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office: February 1993), p. 928.

(Badakhshanis -- see under Ethnic Groups, below), are "heavily persecuted."²⁸ Among practising Sunni Muslims

The Qazi, head of the Muslim administration who was chosen by the Mufti of Maveralnahr based in Tashkent, was forced to flee and replaced by a Mufti who was chosen by the Tajik government. Second, in the spring and summer of 1992, a number of village mosques were burned because the worshipers were thought to be members of the Islamic Revivalist [Renaissance] Party.²⁹

The Effects Of The Civil War

According to the Department of State and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, in the conduct of the civil war, each of the major factions has perpetrated serious violations of human rights, including political and extrajudicial killing, rape, disappearance, arbitrary arrest and detention, the use of excessive force, and other human rights abuses as defined by the Helsinki Accords. With the collapse of the Soviet government and a system of unofficial quotas for government jobs for women and ethnic minorities, the proportion of women, Uzbeks and Russians in government offices has been drastically cut. As mentioned above, members of almost all ethnic groups have been affected by the violence, and many have fled.³⁰

According to the All-Union Census of 1989, the total population of Tajikistan was 5,089,593, of which 3,188,193 (62.6 percent) were Tajik, 1,197,091 were Uzbeks (23.5 percent),

²⁸"Comments on `Tajikistan: Political Conditions in the Post-Soviet Era,'" letter from Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 30 June 1993, p. 5.

²⁹"Comments on `Tajikistan: Political Conditions in the Post-Soviet Era,'" letter from Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 30 June 1993, p. 5.

³⁰U.S. Department of State, "Tajikistan," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), pp. 924-930. "Central Asia: A Civil War the World Ignored," *Information Bulletin* (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 19 May 1993), No. 1, p. 5.

386,630 were Russians (7.2 percent), 63,831 were Kyrgyz (1.2 percent) and 32,493 were Germans (0.5 percent). Other national-ethnic communities constituted the remainder of the population.³¹ Much has changed, however, since this census was conducted. The civil war is exacting a high cost among Tajikistan's ethnic minorities, and the last two years have seen a mass exodus of Russians, Germans, Jews, Uzbeks and even many Tajiks from the country. As a result of the civil war, tens of thousands of Russians and Uzbeks are leaving the country for refuge in Russia and Uzbekistan, and Tajik and Pamiri refugees are seeking haven in Afghanistan.

Ethnic Groups At Risk: The Status of Tajiks

For the last two years, Tajikistan has been embroiled in a civil war which has pitted four major loosely-grouped factions -- formed primarily among Tajiks around ideological, regional and ethnic or clan-based ties -- against each other and against non-Tajik ethnic groups. As discussed above, one faction is the Leninobod (or Khojand) clan in the northern part of the country, which has controlled power throughout the post-World War II period, and is identified with hardline communism. The second faction, consisting of the Kulyab clan in the central region of the country, has both acted as a conservative source of opposition to the communist leadership in Khojand, and as an ally against the Islamic and democratic opposition. The third faction, the Kurgan-Tyube clan, is associated with the major opposition parties. The fourth faction, the Garm clan in the southern region, Gorno-Badakhshan, is one of the strongholds of the Islamic Renaissance Party and other opposition groups.

³¹Gosudarstvennyy Komitet SSSR po Statistike, *Natsional'nyy Sostav Naseleniya*, Ch.II (Moscow: 1989), pp. 90-91.

Therefore, although ethnic Tajiks share a common language and religion, they are divided by distinct regional, clan-based, and political differences. As mentioned above, the situation is further complicated by the fact that political and regional divisions are not absolute: many Tajiks have lived for decades outside their "home" regions. Supporters of the Islamic and democratic parties exist in the communist strongholds, and vice versa. As a result of the civil war, opposition strongholds are governed by forces loyal to the current Tajik government (the Kurgan-Tyube region has been incorporated into "Khatlon Oblast" and is effectively governed by the Kulyab). Given how complex and widespread the civil war is, human rights monitors maintain that almost all Tajiks -- particularly supporters of the opposition groups throughout Tajikistan, those living in the Gorno-Badakhshan and former Kurgan-Tyube regions, and those living outside their region of ethnic origin -- are at risk on grounds of political or clan (ethnic/national) affiliations.³²

Hostilities between Tajiks on ethnic and political grounds had, as the Department of State reported, "driven over 100,000 refugees from Tajikistan into Afghanistan" by the end of 1992.³³ The Department of State and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees report that the various Tajik factions have perpetrated serious violations of human rights against other Tajik factions, including political and extrajudicial killing, rape, disappearance, arbitrary arrest and

³²"Comments on `Tajikistan: Political Conditions in the Post-Soviet Era,'" letter from Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 30 June 1993. Letter from Hiram A. Ruiz, U.S. Committee For Refugees, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 24 June 1993. "Draft Copy Of Paper On Tajikistan," letter from Patricia Carley, Helsinki Commission (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe), to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 28 June 1993.

