[Template:For](/wiki/Template:For" \o "Template:For) [Template:Pp-protected](/wiki/Template:Pp-protected) [Template:POV](/wiki/Template:POV) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Infobox country](/wiki/Template:Infobox_country)

**Kazakhstan** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en);[[1]](#cite_note-1) [Template:Lang-kk](/wiki/Template:Lang-kk)), officially the **Republic of Kazakhstan**, is a country in northern [Central Asia](/wiki/Central_Asia).[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3) Kazakhstan is the world's largest [landlocked country](/wiki/Landlocked_country), and the [ninth largest](/wiki/List_of_countries_and_outlying_territories_by_land_area) in the world, with an area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[4]](#cite_note-4) Kazakhstan is the dominant nation of Central Asia economically, generating 60% of the region's GDP, primarily through its oil/gas industry. Kazakhstan has vast mineral resources.[[5]](#cite_note-5) It shares borders with [Russia](/wiki/Russia), [China](/wiki/China), [Kyrgyzstan](/wiki/Kyrgyzstan), [Uzbekistan](/wiki/Uzbekistan), and [Turkmenistan](/wiki/Turkmenistan), and also adjoins a large part of the [Caspian Sea](/wiki/Caspian_Sea). The terrain of Kazakhstan includes flatlands, [steppe](/wiki/Steppe), [taiga](/wiki/Taiga), [rock canyons](/wiki/Canyon), [hills](/wiki/Hill), [deltas](/wiki/River_delta), snow-capped [mountains](/wiki/Mountain), and [deserts](/wiki/Desert). Kazakhstan has an estimated 18 million people [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of),[[6]](#cite_note-6) Given its large land area, its [population density](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population_density) is among the lowest, at less than 6 people per square kilometre (15 people per sq. mi.). The capital is [Astana](/wiki/Astana), where it was moved in 1997 from [Almaty](/wiki/Almaty).

The territory of Kazakhstan has historically been inhabited by [nomadic tribes](/wiki/Nomads). This changed in the 13th century, when [Genghis Khan](/wiki/Genghis_Khan) occupied the country as part of the Mongolian Empire. Following internal struggles among the conquerors, power eventually reverted to the [nomads](/wiki/Nomads). By the 16th century, the [Kazakh](/wiki/Kazakhs) emerged as a distinct group, divided into three [*jüz*](/wiki/Jüz) (ancestor branches occupying specific territories). The [Russians](/wiki/Russians) began advancing into the [Kazakh steppe](/wiki/Kazakh_steppe) in the 18th century, and by the mid-19th century, they nominally ruled all of Kazakhstan as part of the [Russian Empire](/wiki/Russian_Empire). Following the [1917 Russian Revolution](/wiki/1917_Russian_Revolution), and subsequent [civil war](/wiki/Russian_Civil_War), the territory of Kazakhstan was reorganized several times. In 1936, it was made the [Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic](/wiki/Kazakh_Soviet_Socialist_Republic), part of the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union).

Kazakhstan was the last of the [Soviet republics](/wiki/Republics_of_the_Soviet_Union) to declare independence following the [dissolution of the Soviet Union](/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_Soviet_Union) in 1991. The current [President](/wiki/President_of_Kazakhstan), [Nursultan Nazarbayev](/wiki/Nursultan_Nazarbayev), has been leader of the country since then, and is characterized as authoritarian, with a government history of human rights abuses and suppression of political opposition.[[5]](#cite_note-5) Kazakhstan has worked to develop its [economy](/wiki/Economy_of_Kazakhstan), especially its dominant [hydrocarbon](/wiki/Hydrocarbon) industry.[[5]](#cite_note-5) [Human Rights Watch](/wiki/Human_Rights_Watch) says that "Kazakhstan heavily restricts freedom of assembly, speech, and religion,"[[7]](#cite_note-7) and other human rights organizations regularly describe [Kazakhstan's human rights situation](/wiki/Human_rights_in_Kazakhstan) as poor.

Kazakhstan's 131 ethnicities include [Kazakhs](/wiki/Kazakhs) (63% of the population), [Russians](/wiki/Russians), [Uzbeks](/wiki/Uzbek_people), [Ukrainians](/wiki/Ukrainian_people), [Germans](/wiki/Germans), [Tatars](/wiki/Tatars), and [Uyghurs](/wiki/Uyghur_people).[[8]](#cite_note-8) [Islam](/wiki/Islam) is the religion of about 70% of the population, with [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) practiced by 26%;[[9]](#cite_note-9) Kazakhstan officially allows [freedom of religion](/wiki/Freedom_of_religion_in_Kazakhstan), but religious leaders who oppose the government are suppressed. The [Kazakh language](/wiki/Kazakh_language) is the [state language](/wiki/State_language), and [Russian](/wiki/Russian_language) has equal official status for all levels of administrative and institutional purposes.[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[10]](#cite_note-10)

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

The name "Kazakh" comes from the [ancient Turkic](/wiki/Old_Turkic_language) word *qaz*, "to wander", reflecting the Kazakhs' [nomadic](/wiki/Eurasian_nomads) culture.<ref name=etym>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The name "[Cossack](/wiki/Cossacks)" is of the same origin.<ref name=etym/> The [Persian](/wiki/Persian_language) suffix [*-stan*](/wiki/-stan) means "land" or "place of", so *Kazakhstan* can be literally translated as "land of the wanderers".

Though traditionally referring only to [ethnic Kazakhs](/wiki/Kazakhs), including those living in China, Russia, Turkey, Uzbekistan and other neighboring countries, the term "Kazakh" is increasingly being used to refer to any inhabitant of Kazakhstan, including non-Kazakhs.[[11]](#cite_note-11)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Kazakhstan has been inhabited since the [Neolithic Age](/wiki/Neolithic_Age): the region's climate and terrain are best suited for nomads practicing [pastoralism](/wiki/Pastoralism). Archaeologists believe that humans first [domesticated the horse](/wiki/Domestication_of_the_horse) in the region's vast steppes. Central Asia was originally inhabited by the [Scythians](/wiki/Scythians).[[12]](#cite_note-12)

### Kazakh Khanate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|Artistic depiction of medieval](/wiki/File:Ancient_Taraz_Kazakhstan.jpg) [Taraz](/wiki/Taraz) situated along the [Silk Road](/wiki/Silk_Road) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Abylai_Khan.jpg)[Ablai Khan](/wiki/Ablai_Khan) served as khan of the [Middle jüz](/wiki/Middle_jüz) from 1771 to 1781

The [Cuman](/wiki/Cuman_people) entered the steppes of modern-day Kazakhstan around the early 11th century, where they later joined with the [Kipchak](/wiki/Kipchak_people) and established the vast Cuman-Kipchak confederation. While ancient cities [Taraz](/wiki/Taraz) (Aulie-Ata) and [Hazrat-e Turkestan](/wiki/Hazrat-e_Turkestan) had long served as important way-stations along the [Silk Road](/wiki/Silk_Road) connecting Asia and Europe, true political consolidation began only with the Mongol invasion of the early 13th century. Under the [Mongol Empire](/wiki/Mongol_Empire), the largest in world history, administrative districts were established. These eventually came under the rule of the emergent [Kazakh Khanate](/wiki/Kazakh_Khanate) (Kazakhstan).

Throughout this period, traditional [nomadic](/wiki/Nomadic) life and a [livestock](/wiki/Livestock)-based economy continued to dominate the [steppe](/wiki/Steppe). In the 15th century, a distinct [Kazakh](/wiki/Kazakhs) identity began to emerge among the [Turkic](/wiki/Turkic_peoples) tribes, a process which was consolidated by the mid-16th century with the appearance of the [Kazakh language](/wiki/Kazakh_language), culture, and economy.

Nevertheless, the region was the focus of ever-increasing disputes between the native Kazakh [emirs](/wiki/Emir) and the neighbouring [Persian-speaking peoples](/wiki/Persian-speaking_peoples) to the south. At its height the Khanate would rule parts of Central Asia and control [Cumania](/wiki/Cumania). The Kazakhs nomads would raid people of Russian territory for slaves until the Russian conquest of Kazakhstan. By the early 17th century, the Kazakh Khanate was struggling with the impact of tribal rivalries, which had effectively divided the population into the Great, Middle and Little (or Small) hordes ([*jüz*](/wiki/Jüz)). Political disunion, tribal rivalries, and the diminishing importance of overland trade routes between East and West weakened the Kazakh Khanate. [Khiva Khanate](/wiki/Khiva_Khanate) used this opportunity and annexed [Mangyshlak Peninsula](/wiki/Mangyshlak_Peninsula). Uzbek rule there lasted two centuries until the Russian arrival.

During the 17th century, Kazakhs fought [Oirats](/wiki/Oirats), a federation of western [Mongol](/wiki/Mongol) tribes, including the [Dzungar](/wiki/Dzungar_people).[[13]](#cite_note-13) The beginning of the 18th century marked the zenith of the Kazakh Khanate. During this period the Little Horde participated in the 1723–1730 war against the Dzungar, following their "Great Disaster" [invasion](/wiki/Invasion) of Kazakh territories. Under the leadership of [Abul Khair Khan](/wiki/Abul_Khair_Khan), the Kazakh won major victories over the Dzungar at the Bulanty River in 1726, and at the Battle of Anrakay in 1729.[[14]](#cite_note-14) [Ablai Khan](/wiki/Ablai_Khan) participated in the most significant battles against the Dzungar from the 1720s to the 1750s, for which he was declared a "*batyr*" ("hero") by the people. The Kazakh suffered from the frequent raids against them by the Volga [Kalmyk](/wiki/Kalmyk_people). The [Kokand Khanate](/wiki/Kokand_Khanate) used the weakness of Kazakh jüzs after Dzungar and Kalmyk raids and conquered present Southeastern Kazakhstan, including [Almaty](/wiki/Almaty), the formal capital in the first quarter of the 19th century. Also, the [Emirate of Bukhara](/wiki/Emirate_of_Bukhara) ruled [Shymkent](/wiki/Shymkent) before the Russians took dominance.

### Russian Empire[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

In the 19th century, the [Russian Empire](/wiki/Russian_Empire) began to expand its influence into [Central Asia](/wiki/Central_Asia). The "[Great Game](/wiki/Great_Game)" period is generally regarded as running from approximately 1813 to the [Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907](/wiki/Anglo-Russian_Convention_of_1907). The [tsars](/wiki/Tsar) effectively ruled over most of the territory belonging to what is now the Republic of Kazakhstan.

[thumb|right|Traditional Kazakh wedding dress](/wiki/File:SB_-_Kazakh_woman_on_horse.jpg)

The Russian Empire introduced a system of administration and built military garrisons and barracks in its effort to establish a presence in [Central Asia](/wiki/Central_Asia) in the so-called "Great Game" for dominance in the area against the [British Empire](/wiki/British_Empire), which was extending its influence from the south in India and Southeast Asia. Russia built its first outpost, [Orsk](/wiki/Orsk), in 1735. Russia introduced the Russian language in all schools and governmental organizations.

Russian efforts to impose its system aroused the resentment by the [Kazakh people](/wiki/Kazakh_people), and, by the 1860s, some Kazakh resisted Russia's rule. It had disrupted the traditional nomadic lifestyle and livestock-based economy, and people were suffering from hunger and starvation, with some Kazakh tribes being decimated. The Kazakh national movement, which began in the late 19th century, sought to preserve the native language and identity by resisting the attempts of the Russian Empire to assimilate and stifle them.

From the 1890s onward, ever-larger numbers of settlers from the Russian Empire began [colonizing](/wiki/Colonization) the territory of present-day Kazakhstan, in particular the province of [Semirechye](/wiki/Semirechye). The number of settlers rose still further once the [Trans-Aral Railway](/wiki/Trans-Aral_Railway) from [Orenburg](/wiki/Orenburg) to [Tashkent](/wiki/Tashkent) was completed in 1906. A specially created Migration Department (Переселенческое Управление) in [St. Petersburg](/wiki/St._Petersburg) oversaw and encouraged the migration to expand Russian influence in the area. During the 19th century about 400,000 Russians [immigrated](/wiki/Immigrated) to Kazakhstan, and about one million Slavs, Germans, Jews, and others immigrated to the region during the first third of the 20th century.[[15]](#cite_note-15) [Vasile Balabanov](/wiki/Vasile_Balabanov) was the administrator responsible for the resettlement during much of this time.

[thumb|upright|Russian settlers near](/wiki/File:Prokudin-Gorskii_Russians_in_Central_Asia.jpg) [Petropavlovsk](/wiki/Petropavl)

The competition for land and water that ensued between the Kazakh and the newcomers caused great resentment against colonial rule during the final years of [Tsarist Russia](/wiki/Tsarist_Russia). The most serious uprising, the [Central Asian Revolt](/wiki/Central_Asian_Revolt), occurred in 1916. The Kazakh attacked [Russian](/wiki/Russians) and [Cossack](/wiki/Cossack) settlers and military garrisons. The revolt resulted in a series of clashes and in brutal massacres committed by both sides.[[16]](#cite_note-16) Both sides resisted the communist government until late 1919.

### Soviet Union[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Although there was a brief period of [autonomy](/wiki/Autonomous_entity) ([Alash Autonomy](/wiki/Alash_Autonomy)) during the tumultuous period following the collapse of the Russian Empire, the Kazakhs eventually succumbed to [Soviet](/wiki/Soviet_Union) rule. In 1920, the area of present-day Kazakhstan became an [autonomous republic](/wiki/Kazakh_Autonomous_Soviet_Socialist_Republic) within the Soviet Union.

Soviet repression of the traditional elite, along with forced [collectivization](/wiki/Collectivization) in the late 1920s–1930s, brought [famine](/wiki/Famine) and high fatalities, leading to unrest. (see also: [Famine in Kazakhstan of 1932–33](/wiki/Famine_in_Kazakhstan_of_1932–33)).[[17]](#cite_note-17)[[18]](#cite_note-18) The Kazakh population declined by 38%[[19]](#cite_note-19) due to starvation and mass emigration. Estimates today suggest that the population of Kazakhstan would be closer to 28–35 million if there had been no starvation or emigration of the Kazakh.[[20]](#cite_note-20) During the 1930s, many renowned Kazakh writers, thinkers, poets, politicians and historians were killed on Stalin's orders, both as part of the [Great Purge](/wiki/Great_Purge) and as a methodical pattern of suppressing Kazakh identity and culture. Soviet rule took hold, and a [Communist](/wiki/Communism) apparatus steadily worked to fully integrate Kazakhstan into the Soviet system. In 1936 Kazakhstan became a [Soviet republic](/wiki/Republics_of_the_Soviet_Union). Millions of political prisoners and undesired ethnic groups were internally [exiled](/wiki/Exile) to Kazakhstan from other parts of the Soviet Union during the 1930s and 1940s; many of the [deportation](/wiki/Deportation) victims were deported to [Siberia](/wiki/Siberia) or Kazakhstan merely due to their ethnic heritage or beliefs. For example, after the German invasion in June 1941, the Soviets swept the area and transported approximately 400,000 [Volga Germans](/wiki/Volga_Germans) from Western Russia to Kazakhstan.

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Young_Pioneers_in_Kazakh_SSR.jpg)[Young Pioneers](/wiki/Young_Pioneer_organization_of_the_Soviet_Union) at a Young Pioneer camp in Kazakh SSR

Deportees were interned in some of the biggest [Soviet labor camps](/wiki/Gulag) of the system, including ALZHIR camp outside Astana, which was reserved for the wives of men considered "enemies of the people."[[21]](#cite_note-21) Many moved due to the policy of [population transfer in the Soviet Union](/wiki/Population_transfer_in_the_Soviet_Union) and others were forced into [involuntary settlements in the Soviet Union](/wiki/Involuntary_settlements_in_the_Soviet_Union). The [Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic](/wiki/Kazakh_Soviet_Socialist_Republic) contributed five national divisions to the Soviet Union's World War II effort. In 1947, two years after the end of the war, the USSR founded its [Semipalatinsk Test Site](/wiki/Semipalatinsk_Test_Site), the main national [nuclear weapon](/wiki/Nuclear_weapon) [test site](/wiki/Nuclear_testing), near the city of [Semey](/wiki/Semey).

World War II led to an increase in [industrialisation](/wiki/Industrialisation) and [mineral extraction](/wiki/Mineral_extraction) in support of the war effort. At the time of Soviet leader [Joseph Stalin's](/wiki/Joseph_Stalin) death, however, Kazakhstan still had an overwhelmingly agriculturally based economy. In 1953, Soviet leader [Nikita Khrushchev](/wiki/Nikita_Khrushchev) initiated the ambitious "[Virgin Lands](/wiki/Virgin_Lands)" program to turn the traditional pasture lands of Kazakhstan into a major grain-producing region for the Soviet Union. The Virgin Lands policy brought mixed results. However, along with later modernizations under Soviet leader [Leonid Brezhnev](/wiki/Leonid_Brezhnev), it accelerated the development of the agricultural sector, which remains the source of livelihood for a large percentage of Kazakhstan's population. Because of the decades of privation, war and resettlement, by 1959 the [Kazakh](/wiki/Kazakhs) were a minority in the country, making up 30% of the population. Ethnic [Russians](/wiki/Russians) accounted for 43%.[[22]](#cite_note-22) Finally in the late 20th century, growing tensions within Soviet society led to a demand for political and economic reforms, which came to a head in the 1980s. A factor that contributed strongly to this was [Lavrentii Beria's](/wiki/Lavrentii_Beria) decision to test a nuclear bomb on the territory of Kazakh SSR in [Semey](/wiki/Semey) in 1949. This had catastrophic ecological and biological consequences that were felt generations later, and Kazakh anger toward the Soviet system escalated.

[thumb|180px|The Monument of Independence, Republic Square, Almaty.](/wiki/File:Monument_of_Independence,_Republic_Square,_Almaty.jpg) In December 1986, mass demonstrations by young ethnic Kazakhs, later called the [Jeltoqsan](/wiki/Jeltoqsan) riot, took place in Almaty to protest the replacement of the [First Secretary](/wiki/General_Secretary) of the [Communist Party](/wiki/Communist_Party) of the Kazakh SSR [Dinmukhamed Konayev](/wiki/Dinmukhamed_Konayev) with [Gennady Kolbin](/wiki/Gennady_Kolbin) from the [Russian SFSR](/wiki/Russian_SFSR). Governmental troops suppressed the unrest, several people were killed, and many demonstrators were jailed. In the waning days of Soviet rule, discontent continued to grow and found expression under Soviet leader [Mikhail Gorbachev's](/wiki/Mikhail_Gorbachev) policy of [*glasnost*](/wiki/Glasnost).

### Independence[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Anchor](/wiki/Template:Anchor)

On 16 December 1991, Kazakhstan became the last Soviet republic to declare independence. Its communist-era leader, [Nursultan Nazarbayev](/wiki/Nursultan_Nazarbayev), became the country's first President, a position he has since retained.

Kazakhstan declared its [sovereignty](/wiki/Sovereignty) as a republic within the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in October 1990. Following the August 1991 aborted [coup attempt](/wiki/1991_Soviet_coup_d'état_attempt) in Moscow and the subsequent [dissolution of the Soviet Union](/wiki/Dissolution_of_the_Soviet_Union), Kazakhstan declared independence on 16 December 1991. Nazarbayev has ruled in an authoritarian manner, which [Template:Weasel inline](/wiki/Template:Weasel_inline) was needed in the first years of independence. Emphasis was on converting to a market economy. Political reforms have lagged behind achievements in the economy. By 2006 Kazakhstan generated 60% of the GDP of Central Asia, primarily through its oil industry.[[5]](#cite_note-5) The government moved the capital in 1997, from [Almaty](/wiki/Almaty), established under the Soviet Union and now Kazakhstan's largest city, to [Astana](/wiki/Astana).

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Kazakhstan map of Köppen climate classification.](/wiki/File:Kazakhstan_map_of_Köppen_climate_classification.svg) [300px|left|thumb|Map of Kazakhstan](/wiki/File:Kazakhstan-CIA_WFB_Map.png) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Kazakhs.jpg)[Markakol](/wiki/Markakol) reserve in the [Altai Mountains](/wiki/Altai_Mountains), eastern Kazakhstan [thumb|](/wiki/File:IMG_7431-Sharyn_canyon.jpg)[Charyn Canyon](/wiki/Charyn_Canyon) in northern Tian Shan

As it extends across both sides of the [Ural River](/wiki/Ural_River), considered the dividing line with the European continent, Kazakhstan is one of only two [landlocked countries](/wiki/Landlocked_country) in the world that [has territory in two continents](/wiki/Transcontinental_countries) (the other is [Azerbaijan](/wiki/Azerbaijan)).

With an area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)[Template:Spaced ndashequivalent](/wiki/Template:Spaced_ndash) in size to [Western Europe](/wiki/Western_Europe)[Template:Spaced ndashKazakhstan](/wiki/Template:Spaced_ndash) is the ninth-largest country and largest landlocked country in the world. While it was part of the [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union), Kazakhstan lost some of its territory to China's [Xinjiang](/wiki/Xinjiang) autonomous region[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) and some to Uzbekistan's [Karakalpakstan](/wiki/Karakalpakstan) autonomous republic.

It shares borders of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) with Russia, [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) with [Uzbekistan](/wiki/Uzbekistan), [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) with China, [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) with [Kyrgyzstan](/wiki/Kyrgyzstan), and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) with [Turkmenistan](/wiki/Turkmenistan). Major cities include [Astana](/wiki/Astana), [Almaty](/wiki/Almaty), [Karagandy](/wiki/Karagandy), [Shymkent](/wiki/Shymkent), [Atyrau](/wiki/Atyrau) and [Oskemen](/wiki/Oskemen). It lies between latitudes [40°](/wiki/40th_parallel_north) and [56° N](/wiki/56th_parallel_north), and longitudes [46°](/wiki/46th_meridian_east) and [88° E](/wiki/88th_meridian_east). While located primarily in Asia, a small portion of Kazakhstan is also located west of the [Urals](/wiki/Urals) in Eastern Europe.[[23]](#cite_note-23) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Reserve_Karkaraly.jpg)[Karaganda Region](/wiki/Karaganda_Region) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Astana-steppe-7748.jpg)[Akmola Region](/wiki/Akmola_Region) in the Kazakhstan [steppes](/wiki/Steppe) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Syr_Darya.jpg)[Syr Darya](/wiki/Syr_Darya) river, one of the major rivers of Central Asia that flows through Kazakhstan Kazakhstan's terrain extends west to east from the [Caspian Sea](/wiki/Caspian_Sea) to the [Altay Mountains](/wiki/Altay_Mountains) and north to south from the plains of [Western Siberia](/wiki/Siberia) to the oases and deserts of [Central Asia](/wiki/Central_Asia). The [Kazakh Steppe](/wiki/Kazakh_Steppe) (plain), with an area of around [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), occupies one-third of the country and is the world's largest dry [steppe](/wiki/Steppe) region. The steppe is characterized by large areas of [grasslands](/wiki/Grassland) and sandy regions. Major seas, lakes and rivers include the [Aral Sea](/wiki/Aral_Sea), [Lake Balkhash](/wiki/Lake_Balkhash) and [Lake Zaysan](/wiki/Lake_Zaysan), the [Charyn River and gorge](/wiki/Charyn_Canyon) and the [Ili](/wiki/Ili_River), [Irtysh](/wiki/Irtysh_River), [Ishim](/wiki/Ishim_River), [Ural](/wiki/Ural_River) and [Syr Darya](/wiki/Syr_Darya) rivers.