³³U.S. Department of State, "Tajikistan," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 926.

detention, the use of excessive force, and other human rights abuses as defined in the Helsinki Accords.³⁴

³⁴U.S. Department of State, "Tajikistan," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), pp. 924-929. "Central Asia: A Civil War the World Ignored," *Information Bulletin* (Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 19 May 1993), No. 1, p. 5.

Ethnic Groups At Risk: The Status Of Non-Tajik Ethnic Groups

Most human rights monitoring sources agree that there was some level of hostility expressed against most non-Tajik ethnic groups in the period from 1991 to the beginning of the civil war in late 1992. The levels of hostility vary by ethnic group, as will be discussed below. There is some disagreement, however, about whether the various non-Tajik ethnic groups were a target of violence in the civil war, or were "caught in the crossfire" of a war among Tajiks. As mentioned above, there is no certain way to determine how most ethnic minorities would be treated if they were to return to Tajikistan: most "European" or Russian-speaking minorities have left Tajikistan, and many other ethnic minorities have fled to neighboring countries.³⁵

Russians, Other Slavs, Jews, Germans, and Armenians

In the first nine months of 1992 alone, 50,000 Russians had left the country, and one report notes that of the some 200,000 Russian residents of Dushanbe, 130-150,000 who wish to emigrate "are trapped" by the civil war.³⁶ Earlier, the Russian press reported that "all the non-Tajik population -- without exaggeration -- are sitting on their suitcases waiting to leave."³⁷ Interpretations of the Russian exodus differ somewhat. According to the Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights and the State Department, some incidents of violence against Russians, hostage-

³⁵Roy, Olivier, "Tajikistan" (Washington, D.C.: March 1993), Paper presented at the United States Institute of Peace conference on the former Soviet Union, p. 22.

³⁶Vladimirov, N., "Strangers in a Strange Land: The Bitter Truth About Russian Ordeals in Tajikistan," *Vek* (Moscow: 4-11 December 1992), No. 16, as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: Central Eurasia*, 16 December 1992, p. 92.

³⁷Belykh, V. and Burbyga, N., "Cartridges Instead of Bread," *Izvestiya* (Moscow: 16 September 1992) as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: Central Eurasia*, 25 September 1992, p. 106.

taking, and anti-Russian threats were documented from early 1991 through late 1992 -- before the start of the civil war.³⁸

In the civil war itself, the U.S. Committee for Refugees maintains that "some" of the violence in the civil war may have been directed at the "European" or Russian-speaking population, but the primary victims of the violence were Tajiks.³⁹ The Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights, however, states that "since the beginning of the civil war, which we would estimate at November 1992, the Russian population was not specifically targeted. The mass exodus was due to the discomfort of living in a war situation."⁴⁰ The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe concurs, stating that "Russians ... are not being singled out in the violence"⁴¹ by the warring factions, but noted that "[i]n recent months ... there are reports that ... youth gangs have been threatening the Russian population in Tajikistan, forcing them to give their apartments to Tajik refugees. Mobs of what are essentially armed children will likely prey on the easiest targets, such as Jews and other Russian speakers..."⁴²

³⁸U.S. Department of State, "Tajikistan," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), pp. 929-930. "Comments on `Tajikistan: Political Conditions in the Post-Soviet Era,'" letter from Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 30 June 1993, p. 4.

³⁹Letter from Hiram A. Ruiz, U.S. Committee For Refugees, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 24 June 1993.

⁴⁰"Comments on `Tajikistan: Political Conditions in the Post-Soviet Era,'" letter from Shahrbanou Tadjbaksh, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 30 June 1993, p. 4.

⁴¹"Draft Copy Of Paper On Tajikistan," letter from Patricia Carley, Helsinki Commission (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe), to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 28 June 1993.

⁴²Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Tajikistan," *Implementation of the Helsinki Accords: Human Rights and Democratization in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 231.