The climate is [continental](/wiki/Continental_climate), with warm summers and colder winters. [Precipitation](/wiki/Precipitation_(meteorology)) varies between arid and semi-arid conditions.

The [Charyn Canyon](/wiki/Charyn_Canyon) is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) long, cutting through a red [sandstone](/wiki/Sandstone) plateau and stretching along the Charyn River gorge in northern [Tian Shan](/wiki/Tian_Shan) ("Heavenly Mountains", [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) east of Almaty) at [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord). The steep canyon slopes, columns and arches rise to heights of between 150 and 300 metres. The inaccessibility of the canyon provided a safe haven for a rare [ash tree](/wiki/Ash_tree) Fraxinus sogdiana that survived the [Ice Age](/wiki/Ice_Age) and is now also grown in some other areas.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) [Bigach crater](/wiki/Bigach_crater), at [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord), is a [Pliocene](/wiki/Pliocene) or [Miocene](/wiki/Miocene) [asteroid](/wiki/Asteroid) [impact crater](/wiki/Impact_crater), [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in diameter and estimated to be 5±3-million years old.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Average daily maximum and minimum temperatures for large cities in Kazakhstan[[24]](#cite_note-24) | | | | |
| **Location** | **July (°C)** | **July (°F)** | **January (°C)** | **January (°F)** |
| [Almaty](/wiki/Almaty) | 30/18 | 86/64 | 0/−8 | 33/17 |
| [Shymkent](/wiki/Shymkent) | 32/17 | 91/66 | 4/−4 | 39/23 |
| [Karaganda](/wiki/Karaganda) | 27/14 | 80/57 | –8/−17 | 16/1 |
| [Astana](/wiki/Astana) | 27/15 | 80/59 | –10/–18 | 14/–1 |
| [Pavlodar](/wiki/Pavlodar) | 28/15 | 82/59 | –11/−20 | 12/–5 |
| [Aktobe](/wiki/Aktobe) | 30/15 | 86/61 | –8/–16 | 17/2 |

### Administrative divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Kazakhstan is divided into fourteen [regions](/wiki/Regions_of_Kazakhstan) ([Template:Lang-kz](/wiki/Template:Lang-kz)). The regions are subdivided into [districts](/wiki/Districts_of_Kazakhstan) ([Template:Lang-kz](/wiki/Template:Lang-kz)).

The cities of [Almaty](/wiki/Almaty) and [Astana](/wiki/Astana) have status "state importance" and do not belong to any region. The city of [Baikonur](/wiki/Baikonur) has a special status because it is being leased until 2050 to Russia for the [Baikonur cosmodrome](/wiki/Baikonur_cosmodrome).[[2]](#cite_note-2) Each region is headed by an *akim* (regional governor) appointed by the president. Municipal *akim*s [*akimi*?] are appointed by region *akim*s. Kazakhstan's government relocated its capital from Almaty, established under the Soviet Union, to Astana on 10 December 1997.

[Template:Provinces of Kazakhstan Image Map](/wiki/Template:Provinces_of_Kazakhstan_Image_Map)

## Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Kazakh_Parliament_Astana.jpg)[Parliament of Kazakhstan](/wiki/Parliament_of_Kazakhstan)

### Political system[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

Kazakhstan is a [unitary republic](/wiki/Unitary_republic). Its first and, to date (2016), only President is [Nursultan Nazarbayev](/wiki/Nursultan_Nazarbayev). The President may [veto](/wiki/Veto) legislation that has been passed by the [Parliament](/wiki/Parliament_of_Kazakhstan) and is also the [commander in chief](/wiki/Commander_in_chief) of the [armed forces](/wiki/Armed_Forces_of_the_Republic_of_Kazakhstan). The Prime Minister chairs the Cabinet of Ministers and serves as Kazakhstan's head of government. There are three deputy prime ministers and sixteen ministers in the Cabinet.

Kazakhstan has a [bicameral](/wiki/Bicameral) Parliament composed of the [*Majilis*](/wiki/Majilis) (the [lower house](/wiki/Lower_house)) and [Senate](/wiki/Senate_of_Kazakhstan) (the [upper house](/wiki/Upper_house)).[[25]](#cite_note-25) Single-mandate districts popularly elect 107 seats in the *Majilis*; there also are ten members elected by party-list vote. The Senate has 47 members. Two senators are selected by each of the elected assemblies (*Maslikhats*) of Kazakhstan's sixteen principal [administrative divisions](/wiki/Administrative_divisions_of_Kazakhstan) (fourteen regions plus the cities of Astana and Almaty). The President appoints the remaining seven senators. *Majilis* deputies and the government both have the right of legislative initiative, though the government proposes most legislation considered by the Parliament.

### Political culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[thumb|300px|A"Kazakhstan 2030", billboard promoting the president's economic plan, 2008,](/wiki/File:Kazakhstan_2030_billboard.jpg) [Almaty](/wiki/Almaty).

[Elections to the Majilis](/wiki/Elections_in_Kazakhstan) in September 2004, yielded a lower house dominated by the pro-government [Otan Party](/wiki/Nur-Otan), headed by President Nazarbayev. Two other parties considered sympathetic to the president, including the agrarian-industrial bloc AIST and the [Asar Party](/wiki/Asar_Party), founded by President Nazarbayev's daughter, won most of the remaining seats. Opposition parties, which were officially registered and competed in the elections, won a single seat during elections. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe was monitoring the election, which it said fell short of international standards.

In 1999, Kazakhstan had applied for observer status at the [Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly](/wiki/Council_of_Europe_Parliamentary_Assembly). The official response of the Assembly was that Kazakhstan could apply for full membership, because it is partially located in Europe[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed), but that they would not be granted any status whatsoever at the Council until their [democracy](/wiki/Democracy) and [human rights](/wiki/Human_rights) records improved.

On 4 December 2005, Nursultan Nazarbayev was reelected in an apparent landslide victory. The electoral commission announced that he had won over 90% of the vote. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) concluded the election did not meet international standards despite some improvements in the administration of the election.[[26]](#cite_note-26) On 17 August 2007, elections to the lower house of parliament were held and a coalition led by the ruling [Nur-Otan](/wiki/Nur-Otan) Party, which included the [Asar Party](/wiki/Asar_Party), the Civil Party of Kazakhstan, and the [Agrarian Party](/wiki/Agrarian_Party_of_Kazakhstan), won every seat with 88% of the vote. None of the opposition parties has reached the benchmark 7% level of the seats. Opposition parties made accusations of serious irregularities in the election.[[27]](#cite_note-27)[[28]](#cite_note-28) Daan Everts, [OSCE](/wiki/OSCE) mission chief at the time, said: 'It has not been a competitive race.'[[29]](#cite_note-29) In 2010, President Nazarbayev rejected a call from supporters to hold a referendum to keep him in office until 2020. He insisted on presidential elections for a five-year term. In a vote held on 3 April 2011, President Nazarbayev received 95.54% of the vote with 89.9% of registered voters participating.[[30]](#cite_note-30) In March 2011, Nazarbayev outlined the progress made toward democracy by Kazakhstan.[[31]](#cite_note-31) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Kazakhstan was reported on the [Democracy Index](/wiki/Democracy_Index) by [*The Economist*](/wiki/The_Economist) as an [authoritarian regime](/wiki/Authoritarian_regime).

On 26 April 2015, the 5th presidential election was held in Kazakhstan.<ref name=foxnews2>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> Nursultan Nazarbayev was re-elected with 97.7% of votes.<ref name=rt1>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

### Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Dmitry_Medvedev_in_South_Korea,_March_2012-15.jpeg)[President](/wiki/President_of_Kazakhstan) [Nazarbayev](/wiki/Nursultan_Nazarbayev) with U.S. [Barack Obama](/wiki/Barack_Obama) and Russian [Dmitry Medvedev](/wiki/Dmitry_Medvedev) in 2012 Kazakhstan is a member of the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations), [Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe](/wiki/Organization_for_Security_and_Cooperation_in_Europe), [Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council](/wiki/Euro-Atlantic_Partnership_Council) and the [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation](/wiki/Organisation_of_Islamic_Cooperation) (OIC). It is an active participant in the [North Atlantic Treaty Organisation](/wiki/North_Atlantic_Treaty_Organization) [Partnership for Peace](/wiki/Partnership_for_Peace) program.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

On 11 April 2010, Presidents Nazarbayev and [Obama](/wiki/Barack_Obama) met at the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, D.C., and discussed strengthening the strategic partnership between the United States and Kazakhstan. They pledged to intensify bilateral cooperation to promote nuclear safety and non-proliferation, regional stability in Central Asia, economic prosperity, and universal values.[[32]](#cite_note-32) In April 2011, President Obama called President Nazarbayev and discussed many cooperative efforts regarding nuclear security, including securing nuclear material from the BN-350 reactor. They reviewed progress on meeting goals that the two presidents established during their bilateral meeting at the Nuclear Security Summit in 2010.[[33]](#cite_note-33) Kazakhstan is also a member of the [Commonwealth of Independent States](/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Independent_States), the [Economic Cooperation Organization](/wiki/Economic_Cooperation_Organization) and the [Shanghai Cooperation Organization](/wiki/Shanghai_Cooperation_Organization). The nations of Kazakhstan, Russia, [Belarus](/wiki/Belarus), Kyrgyzstan and [Tajikistan](/wiki/Tajikistan) established the [Eurasian Economic Community](/wiki/Eurasian_Economic_Community) in 2000, to revive earlier efforts to harmonize trade tariffs and to create a free trade zone under a customs union. On 1 December 2007, it was announced that Kazakhstan had been chosen to chair the [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe](/wiki/Organization_for_Security_and_Co-operation_in_Europe) for the year 2010. Kazakhstan was elected a member of the [UN Human Rights Council](/wiki/UN_Human_Rights_Council) for the first time on 12 November 2012.[[34]](#cite_note-34)[thumb|President Nazarbayev attends the Caspian Sea Summit in](/wiki/File:IV_Каспийский_саммит_-_27.jpeg) [Astrakhan](/wiki/Astrakhan), Russia, 29 September 2014

Since independence in 1991, Kazakhstan has pursued what is known as the "multivector foreign policy" ([Template:Lang-kz](/wiki/Template:Lang-kz)), seeking equally good relations with its two large neighbors, Russia and China as well as with the United States and the rest of the [Western world](/wiki/Western_world).[[35]](#cite_note-35)[[36]](#cite_note-36)Russia currently leases approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of territory enclosing the [Baikonur Cosmodrome](/wiki/Baikonur_Cosmodrome) space launch site in south central Kazakhstan, where the first man was launched into space as well as Soviet space shuttle [Buran](/wiki/Buran_(spacecraft)) and the well-known space station [Mir](/wiki/Mir).

Since 2014 the Kazakh government has been bidding for a non-permanent member seat on the UN Security Council for 2017–2018.<ref name=AT5>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> That election is to be held in November 2016 at the General Assembly in New York.[[37]](#cite_note-37) Kazakhstan actively supports UN peacekeeping missions in Haiti, the Western Sahara, and Côte d'Ivoire.<ref name=TN1>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> In March 2014, the Ministry of Defense chose 20 Kazakh military men as observers for the UN peacekeeping missions. The military personnel, ranking from captain to colonel, had to go through a specialized UN training; they had to be fluent English and skilled in using specialized military vehicles.[[38]](#cite_note-38) In 2014, Kazakhstan gave Ukraine humanitarian aid during the conflict with Russian-backed rebels. In October 2014, Kazakhstan donated $30,000 to the International Committee of the Red Cross's humanitarian effort in Ukraine. In January 2015, to help the humanitarian crisis, Kazakhstan sent $400,000 of aid to [Ukraine's southeastern regions](/wiki/Novorossiya_(confederation)).<ref name=gpostukraine1>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> President Nazarbayev said of the war in Ukraine, "The fratricidal war has brought true devastation to eastern Ukraine, and it is a common task to stop the war there, strengthen Ukraine’s independence and secure territorial integrity of Ukraine."<ref name=ukrainenaz>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> Experts believe that no matter how the Ukraine crisis develops, Kazakhstan’s relations with the European Union will remain normal.<ref name=CarnegieUkraniepiece>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> It is believed that Nazarbayev’s mediation is positively received by both Russia and Ukraine.[[39]](#cite_note-39) Kazakhstan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement on 26 January 2015: "We are firmly convinced that there is no alternative to peace negotiations as a way to resolve the crisis in the south-eastern Ukraine."<ref name=ukrainejan26statement>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [right|thumb|](/wiki/File:Kazakhstan_Republican_Guard.JPEG)[Kazakhstan Republican Guard](/wiki/Republican_Guard_(Kazakhstan)) Most of Kazakhstan's military was inherited from the [Soviet Armed Forces'](/wiki/Soviet_Armed_Forces) [Turkestan Military District](/wiki/Turkestan_Military_District). These units became the core of Kazakhstan's new military. It acquired all the units of the [40th Army](/wiki/40th_Army_(Soviet_Union)) (the former 32nd Army) and part of the 17th Army Corps, including six land-force divisions, storage bases, the 14th and 35th air-landing brigades, two rocket brigades, two artillery regiments and a large amount of equipment which had been withdrawn from over the Urals after the signing of the [Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe](/wiki/Treaty_on_Conventional_Armed_Forces_in_Europe). Since the late 20th century, the Kazakhstan Army has focused on expanding the number of its armored units. Since 1990, armored units have expanded from 500 to 1,613 in 2005.

The Kazakh air force is composed mostly of Soviet-era planes, including 41 [MiG-29s](/wiki/MiG-29), 44 [MiG-31s](/wiki/MiG-31), 37 [Su-24s](/wiki/Su-24) and 60 [Su-27s](/wiki/Su-27). A small naval force is maintained on the Caspian Sea.

Kazakhstan sent 49 military engineers to [Iraq](/wiki/Iraq) to assist the [US post-invasion mission in Iraq](/wiki/Post-invasion_Iraq,_2003–present). During the second Iraq War, Kazakhstani troops dismantled 4 million mines and other explosives, helped provide medical care to more than 5,000 coalition members and civilians, and purified [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of water.[[40]](#cite_note-40) Kazakhstan's [National Security Committee](/wiki/National_Security_Committee_of_the_Republic_of_Kazakhstan) (UQK) was established on 13 June 1992. It includes the Service of Internal Security, Military Counterintelligence, Border Guard, several Commando units, and Foreign Intelligence (Barlau). The latter is considered as the most important part of KNB. Its director is [Nurtai Abykayev](/wiki/Nurtai_Abykayev).

Since 2002 the joint tactical peacekeeping exercise "Steppe Eagle" has been hosted by the Kazakhstan government. "Steppe Eagle" focuses on building coalitions and gives participating nations the opportunity to work together. During the Steppe Eagle exercises, the Kazbat peacekeeping battalion operates within a multinational force under a unified command within multidisciplinary peacekeeping operations, with NATO and the U.S. Military.<ref name=steppe1>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

In December 2013, Kazakhstan announced it will send officers to support United Nations Peacekeeping forces in Haiti, Western Sahara, Ivory Coast and Liberia.<ref name=un1>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

### Human rights[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

According to a US government report released in 2014, in Kazakhstan:

"The law does not require police to inform detainees that they have the right to an attorney, and police did not do so. Human rights observers alleged that law enforcement officials dissuaded detainees from seeing an attorney, gathered evidence through preliminary questioning before a detainee’s attorney arrived, and in some cases used corrupt defense attorneys to gather evidence. [...][[41]](#cite_note-41) "The law does not adequately provide for an independent judiciary. The executive branch sharply limited judicial independence. Prosecutors enjoyed a quasi-judicial role and had the authority to suspend court decisions. Corruption was evident at every stage of the judicial process. Although judges were among the most highly paid government employees, lawyers and human rights monitors alleged that judges, prosecutors, and other officials solicited bribes in exchange for favorable rulings in the majority of criminal cases."<ref name=countryreport>["Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013: Kazakhstan"](http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2013&dlid=220395#wrapper), released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Retrieved on November 1, 2015</ref>

Kazakhstan's global rank in the [World Justice Project's](/wiki/World_Justice_Project) 2015 Rule of Law Index was 65 out of 102; the country scored well on "Order and Security" (global rank 32/102), and poorly on "Constraints on Government Powers" (global rank 93/102), "Open Government" (85/102) and "Fundamental Rights" (84/102, with a downward trend marking a deterioration in conditions).<ref name=WJP2015>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

The [ABA Rule of Law Initiative](/wiki/ABA_Rule_of_Law_Initiative) of the American Bar Association has programs to train justice sector professionals in Kazakhstan.<ref name=ABArol>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref><ref name=ABAback>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

Kazakhstan’s Supreme Court has taken recent steps to modernize and to increase transparency and oversight over the country’s legal system. With funding from the US Agency for International Development, the ABA Rule of Law Initiative began a new program in April 2012 to strengthen the independence and accountability of Kazakhstan’s judiciary.<ref name=ABAjr>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

[thumb|350px|A proportional representation of Kazakhstan's exports.](/wiki/File:Kazakhstan_Export_Treemap.jpg) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Soyuz_TMA-3_launch.jpg)[Baikonur Cosmodrome](/wiki/Baikonur_Cosmodrome) is the world's oldest and largest operational [space launch facility](/wiki/Spaceport).

Kazakhstan has the largest and strongest performing economy in Central Asia. Supported by rising oil output and prices, Kazakhstan’s economy grew at an average of 8% per year until 2013, before suffering a slowdown in 2014 and 2015<ref name=imfarticleiv>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Kazakhstan was the first former Soviet Republic to repay all of its debt to the International Monetary Fund, 7 years ahead of schedule.<ref name=IMFrepay>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

Buoyed by high world [crude oil](/wiki/Crude_oil) prices, GDP growth figures were between 8.9% and 13.5% from 2000 to 2007 before decreasing to 1–3% in 2008 and 2009, and then rising again from 2010.[[42]](#cite_note-42) Other major exports of Kazakhstan include wheat, textiles, and livestock. Kazakhstan is a leading exporter of uranium.[[43]](#cite_note-43)[[44]](#cite_note-44) Kazakhstan’s economy grew by 4.6% in 2014.<ref name=BRICplus>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> The country experienced a slowdown in economic growth from 2014 sparked by falling oil prices and the effects of the [Ukrainian crisis](/wiki/Ukrainian_crisis)[[45]](#cite_note-45) The country devalued its currency by 19% in February 2014.[[46]](#cite_note-46) Another 22% devaluation occurred in August 2015.[[47]](#cite_note-47) Kazakhstan’s fiscal situation is stable. The government has continued to follow a conservative fiscal policy by controlling budget spending and accumulating oil revenue savings in its Oil Fund – Samruk-Kazyna. The global financial crisis forced Kazakhstan to increase its public borrowing to support the economy. Public debt increased to 13.4 per cent in 2013 from 8.7 per cent in 2008. Between 2012 and 2013, the government achieved an overall fiscal surplus of 4.5 per cent.<ref name=kzwbprofile>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

Since 2002, Kazakhstan has sought to manage strong inflows of foreign currency without sparking inflation. Inflation has not been under strict control, however, registering 6.6% in 2002, 6.8% in 2003, and 6.4% in 2004.

In March 2002, the [U.S. Department of Commerce](/wiki/U.S._Department_of_Commerce) granted Kazakhstan [market economy](/wiki/Market_economy) status under [U.S. trade law](/wiki/Trade_Act_of_2002). This change in status recognized substantive market economy reforms in the areas of currency convertibility, wage rate determination, openness to foreign investment, and government control over the means of production and allocation of resources.

### Economic stewardship during the Global Financial Crisis[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

Kazakhstan weathered the global financial crisis well,[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) by combining fiscal relaxation with monetary stabilization. In 2009, the government introduced large-scale support measures such as the recapitalization of banks and support for the real estate and agricultural sectors, as well as for small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The total value of the stimulus programs amounted to $21 billion, or 20 per cent of the country’s GDP, with $4 billion going to stabilize the financial sector.<ref name=ft21bn>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> During the global economic crisis, Kazakhstan’s economy contracted by 1.2% in 2009, while the annual growth rate subsequently increased to 7.5% and 5% in 2011 and 2012, respectively.[[48]](#cite_note-48) In September 2002, Kazakhstan became the first country in the [CIS](/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Independent_States) to receive an investment grade [credit rating](/wiki/Credit_rating) from a major international [credit rating agency](/wiki/Credit_rating_agency).[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) As of late December 2003, Kazakhstan's gross foreign debt was about $22.9 billion. Total governmental debt was $4.2 billion, 14% of GDP. There has been a reduction in the ratio of debt to GDP. The ratio of total governmental debt to GDP in 2000, was 21.7%; in 2001, it was 17.5%, and in 2002, it was 15.4%.[Template:Update inline](/wiki/Template:Update_inline)

[Economic growth](/wiki/Economic_growth), combined with earlier [tax](/wiki/Tax_reform) and financial sector reforms, has dramatically improved government finance from the 1999 [budget deficit](/wiki/Budget_deficit) level of 3.5% of GDP to a deficit of 1.2% of GDP in 2003. Government revenues grew from 19.8% of GDP in 1999 to 22.6% of GDP in 2001, but decreased to 16.2% of GDP in 2003.[Template:Update inline](/wiki/Template:Update_inline) In 2000, Kazakhstan adopted a new [tax code](/wiki/Tax_code) in an effort to consolidate these gains.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

[thumb|right|Kazakhstan's capital,](/wiki/File:Central_Downtown_Astana_2.jpg) [Astana](/wiki/Astana) On 29 November 2003, the Law on Changes to Tax Code which reduced [tax rates](/wiki/Tax_rates_around_the_world) was adopted. The [value added tax](/wiki/Value_added_tax) fell from 16% to 15%, the social tax,[Template:Clarify](/wiki/Template:Clarify) from 21% to 20%, and the personal [income tax](/wiki/Income_tax), from 30% to 20%. On 7 July 2006, the personal income tax was reduced even further to a flat rate of 5% for personal income in the form of dividends and 10% for other personal income. Kazakhstan furthered its reforms by adopting a new land code on 20 June 2003, and a new customs code on 5 April 2003.