Although protection of religious freedom is guaranteed in the Law on Freedom of Faith and Religious Organizations of December 1990, and Jews have been permitted to practice their religion, Jews appear to be a particular target for societal hostility. In one incident, the Dushanbe Synagogue was attacked by a gang of Tajiks. There are also reports that Jewish children are beaten in Tajik schools.⁴³ The Canadian Documentation, Information and Research Branch (DIRB) reported anti-Jewish violence in Dushanbe during 1991.⁴⁴ The State Department reports one incident involving "serious mistreatment of a young Jewish man by Dushanbe police."⁴⁵ As mentioned above, the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe has expressed concern about the potential for hostility against Jews from "youth gangs."⁴⁶ According to the U.S. Committee for Refugees, almost all of Tajikistan's estimated 5,000 Jews have left, so there is no information on how Jews returned to Tajikistan in 1993 would fare.⁴⁷

It is not yet clear whether Armenians are also being singled out as a particularly vulnerable target among the "European" ethnic groups. Anti-Armenian slogans were allegedly shouted during the 1990 demonstrations in Dushanbe because it had been rumored that incoming

⁴³Naftalin, Micah H., "On The Situation In Central Asia" (Washington, D.C.: 25 March 1993), Paper submitted as testimony for hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, p. 13.

⁴⁴Immigration and Refugee Board, Documentation, Information, and Research Branch, *CIS, Baltic States, and Georgia: Situation of the Jews* (Ottawa, Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board, Documentation, Information, and Research Branch, July 1992).

⁴⁵U.S. Department of State, "Tajikistan," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), pp. 924-929.

⁴⁶Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Tajikistan," *Implementation of the Helsinki Accords: Human Rights and Democratization in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1993), p. 231.

⁴⁷Letter from Hiram A. Ruiz, U.S. Committee For Refugees, to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 24 June 1993.

Armenian refugees from the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabagh would receive apartments before the local inhabitants of Dushanbe.⁴⁸ As it turned out, the rumor was unfounded.⁴⁹ The total population of Armenians in Tajikistan in 1989 was only 5,630, many of whom have now left.⁵⁰

Uzbeks

The bulk of Tajikistan's Uzbek population live in the northern part of the country, in the eastern Ferghana Valley in Khojand (Leninobod) Oblast. However, some also live in the Kurgan-Tyube region and other areas associated with opposition to the hardline ex-communist Tajik government. Although the Tajik civil war initially stemmed from regional and ideological, rather than purely ethnic, factors, the Helsinki Commission reported that the decision of the Leninobod leadership that they would rather join their region to Uzbekistan than accept decisions of a coalition government "has given weight to the ethnic element of the current struggle."⁵¹ The Department of State reached the same conclusion by noting that Uzbek armed groups which are supporting "old guard forces" have "changed the nature of the armed conflict into one in which non-Tajiks are involved." Many Uzbeks living outside the Leninobod region became involved on

⁴⁸Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Tajikistan," *Implementation of the Helsinki Accords: Human Rights and Democratization in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1993), p. 222.

⁴⁹Kadyr, Timur, "Powder-Keg Under The Roof Of The World: Tajikistan Cracking At The Seams," *Megapolis-Express* (Moscow: 15 September 1992), No. 37, as reported in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: Central Eurasia*, 28 October 1992, p. 91.

⁵⁰"Gosudarstvennyy Komitet SSSR po Statistike," *Natsional'nyy Sostav Naseleniya*, Ch.II (Moscow, 1988), p. 90.

⁵¹Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "Tajikistan," *Implementation of the Helsinki Accords: Human Rights and Democratization in the Newly Independent States of the Former Soviet Union* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January 1993), p. 227.

the side of the Tajik government in armed conflict with the opposition groups. Moreover, although generally loyal to the current government, many ethnic Uzbeks in government jobs are being replaced by ethnic Tajiks.⁵²

Uzbekistan's government is not maintaining neutrality in the Tajikistan civil struggle. A journalist, reporting from the border of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, has concluded that "it is obvious that Tashkent [Uzbekistan's capital] is rendering anti-Islamic detachments diverse assistance."⁵³ Assistance -- materiel and troops to protect the Uzbekistan-Tajikistan border -- was supplied overtly in mid-1993.⁵⁴ Under these conditions, and given a history of tension between Tajiks and Uzbeks in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, Tajikistan's Uzbek-speaking population, particularly the minority of Uzbeks who are not living in the Khojand and former Kulyab oblasts, and who support the hardline ex-communist government shored up by Uzbekistan, could be at considerable risk.⁵⁵

Kyrgyz

⁵²U.S. Department of State, "Tajikistan," *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1992* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1993), p. 929-930.