[Energy](/wiki/Energy) is the leading economic sector. Production of crude oil and [natural gas condensate](/wiki/Natural_gas_condensate) from the [oil and gas basins of Kazakhstan](/wiki/Oil_and_gas_basins_of_Kazakhstan) amounted to 79.2 million tons in 2012 up from 51.2 million [tons](/wiki/Ton) in 2003. Kazakhstan raised oil and gas condensate exports to 44.3 million tons in 2003, 13% higher than in 2002. Gas production in Kazakhstan in 2003, amounted to 13.9 billion cubic meters (491 billion cu. ft), up 22.7% compared to 2002, including [natural gas](/wiki/Natural_gas) production of 7.3 billion cubic meters (258 billion cu. ft). Kazakhstan holds about 4 billion tons of proven recoverable oil reserves and 2,000 cubic kilometers (480 cu mi) of gas. According to industry analysts, expansion of oil production and the development of new [fields](/wiki/Oil_field) will enable the country to produce as much as [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) per day by 2015, and Kazakhstan would be among the top 10 oil-producing nations in the world.[Template:Update inline](/wiki/Template:Update_inline) Kazakhstan's oil exports in 2003, were valued at more than $7 billion, representing 65% of overall exports and 24% of the GDP. Major oil and gas fields and recoverable [oil reserves](/wiki/Oil_reserves) are [Tengiz](/wiki/Tengiz_Field) with [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert); [Karachaganak](/wiki/Karachaganak_Field) with [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) and 1,350 km³ of natural gas; and [Kashagan](/wiki/Kashagan_Field) with 7 to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).

[thumb|](/wiki/File:35Aktau_główna_ulica.JPG)[Aktau](/wiki/Aktau) is Kazakhstan's only seaport on the [Caspian Sea](/wiki/Caspian_Sea) Kazakhstan instituted an ambitious [pension](/wiki/Pension) reform program in 1998. As of 1 January 2012, the pension assets were about $17 billion (KZT 2.5 trillion). There are 11 saving pension funds in the country. The State Accumulating Pension Fund, the only state-owned fund, was [privatized](/wiki/Privatization) in 2006. The country's unified financial regulatory agency oversees and regulates the pension funds. The growing demand of the pension funds for quality investment outlets triggered rapid development of the debt [securities](/wiki/Security_(finance)) market. Pension fund capital is being invested almost exclusively in corporate and government [bonds](/wiki/Bond_(finance)), including government of Kazakhstan Eurobonds. The government of Kazakhstan is studying a project to create a unified national pension fund and transfer all the accounts from the private pension funds into it.[[49]](#cite_note-49) The banking system of Kazakhstan is developing rapidly and the system's capitalization now[Template:When](/wiki/Template:When) exceeds $1 billion. The [National Bank](/wiki/National_Bank_of_Kazakhstan) has introduced deposit insurance in its campaign to strengthen the banking sector. Due to troubling and non-performing bad assets the bank sector yet is at risk to lose stability. Several major foreign banks have branches in Kazakhstan, including [RBS](/wiki/Royal_Bank_of_Scotland), [Citibank](/wiki/Citibank), and [HSBC](/wiki/HSBC). [Kookmin](/wiki/Kookmin) and [UniCredit](/wiki/UniCredit) have both recently entered the Kazakhstan's financial services market through acquisitions and [stake](/wiki/Equity_(finance))-building.

According to the 2010–11 World Economic Forum in Global Competitiveness Report, Kazakhstan was ranked 72nd in the world in economic competitiveness.[[50]](#cite_note-50)One year later, the [Global Competitiveness Report](/wiki/Global_Competitiveness_Report) ranked Kazakhstan 50th in most competitive markets.[[51]](#cite_note-51) In 2012, Kazakhstan attracted $14 billion of [foreign direct investment](/wiki/Foreign_direct_investment) inflows into the country at a 7% growth rate making it the most attractive place to invest out of [CIS](/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Independent_States) nations.[[52]](#cite_note-52)[Template:Update inline](/wiki/Template:Update_inline)

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Построение_участников_перед_стартом_26.08.2006_г.JPG)[Pavlodar Region](/wiki/Pavlodar_Region) – a large industrial centre of Kazakhstan During the first half of 2013, Kazakhstan's fixed investment increased 7.1% compared to the same period in 2012 totaling 2.8 trillion tenge ($18 billion US dollars).[[53]](#cite_note-53) In 2013, [*Aftenposten*](/wiki/Aftenposten) quoted the human-rights activist and lawyer [Denis Jivaga](/wiki/Denis_Jivaga) as saying that there is an "[oil fund](/wiki/Oil_fund) in Kazakhstan, but nobody knows how the income is spent".[[54]](#cite_note-54)

### Macroeconomic trends[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

Kazakhstan’s economy grew at an average of 8% per year over the past decade on the back of hydrocarbon exports.[[48]](#cite_note-48) Despite the lingering uncertainty of the global economy, Kazakhstan’s economy has been stable. GDP growth in January–September 2013 was 5.7%, according to preliminary calculations of the Ministry Economy and Budget Planning.<ref name=kzgdp2013>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

From January to September 2014 Kazakhstan's GDP grew at 4%.<ref name=BSt1>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> According to the results from the first half of the year, the current account surplus is $6.6 billion, a figure two times higher than that of the first half of 2013.[[55]](#cite_note-55) According to the Chairman of the National Bank of Kazakhstan, Kairat Kelimbetov, the increase was caused by a trade surplus of 17.4 percent, or approximately USD 22.6 billion.[[55]](#cite_note-55) The overall inflation rate for 2014 is forecasted at 7.4 percent.[[55]](#cite_note-55)

### Agriculture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Kazakh](/wiki/File:Kazakh_shepard_with_dogs_and_horse.jpg) [shepherd](/wiki/Shepherd): His and his dogs' primary job is to guard the sheep from predators. [Agriculture](/wiki/Agriculture_in_Kazakhstan) accounts for approximately 5% of Kazakhstan's GDP.[[2]](#cite_note-2) [Grain](/wiki/Grain), potatoes, vegetables, melons and [livestock](/wiki/Livestock) are the most important agricultural commodities. Agricultural land occupies more than [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). The available agricultural land consists of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of arable land and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of [pasture](/wiki/Pasture) and hay land. Over 80% of the country’s total area is classified as agricultural land, including almost 70% occupied by pasture. Its arable land has the second highest availability per inhabitant (1.5 hectares).<ref name=wb1>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

Chief livestock products are [dairy products](/wiki/Dairy_product), [leather](/wiki/Leather), [meat](/wiki/Meat), and [wool](/wiki/Wool). The country's major crops include [wheat](/wiki/Wheat), [barley](/wiki/Barley), [cotton](/wiki/Cotton), and [rice](/wiki/Rice). Wheat [exports](/wiki/Export), a major source of [hard currency](/wiki/Hard_currency), rank among the leading commodities in Kazakhstan's export trade. In 2003 Kazakhstan harvested 17.6 million tons of grain in gross, 2.8% higher compared to 2002. Kazakh agriculture still has many environmental problems from mismanagement during its years in the Soviet Union. Some [Kazakh wine](/wiki/Kazakh_wine) is produced in the mountains to the east of Almaty.

Kazakhstan is thought to be one of the places that the [apple](/wiki/Apple) originated, particularly the wild [ancestor](/wiki/Ancestor) of *Malus domestica*, [*Malus sieversii*](/wiki/Malus_sieversii).[[56]](#cite_note-56) It has no common name in English, but is known in its native Kazakhstan as *alma*. The region where it is thought to originate is called *Almaty*: "rich with apple".[[57]](#cite_note-57) This tree is still found wild in the mountains of [Central Asia](/wiki/Central_Asia), in southern Kazakhstan, [Kyrgyzstan](/wiki/Kyrgyzstan), [Tajikistan](/wiki/Tajikistan) and [Xinjiang](/wiki/Xinjiang) in China.

### Natural resources[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|right|Headquarters of](/wiki/File:KazMunayGaz.JPG) [KazMunayGaz](/wiki/KazMunayGaz), Kazakhstan's national oil and gas company Kazakhstan has an abundant supply of accessible mineral and fossil fuel resources. Development of [petroleum](/wiki/Petroleum), [natural gas](/wiki/Natural_gas), and mineral extractions, has attracted most of the over $40 billion in foreign investment in Kazakhstan since 1993 and accounts for some 57% of the nation's industrial output (or approximately 13% of gross domestic product). According to some estimates,[[58]](#cite_note-58) Kazakhstan has the second largest [uranium](/wiki/Uranium), [chromium](/wiki/Chromium), [lead](/wiki/Lead), and [zinc](/wiki/Zinc) reserves, the third largest [manganese](/wiki/Manganese) reserves, the fifth largest [copper](/wiki/Copper) reserves, and ranks in the top ten for [coal](/wiki/Coal), [iron](/wiki/Iron), and [gold](/wiki/Gold). It is also an exporter of [diamonds](/wiki/Diamond). Perhaps most significant for economic development, Kazakhstan also currently has the 11th largest proven reserves of both petroleum and natural gas.[[59]](#cite_note-59) In total, there are 160 deposits with over 2.7 billion tons of petroleum. Oil explorations have shown that the deposits on the [Caspian shore](/wiki/Caspian_sea) are only a small part of a much larger deposit. It is said that 3.5 billion tons of oil and 2.5 trillion cubic meters of gas could be found in that area. Overall the estimate of Kazakhstan's oil deposits is 6.1 billion tons. However, there are only 3 [refineries](/wiki/Oil_refinery) within the country, situated in [Atyrau](/wiki/Atirau), [Pavlodar](/wiki/Pavlodar), and [Shymkent](/wiki/Shymkent). These are not capable of processing the total crude output so much of it is exported to Russia. According to the U.S. [Energy Information Administration](/wiki/Energy_Information_Administration) Kazakhstan was producing approximately [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of oil per day in 2009.[[60]](#cite_note-60) Kazakhstan also possesses large deposits of phosphorite. One of the largest known being the Karatau basin with 650 million tonnes of P2O5 and Chilisai deposit of [Aktyubinsk/Aqtobe phosphorite basin](/wiki/Ru:Актобинский_фосфоритоносный_бассейн) located in north western Kazakhstan, with a resource of 500–800 million tonnes of 9% ore.[[61]](#cite_note-61)[[62]](#cite_note-62) On 17 October 2013, the [Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative](/wiki/Extractive_Industries_Transparency_Initiative) (EITI) accepted Kazakhstan as "EITI Compliant", meaning that the country has a basic and functional process to ensure the regular disclosure of natural resource revenues.[[63]](#cite_note-63)

### Transport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[thumbnail|](/wiki/File:Turk-Sib_railway.jpg)[Turkestan-Siberia Railway](/wiki/Turkestan-Siberia_Railway) line connects Central Asia with Russian Siberia [Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Most cities are connected by railroad; high-speed trains go from [Almaty](/wiki/Almaty) (the southernmost city) to [Petropavl](/wiki/Petropavl) (the northernmost city) in about 18 hours. [Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

### Banking[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

The banking industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan experienced a pronounced boom and bust cycle over 2000s decade. After several years of rapid expansion in the mid-2000s, the banking industry collapsed in 2008. Several large banking groups, including [BTA Bank](/wiki/BTA_Bank) J.S.C. and Alliance Bank, defaulted soon after. Since then, the industry has shrunk and been restructured, with system-wide loans dropping to 39% of GDP in 2011 from 59% in 2007. Although the Russian and Kazakh banking systems share several common features, there are also some fundamental differences. Banks in Kazakhstan have experienced a lengthy period of political stability and economic growth. Together with a rational approach to banking and finance policy, this has helped push Kazakhstan’s banking system to a higher level of development. Banking technology and personnel qualifications alike are stronger in Kazakhstan than in Russia. On the negative side, past stability in Kazakhstan arose from the concentration of virtually all political power in the hands of a single individual – the key factor in any assessment of system or country risk. The potential is there for serious disturbances if and when authority passes into new hands.[[64]](#cite_note-64)

### Green economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

The government has set the goals that a transition to the [Green Economy in Kazakhstan](/wiki/Green_Economy_in_Kazakhstan) occur by 2050. The green economy is projected to increase GDP by 3% and create more than 500 thousand new jobs.[Template:Cn](/wiki/Template:Cn)

The government of Kazakhstan has set prices for energy produced from renewable sources. The price of 1 kilowatt-hour for energy produced by wind power plants was set at 22.68 tenge ($0.12). The price for 1 kilowatt-hour produced by small hydro-power plants is 16.71 tenge ($0.09), and from biogas plants 32.23 tenge ($0.18).<ref name=renewableprices>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>

### Foreign direct investment[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

As of 30 September 2012, foreign investors had placed a total of $177.7 billion in Kazakhstan.<ref name=2013ICS>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> According to the US State Department, Kazakhstan is widely considered to have the best investment climate in the region.[[65]](#cite_note-65) In 2002 the country became the first sovereign in the former Soviet Union to receive an investment-grade credit rating from an international credit rating agency. Foreign direct investment (FDI) plays a more significant role in the national economy than in most other former Soviet republics.<ref name=kzbankstats>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

President Nazarbayev signed into law tax concessions to promote foreign direct investment which include a 10-year exemption from corporation tax, an 8-year exemption from property tax, and a 10-year freeze on most other taxes.<ref name=taxnews>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> Other incentives include a refund on capital investments of up to 30 percent once a production facility is in operation.[[66]](#cite_note-66) Sir [Suma Chakrabarti](/wiki/Suma_Chakrabarti), the President of the [European Bank of Reconstruction and Development](/wiki/European_Bank_of_Reconstruction_and_Development) (EBRD), co-chaired the Kazakhstan Foreign Investors’ Council with President Nursultan Nazarbayev.<ref name=SirSuma>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> In May 2014, the EBRD and government of Kazakhstan created the Partnership for Re-Energizing the Reform Process in Kazakhstan to work with international financial institutions to channel US$2.7 billion provided by the Kazakh government into important sectors of Kazakhstan’s economy.<ref name=EBRDprrp>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The partnership will boost investment and drive forward reforms in the country.[[67]](#cite_note-67) As of May 2014, Kazakhstan attracted $190 billion in gross foreign investments since its independence in 1991 and it leads the CIS countries in terms of FDI attracted per capita.<ref name=AstanaT>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> One of the factors that attract foreign direct investments is country's political stability. According to the World Bank's report, Kazakhstan is among the top 40% of countries in the world that are considered the most politically stable and free of violence.<ref name=wgi>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

Kazakhstan also received high ratings in a survey conducted by [Ernst & Young](/wiki/Ernst_&_Young) in 2014. According to EY's 2014 Kazakhstan Attractiveness Survey, "Investor confidence in Kazakhstan’s potential is also at an all-time high with 47.3% of respondents expecting Kazakhstan to become increasingly attractive over the next three years."<ref name=EY2014>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The high level of economic, political and social stability and Kazakhstan’s competitive corporate tax rate were the primary reasons mentioned for its attractiveness.[[68]](#cite_note-68)

### Bond market[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

In October 2014, Kazakhstan introduced its first overseas dollar bonds in 14 years.<ref name=bloom1>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> Kazakhstan issued $2.5 billion of 10- and 30-year bonds on 5 October 2014, in what was the nation’s first dollar-denominated overseas sale since 2000.[[69]](#cite_note-69) Kazakhstan sold $1.5 billion of 10-year dollar bonds to yield 1.5 percentage points above midswaps and $1 billion of 30-year debt at 2 percentage points over midswaps.[[69]](#cite_note-69) The country drew bids for $11 billion.[[69]](#cite_note-69)

### Economic competitiveness[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

Kazakhstan achieved its goal of entering the top 50 most competitive countries in 2013, and has maintained its position in the 2014–2015 World Economic Forum [Global Competitiveness Report](/wiki/Global_Competitiveness_Report) that was published at the beginning of September 2014.<ref name=AT1>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> Kazakhstan is ahead of other states in the [CIS](/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Independent_States) in almost all of the report’s pillars of competitiveness, including institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market development, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication and innovation, lagging behind only in the category of health and primary education.[[70]](#cite_note-70) The Global Competitiveness Index gives a score from 1 to 7 in each of these pillars, and Kazakhstan earned an overall score of 4.4.[[70]](#cite_note-70)

### Housing market[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

The housing market of Kazakhstan has grown since 2010.<ref name=rank1>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> In 2013, the total housing area in Kazakhstan amounted to 336.1 million square meters.[[71]](#cite_note-71) The housing stock rose over the year to 32.7 million squares, which is nearly 11% increase.[[71]](#cite_note-71) Between 2012 and 2013, the living area per Kazakh citizen rose from 19.6 to 20.9 square meters.[[71]](#cite_note-71) The urban areas concentrate 62.5 percent of the country’s housing stock.[[71]](#cite_note-71)The UN’s recommended standard for housing stands at 30 square meters per person.[[71]](#cite_note-71) Kazakhstan will be able to reach the UN standards by 2019 or 2020, if in the medium term the housing growth rate remains within 7 percent.[[71]](#cite_note-71)

### "Nurly Zhol" economic policy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

On 11 November 2014, President of Kazakhstan [Nursultan Nazarbayev](/wiki/Nursultan_Nazarbayev) delivered an unexpected state-of-the-nation address in Astana at an extended session of the Political Council of the Nur Otan party, introducing a "Nurly Zhol" (Bright Path), a new economic policy that implies massive state investment in infrastructure over the next several years.<ref name=NZ1>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref> The "Nurly Zhol" policy is accepted as preventive measures needed to help steer the economy towards sustainable growth in the context of the modern global economic and geopolitical challenges, such as the 25%-reduction in the oil price, reciprocal sanctions between the West and Russia over Ukraine, etc.[[72]](#cite_note-72) The policy embraces all aspects of economic growth, including finances, industry and social welfare, but especially esemphasises investments into the development of infrastructure and construction works.[[72]](#cite_note-72) Given recent decreases in revenues from the export of raw materials, funds will be used from Kazakhstan’s National Fund.[[72]](#cite_note-72)

### Corruption[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

In 2005, the [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank) listed Kazakhstan as a corruption hotspot, on a par with [Angola](/wiki/Angola), [Bolivia](/wiki/Bolivia), [Kenya](/wiki/Kenya), [Libya](/wiki/Libya) and [Pakistan](/wiki/Pakistan).[[73]](#cite_note-73) In 2012, Kazakhstan ranked low in an index of the least corrupt countries[[74]](#cite_note-74) and the [World Economic Forum](/wiki/World_Economic_Forum) listed corruption as the biggest problem in doing business in the country.[[74]](#cite_note-74)The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Kazakh Anti-Corruption Agency signed a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in February 2015.<ref name=MLATfeb15>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Population_pyramid_Kazakhstan_2014.gif)[Population pyramid](/wiki/Population_pyramid), 2014 [thumb|](/wiki/File:Central_Asia_Ethnic_en.svg)[Central Asian](/wiki/Central_Asia) ethnolinguistic patchwork, 1992 [thumb|Kazakhstanis on a](/wiki/File:Dzhasybay_beach.jpg) [Lake Jasybay](/wiki/Lake_Jasybay) beach, [Pavlodar Region](/wiki/Pavlodar_Region) [thumb|Kazakh man on a horse with golden eagle. (Photo taken](/wiki/File:SB_-_Kazakh_man_on_horse_with_golden_eagle.jpg) [c.](/wiki/Circa) 1911–14.)

The [US Census Bureau](/wiki/US_Census_Bureau) International Database lists the current population of Kazakhstan as 15,460,484, while [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations) sources such as the UN Population Division give an estimate of 15,753,460.[Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed) Official estimates put the population of Kazakhstan at 16.455 million as of February 2011, of which 46% is rural and 54% is urban.[[75]](#cite_note-75) In 2013, Kazakhstan's population rose to 17,280,000 with a 1.7% growth rate over the past year according to the Kazakhstan Statistics Agency.[[76]](#cite_note-76) The 2009 population estimate is 6.8% higher than the population reported in the last census from January 1999. The decline in population that began after 1989 has been arrested and possibly reversed. Men and women make up 48.3% and 51.7% of the population, respectively.

### Ethnic groups[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

Ethnic [Kazakhs](/wiki/Kazakhs) are 63.1% of the population and ethnic [Russians in Kazakhstan](/wiki/Russians_in_Kazakhstan) are 23.7%.[[8]](#cite_note-8) Other groups include [Tatars](/wiki/Tatars) (1.3%), [Ukrainians](/wiki/Ukrainians) (2.1%), [Uzbeks](/wiki/Uzbeks) (2.8%), [Belarusians](/wiki/Belarusians), [Uyghurs](/wiki/Uyghur_people) (1.4%), [Azerbaijanis](/wiki/Azerbaijanis), [Poles](/wiki/Poles_in_the_former_Soviet_Union),[[77]](#cite_note-77) and [Lithuanians](/wiki/Lithuanians). Some minorities such as Germans (1.1%), Ukrainians, Koreans, [Chechens](/wiki/Chechens),[[78]](#cite_note-78) [Meskhetian Turks](/wiki/Meskhetian_Turks), and Russian political opponents of the regime had been [deported to Kazakhstan](/wiki/Population_transfer_in_the_Soviet_Union) in the 1930s and 1940s by Stalin. Some of the largest Soviet [labour camps](/wiki/Labour_camp) ([Gulag](/wiki/Gulag)) existed in the country.[[79]](#cite_note-79) Significant Russian immigration also connected with [Virgin Lands Campaign](/wiki/Virgin_Lands_Campaign) and [Soviet space program](/wiki/Soviet_space_program) during the [Khrushchev](/wiki/Nikita_Khrushchev) era.[[80]](#cite_note-80) In 1989, ethnic Russians were 37.8% of the population and Kazakhs held a majority in only 7 of the 20 regions of the country. Before 1991 there were about 1 million [Germans in Kazakhstan](/wiki/Germans_of_Kazakhstan), mostly descendants of the [Volga Germans](/wiki/Volga_Germans) deported to Kazakhstan during World War II. After the [breakup of the Soviet Union](/wiki/Breakup_of_the_Soviet_Union), most of them emigrated to Germany.[[81]](#cite_note-81) Most members of the smaller [Pontian Greek](/wiki/Pontian_Greek) minority have emigrated to Greece. In the late 1930s thousands of [Koreans](/wiki/Koreans) in the Soviet Union were [deported to Central Asia](/wiki/Deportation_of_Koreans_in_the_Soviet_Union). These people are now known as [Koryo-saram](/wiki/Koryo-saram).