⁵³Rotar, Igor, "Is Tashkent Helping Dushanbe's Anti-Islamists?: Coverage From The Uzbek-Tajik Border," *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (Moscow: 11 December 1992) as reported in Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], *Daily Report: Central Eurasia*, 16 January 1993, p. 46.

⁵⁴"Slim Hopes For An End To Civil War In Tajikistan" *The Guardian* (London: 6 August 1993), p. 8.

⁵⁵Most of the human rights monitors which reviewed the draft of this document did not comment on this statement. One, however, stated, "It seems to me that since the current government leaders, and indeed all government leaders in Tajikistan during the Soviet era, have come from that region in the country populated largely by Uzbeks [the Khojand Oblast] and probably were ethnic Uzbeks themselves, I'm not sure the Uzbeks are so much at risk." "Draft Copy Of Paper On Tajikistan," letter from Patricia Carley, Helsinki Commission (Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe), to John Evans, Resource Information Center, 28 June 1993.

The Kyrgyz population of Tajikistan, according to a 1989 census figure, is close to 64,000 (of whom almost 11,000 live in Gorno-Badakhshan, and most of the remainder nearby). Kyrgyz-Tajik conflicts over control of water resources have been occurring sporadically since the late 1980s (see section on Independence). As early as 1988, the media in Kyrgyzstan noted a general lack of knowledge about conditions for the ethnic Kyrgyz in Gorno-Badakhshan,⁵⁶ as more public attention was focused on the ethnic Kyrgyz, various Kyrgyz book distribution programs were begun.⁵⁷ This public attention magnified the significance of the water conflict of 1989. Whether the conflict between the Kyrgyz and Tajiks over water resources and the political polarization occurring in Tajikistan and particularly in the Gorno-Badakhshan region endanger the Kyrgyz as a nationality is unknown.

Pamirs (Badakhshanis)

Although the Pamirs, like the Tajiks, are an Iranian people, they belong to a different sect of Islam, the Ismailis, speak a different language, and consider that they look different from Tajiks.⁵⁸ Most Pamirs live in the Gorno-Badakhshan oblast, one of the regions in opposition to the hardline ex-communist government. Pamirs, although many are not members of the major opposition parties, have been loosely allied with the opposition against the current Tajik government. The Gorno-Badakhshan region has recently suffered the worst fighting between the

⁵⁶Isanov, N., "Society For Relations With Kyrgyz Abroad Supported," *Sovettik Kyrgyzstan* (Frunze: 14 September 1988), p. 3.

⁵⁷Tentimishev, M., "Our Civic Duty," *Sovettik Kyrgyzstan* (Frunze: 18 October 1988), p. 4. Yuldashova, G., "Tajikistan," *Sovettik Kyrgyzstan* (Frunze: 23 December 1988), p. 4.

⁵⁸James Kynge, "Plight Of The Pamiris Highlights Pain Of Tajikistan Minorities," *Reuters* (London: 15 July 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database.

government and opposition forces, and several thousand Pamirs are believed to have died in the civil war. The government attempted a blockade of food, energy and medical supplies to the region: Pamirs maintain that they would have starved had not a charity financed by the international leader of the Ismailis, the Aga Khan, provided food. Although some of the Pamirs who fled to Afghanistan during the worst of the fighting are returning, there were credible reports of beatings and intimidation of returnees, and many found their homes looted or destroyed. As late as August, 1993, there were reports of villages in Gorno-Badakhshan being strafed by airplanes. Reports of murders of Pamirs in the capital, Dushanbe -- believed by families of the victims to be ethnically motivated -- continued through mid-1993. The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights describes the Pamirs as "heavily persecuted."⁶⁹

⁵⁹"Tajikistan: The Empire Strikes Back," *The Economist* (London: 7 August 1993), p. 36. "Tajikistan: The Russians Take Up Their Burden," *The Economist* (London: 24 July 1993), p. 38. James Kynge, "Plight Of The Pamiris Highlights Pain Of Tajikistan Minorities," *Reuters* (London: 15 July 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. Galina Gridneva, "Head Of Ishmaelites Continues To Provide Aid To Tajikistan," *TASS* (Moscow: 6 September 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. Elif Kaban, "Tajik Chaos Puts Central Asia Back Into Moscow Fold," *Reuters* (London: 8 August 1993) - as reported on NEXIS database. "Slim Hopes For An End To Civil War In Tajikistan," *The Guardian* (London: 6 August 1993), p. 8.

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