The 1990s were marked by the emigration of many of the country's [Russians](/wiki/Russians) and [Volga Germans](/wiki/Volga_Germans), a process that began in the 1970s. This has made indigenous Kazakhs the largest ethnic group. Additional factors in the increase in the Kazakh population are higher birthrates and [immigration of ethnic Kazakhs](/wiki/Oralman) from China, [Mongolia](/wiki/Mongolia), and Russia.

{| class="wikitable" |+ **Population of Kazakhstan according to ethnic group 1926–2009** |- style="background:#e0e0e0;" ! rowspan=2 | Ethnic  
group ! colspan=2 | census 19261 ! colspan=2 | census 19702 ! colspan=2 | census 19893 ! colspan=2 | census 19994 ! colspan=2 | census 20095 |- style="background:#e0e0e0;" ! Number ! % ! Number ! % ! Number ! % ! Number ! % ! Number ! % |- | [Kazakhs](/wiki/Kazakhs) | style="text-align:right;"| 3,627,612 | style="text-align:right;"| 58.5 | style="text-align:right;"| 4,161,164 | style="text-align:right;"| 32.4 | style="text-align:right;"| 6,534,616 | style="text-align:right;"| 39.7 | style="text-align:right;"| 8,011,452 | style="text-align:right;"| 53.5 | style="text-align:right;"| 10,096,763 | style="text-align:right;"| 63.1 |- | [Russians](/wiki/Russians) | style="text-align:right;"| 1,275,055 | style="text-align:right;"| 20.6 | style="text-align:right;"| 5,499,826 | style="text-align:right;"| 42.8 | style="text-align:right;"| 6,227,549 | style="text-align:right;"| 37.8 | style="text-align:right;"| 4,480,675 | style="text-align:right;"| 29.9 | style="text-align:right;"| 3,793,764 | style="text-align:right;"| 23.7 |- | [Uzbeks](/wiki/Uzbeks)

| style="text-align:right;"| 129,407 | style="text-align:right;"| 2.1 | style="text-align:right;"| 207,514 | style="text-align:right;"| 1.6 | style="text-align:right;"| 332,017 | style="text-align:right;"| 2.0 | style="text-align:right;"| 370,765 | style="text-align:right;"| 2.5 | style="text-align:right;"| 456,997 | style="text-align:right;"| 2.8 |- | [Ukrainians](/wiki/Ukrainians) | style="text-align:right;"| 860,201 | style="text-align:right;"| 13.9 | style="text-align:right;"| 930,158 | style="text-align:right;"| 7.2 | style="text-align:right;"| 896,240 | style="text-align:right;"| 5.4 | style="text-align:right;"| 547,065 | style="text-align:right;"| 3.7 | style="text-align:right;"| 333,031 | style="text-align:right;"| 2.1 |- | [Germans](/wiki/Germans) | style="text-align:right;"| 51,094 | style="text-align:right;"| 0.8 | style="text-align:right;"| 839,649 | style="text-align:right;"| 6.5 | style="text-align:right;"| 957,518 | style="text-align:right;"| 5.8 | style="text-align:right;"| 353,462 | style="text-align:right;"| 2.4 | style="text-align:right;"| 178,409 | style="text-align:right;"| 1.1 |- | colspan=19 | 1 Source:[[82]](#cite_note-82) 2 Source:[[83]](#cite_note-83) 3 Source:[[84]](#cite_note-84) 4 Source:[[85]](#cite_note-85) 5 Source:[[8]](#cite_note-8)|}

### Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Kazakhstan is officially a bilingual country. [Kazakh](/wiki/Kazakh_language), a [Turkic](/wiki/Turkic_languages) language spoken natively by 64.4% of the population, has the status of "state" language, whereas [Russian](/wiki/Russian_language), which is spoken by most Kazakhstanis, is declared an "official" language, and is used routinely in business, government, and inter-ethnic communication, although Kazakh is slowly replacing it.[[86]](#cite_note-86) The government announced in January 2015 that the [Latin alphabet](/wiki/Latin_alphabet) will replace [Cyrillic](/wiki/Cyrillic) as the writing system for the Kazakh language by 2025.[[86]](#cite_note-86) Other minority languages spoken in Kazakhstan include [Uzbek](/wiki/Uzbek_language), [Ukrainian](/wiki/Ukrainian_language), [Uyghur](/wiki/Uyghur_language), [Kyrgyz](/wiki/Kyrgyz_language), and [Tatar](/wiki/Tatar_language). English, as well as Turkish, have gained popularity among younger people since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Education across Kazakhstan is conducted in either Kazakh, Russian, or both.[[87]](#cite_note-87)

### Urban centres[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

[Template:Largest cities of Kazakhstan](/wiki/Template:Largest_cities_of_Kazakhstan)

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:Bar box](/wiki/Template:Bar_box)

[thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Zenkov_cathedral.jpg)[Eastern Orthodoxy](/wiki/Eastern_Orthodoxy) is the second largest religion in Kazakhstan. According to the 2009 Census, 70% of the population is [Muslim](/wiki/Muslim), 26% [Christian](/wiki/Christian), 0.1% [Buddhists](/wiki/Buddhism), 0.2% others (mostly [Jews](/wiki/Judaism)), and 3% [Irreligious](/wiki/Irreligion), while 0.5% chose not to answer.[[9]](#cite_note-9) According to its Constitution, Kazakhstan is a secular state.

Religious freedoms are guaranteed by Article 39 of Kazakhstan's Constitution. Article 39 states: "Human rights and freedoms shall not be restricted in any way." Article 14 prohibits "discrimination on religious basis" and Article 19 ensures that everyone has the "right to determine and indicate or not to indicate his/her ethnic, party and religious affiliation." The Constitutional Council recently affirmed these rights by ruling that a proposed law limiting the rights of certain individuals to practice their religion was declared unconstitutional.

[Islam](/wiki/Islam) is the largest religion in Kazakhstan, followed by [Orthodox Christianity](/wiki/Orthodox_Church). After decades of [religious suppression by the Soviet Union](/wiki/Religion_in_the_Soviet_Union), the coming of independence witnessed a surge in expression of ethnic identity, partly through religion. The free practice of [religious beliefs](/wiki/Religion) and the establishment of full freedom of religion led to an increase of religious activity. Hundreds of [mosques](/wiki/Mosque), [churches](/wiki/Church_(building)), and other religious structures were built in the span of a few years, with the number of religious associations rising from 670 in 1990 to 4,170 today.[[88]](#cite_note-88) Some figures show that [non-denominational Muslims](/wiki/Non-denominational_Muslims)[[89]](#cite_note-89) form the majority, while others indicate that most Muslims in the country are [Sunnis](/wiki/Sunni_Islam) following the [Hanafi](/wiki/Hanafi) school. These include ethnic [Kazakhs](/wiki/Kazakhs), who constitute about 60% of the population, as well as ethnic [Uzbeks](/wiki/Uzbeks), [Uighurs](/wiki/Uighurs), and [Tatars](/wiki/Tatars).[[90]](#cite_note-90) Less than 1% are part of the Sunni [Shafi`i](/wiki/Shafi%60i) school (primarily [Chechens](/wiki/Chechens)). There are also some [Ahmadi](/wiki/Ahmadiyya) Muslims.[[91]](#cite_note-91) There are a total of 2,300 mosques,[[88]](#cite_note-88) all of them are affiliated with the "Spiritual Association of Muslims of Kazakhstan", headed by a supreme [mufti](/wiki/Mufti).[[92]](#cite_note-92) Unaffiliated mosques are forcefully closed.[[93]](#cite_note-93) [Eid al-Adha](/wiki/Eid_al-Adha) is recognized as a national holiday.[[88]](#cite_note-88) One quarter of the population is Russian Orthodox, including ethnic Russians, Ukrainians and Belorussians.[[94]](#cite_note-94) Other Christian groups include [Roman Catholics](/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) and [Protestants](/wiki/Protestantism).[[90]](#cite_note-90) There are a total of 258 Orthodox churches, 93 Catholic churches, and over 500 Protestant churches and prayer houses. The Russian Orthodox [Christmas](/wiki/Christmas) is recognized as a national holiday in Kazakhstan.[[88]](#cite_note-88) Other religious groups include Judaism, the [Bahá'í Faith](/wiki/Bahá'í_Faith), [Hinduism](/wiki/Hinduism), [Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhism), and [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints](/wiki/The_Church_of_Jesus_Christ_of_Latter-day_Saints).[[90]](#cite_note-90) According to the 2009 Census data, there are very few Christians outside the Slavic and Germanic ethnic groups:[[95]](#cite_note-95)

### Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|](/wiki/File:L.N.Gumilyov_Eurasian_National_University.JPG)[L.N.Gumilyov Eurasian National University](/wiki/L.N.Gumilyov_Eurasian_National_University) in Astana is one of Kazakhstan's top universities.

Education is universal and mandatory through to the [secondary level](/wiki/Secondary_education) and the [adult literacy rate](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_literacy_rate) is 99.5%.[[96]](#cite_note-96) Education consists of three main phases: [primary education](/wiki/Primary_education) (forms 1–4), basic general education (forms 5–9) and senior level education (forms 10–11 or 12) divided into continued general education and vocational education. Vocational Education usually lasts 3 or 4 years.[[97]](#cite_note-97) (Primary education is preceded by one year of pre-school education.) These levels can be followed in one institution or in different ones (e.g., primary school, then secondary school). Recently, several secondary schools, specialized schools, [magnet schools](/wiki/Magnet_school), [gymnasiums](/wiki/Gymnasium_(school)), [lyceums](/wiki/Lyceum#Lyceums_in_today's_education) and linguistic and technical gymnasiums have been founded. Secondary professional education is offered in special professional or [technical schools](/wiki/Technical_school), lyceums or colleges and [vocational schools](/wiki/Vocational_school).[[96]](#cite_note-96) At present, there are [universities](/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Kazakhstan), [academies](/wiki/Academy) and [institutes](/wiki/Institute), [conservatories](/wiki/College_or_university_school_of_music), higher schools and higher colleges. There are three main levels: basic [higher education](/wiki/Higher_education) that provides the fundamentals of the chosen field of study and leads to the award of the [Bachelor's degree](/wiki/Bachelor's_degree); specialized higher education after which students are awarded the Specialist's Diploma; and scientific-pedagogical higher education which leads to the [Master's Degree](/wiki/Master's_Degree). [Postgraduate](/wiki/Postgraduate) education leads to the [*Kandidat Nauk*](/wiki/Kandidat_Nauk) ("Candidate of Sciences") and the Doctor of Sciences (Ph.D.). With the adoption of the Laws on Education and on Higher Education, a private sector has been established and several private institutions have been licensed.

Over 2,500 students in Kazakhstan have applied for student loans totaling about $9 million. The largest number of student loans come from Almaty, Astana and Kyzylorda.[[98]](#cite_note-98) [thumb|right|Graduation day of a](/wiki/File:Graduation_Day_of_a_Bolashak_Scholar_from_Kazakhstan.jpg) [*Bolashak*](/wiki/Bolashak) scholar

The training and skills development programs in Kazakhstan are also supported by international organizations. For example, on 30 March 2015, the World Banks' Group of Executive Directors approved a $100 million loan for the Skills and Job project in Kazakhstan.<ref name=WB11>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> The project aims to provide relevant training to unemployed, unproductively self-employed, and current employees in need of training.[[99]](#cite_note-99)

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Riders in traditional dress demonstrate Kazakhstan's](/wiki/File:Catchthegirl.JPG) [equestrian](/wiki/Equestrianism) culture by playing a [kissing](/wiki/Kiss) game, [*Kyz kuu*](/wiki/Kyz_kuu) ("Chase the Girl"), one of a number of traditional games played on horseback[[100]](#cite_note-100) [Template:Refimprove section](/wiki/Template:Refimprove_section)

Before the Russian colonization, the Kazakhs had a highly developed culture based on their nomadic pastoral economy. [Islam](/wiki/Islam) was introduced into the region with the arrival of the [Arabs](/wiki/Arabs) in the 8th century. It initially took hold in the southern parts of [Turkestan](/wiki/Turkestan) and spread northward.[[101]](#cite_note-101) The [Samanids](/wiki/Samanids) helped the religion take root through zealous missionary work. The [Golden Horde](/wiki/Golden_Horde) further propagated Islam amongst the tribes in the region during the 14th century.[[102]](#cite_note-102) [thumb|left|upright|](/wiki/File:AbaiPainting.jpg)[Abai Qunanbaiuli](/wiki/Abai_Qunanbaiuli), Kazakh poet, composer and philosopher

Because livestock was central to the Kazakhs' traditional lifestyle, most of their nomadic practices and customs relate in some way to livestock. Kazakhs have historically been very passionate about horse-riding. [Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

Kazakhstan is home to a large number of prominent contributors to literature, science and philosophy: [Abay Qunanbayuli](/wiki/Abay_Qunanbayuli), [Mukhtar Auezov](/wiki/Mukhtar_Auezov), [Gabit Musirepov](/wiki/Gabit_Musirepov), [Kanysh Satpayev](/wiki/Kanysh_Satpayev), [Mukhtar Shakhanov](/wiki/Mukhtar_Shakhanov), [Saken Seyfullin](/wiki/Saken_Seyfullin), [Jambyl Jabayev](/wiki/Jambyl_Jabayev), among many others.

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Dzhuchi_khan_mausoleum.jpg)[Jochi](/wiki/Jochi) Mausoleum, [Karagandy Region](/wiki/Karagandy_Region), Kazakhstan

Tourism is a rapidly growing industry in Kazakhstan and it is joining the international tourism networking. In 2010, Kazakhstan joined The Region Initiative (TRI) which is a Tri-regional Umbrella of Tourism related organisations. TRI is functioning as a link between three regions: South Asia, Central Asia and Eastern Europe. Armenia, Bangladesh, India, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Nepal, Tajikistan, Russia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Ukraine are now Partners and Kazakhstan is linked with other South Asian, Eastern European and Central Asian countries in tourism market.

### Cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

In the national cuisine, livestock meat can be cooked in a variety of ways and is usually served with a wide assortment of traditional bread products. Refreshments often include black tea and traditional milk-derived drinks such as [ayran](/wiki/Ayran), [shubat](/wiki/Shubat) and [kymyz](/wiki/Kymyz). A traditional Kazakh dinner involves a multitude of appetisers on the table, followed by a soup and one or two main courses such as [pilaf](/wiki/Pilaf) and [beshbarmak](/wiki/Beshbarmak). They also drink their national beverage, which consists of fermented mare's milk. [Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

### Sport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|170px|](/wiki/File:Alexandre_Vinokourov_TR_2011.jpg)[Alexander Vinokourov](/wiki/Alexander_Vinokourov), [Template:Ct](/wiki/Template:Ct) rider [thumb|](/wiki/File:Nik_Antropov_Jets_2012-02-11.JPG)[Nik Antropov](/wiki/Nik_Antropov), a professional ice hockey player from Kazakhstan [thumb|](/wiki/File:Astana_Arena_(inside_interior).JPG)[Astana Arena](/wiki/Astana_Arena), a national stadium Kazakhstan Kazakhstan has developed itself as a formidable sports-force on the world arena in the following fields: bandy, boxing, chess, kickboxing, skiing, gymnastics, water polo, cycling, martial arts, heavy athletics, horse-riding, triathlon, track hurdles, sambo, Greco-Roman wrestling and billiards. The following are all well-known Kazakhstani athletes and world-championship medalists: [Bekzat Sattarkhanov](/wiki/Bekzat_Sattarkhanov), [Vassiliy Jirov](/wiki/Vassiliy_Jirov), [Alexander Vinokourov](/wiki/Alexander_Vinokourov), [Bulat Jumadilov](/wiki/Bulat_Jumadilov), [Mukhtarkhan Dildabekov](/wiki/Mukhtarkhan_Dildabekov), [Olga Shishigina](/wiki/Olga_Shishigina), [Andrey Kashechkin](/wiki/Andrey_Kashechkin), [Aliya Yussupova](/wiki/Aliya_Yussupova), [Dmitriy Karpov](/wiki/Dmitriy_Karpov), [Darmen Sadvakasov](/wiki/Darmen_Sadvakasov), [Yeldos Ikhsangaliyev](/wiki/Yeldos_Ikhsangaliyev), [Askhat Zhitkeyev](/wiki/Askhat_Zhitkeyev), [Maxim Rakov](/wiki/Maxim_Rakov), [Aidar Kabimollayev](/wiki/Aidar_Kabimollayev), [Yermakhan Ibraimov](/wiki/Yermakhan_Ibraimov), [Vladimir Smirnov](/wiki/Vladimir_Smirnov_(skier)), [Ilya Ilin](/wiki/Ilya_Ilin), [Denis Ten](/wiki/Denis_Ten).

In December 2014, the outgoing head of Kazakhstan's football federation, Adilbek Zhaksybekov, said Kazakhstan was planning bidding to host 2026 [FIFA](/wiki/FIFA) World Cup.<ref name=soccer>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

[2011 Asian Winter Games](/wiki/2011_Asian_Winter_Games)

Hosted by Kazakhstan.

[thumb|right|](/wiki/File:2012_Rostelecom_Cup_01d_618_Denis_TEN.JPG)[Denis Ten](/wiki/Denis_Ten) in 2012

[Figure skating](/wiki/Figure_skating)

[Denis Ten](/wiki/Denis_Ten) won bronze at the [2014 Winter Olympics](/wiki/2014_Winter_Olympics), and a silver and bronze medal at the [2013 World Figure Skating Championships](/wiki/2013_World_Figure_Skating_Championships) and [2015 World Figure Skating Championships](/wiki/2015_World_Figure_Skating_Championships) respectively.[[103]](#cite_note-103); [Football](/wiki/Association_football) : The most popular sport in Kazakhstan. The [Football Federation of Kazakhstan](/wiki/Football_Federation_of_Kazakhstan) (FFK; [Template:Lang-kz](/wiki/Template:Lang-kz)) is the sport's national governing body. The FFK organises the [men's](/wiki/Kazakhstan_national_football_team), [women's](/wiki/Kazakhstan_women's_national_football_team) and [Futsal](/wiki/Futsal) national teams.

[Ice hockey](/wiki/Ice_hockey)

The [Kazakhstani national ice hockey team](/wiki/Kazakhstan_men's_national_ice_hockey_team) has competed in ice hockey in the 1998 and 2006 Winter Olympics as well as in the 2006 Men's World Ice Hockey Championships.

[Cycling](/wiki/Cycling)

Cycling is a popular activity throughout the country. Kazakhstan's most famous cyclist is [Alexander Vinokourov](/wiki/Alexander_Vinokourov). [Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

[Boxing](/wiki/Boxing)

Since independence in 1991, Kazakhstan's boxers have won many medals, quickly moving up the all-time Olympic boxing medal table from last to a current 11th place. Three Kazakh boxers, [Bakhtiyar Artayev](/wiki/Bakhtiyar_Artayev), [Vassiliy Jirov](/wiki/Vassiliy_Jirov) and [Serik Sapiyev](/wiki/Serik_Sapiyev), have won the [Val Barker Trophy](/wiki/Val_Barker_Trophy), leaving Kazakhstan second (after the United States) in total number of victories.

World [IBF](/wiki/International_Boxing_Federation), [WBO](/wiki/World_Boxing_Organization) and [IBO](/wiki/International_Boxing_Organization) heavyweight champion [Vladimir Klitschko](/wiki/Vladimir_Klitschko) was born in Kazakhstan in 1976. Additionally, undefeated middleweight [Gennady Golovkin](/wiki/Gennady_Golovkin) holds the [WBA](/wiki/World_Boxing_Association) and [IBO](/wiki/International_Boxing_Organisation) titles, as well as the [WBC](/wiki/World_Boxing_Council) interim title. He is also currently on a streak of 20 consecutive knockout victories.

[thumb|right|](/wiki/File:Bandy_in_Medeu_Kazakhstan.JPG)[Bandy at the 2011 Asian Winter Games](/wiki/Bandy_at_the_2011_Asian_Winter_Games), minutes before Kazakhstan winning the title

[Bandy](/wiki/Bandy)

The [Kazakhstan national bandy team](/wiki/Kazakhstan_national_bandy_team) is among the best in the world and has won the bronze medal at the [Bandy World Championship](/wiki/Bandy_World_Championship) many times, including the last time in 2015. In the [2011 Bandy World Championship](/wiki/2011_Bandy_World_Championship), the team reached extra time in the semifinal before their defeat by Sweden. [The 2012 Championship](/wiki/2012_Bandy_World_Championship) was hosted by Kazakhstan. Again there was a dramatic semifinal against Sweden, as Kazakhstan was leading 5–3 with a few minutes remaining and finally losing in a penalty shoot-out. At the [2011 Asian Winter Games](/wiki/Bandy_at_the_2011_Asian_Winter_Games), the team won the gold medal. Bandy is being developed in 10 of the country's 17 administrative divisions (8 of the 14 regions and 2 of the 3 cities which are situated inside of but are not part of regions).[[104]](#cite_note-104) [Akzhaiyk](/wiki/Akzhaiyk) from [Oral](/wiki/Oral,_Kazakhstan), however, is the only professional club. At the [2017 Winter Universiade](/wiki/Bandy_at_the_Winter_Universiade) in [Almaty](/wiki/Almaty), bandy will feature as a demonstration sport for the first time.[[105]](#cite_note-105)

[Judo](/wiki/Judo)

Askhat Zhitkeyev won silver at the 2008 Olympics and Yeldos Smetov won the 2010 Junior World Championships in the [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) category.

[Olympic weightlifting](/wiki/Olympic_weightlifting)

Zulfiya Chinshanlo won a gold medal at the 2012 London Olympics. [Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

### Film[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|International Astana Action Film Festival](/wiki/File:Red_Carpet_at_AIAFF.jpg) Kazakhstan's film industry is run through the state-owned [Kazakhfilm](/wiki/Kazakhfilm) studios based in Almaty. The studio has produced award winning movies such as [*Myn Bala*](/wiki/Myn_Bala), [*Harmony Lessons*](/wiki/Harmony_Lessons), and [*Shal*](/wiki/Imdbtitle:2182115). Kazakhstan is host of the [International Astana Action Film Festival](/wiki/International_Astana_Action_Film_Festival) and the [Eurasian Film Festival](https://web.archive.org/web/20150608065617/http://eurasiaiff.kz/en/) held annually. Hollywood director [Timur Bekmambetov](/wiki/Timur_Bekmambetov) is from Kazakhstan and has become active in bridging Hollywood to the Kazakhstan film industry. [Template:Citation needed](/wiki/Template:Citation_needed)

Kazakhstan journalist Artur Platonov won Best Script for his documentary "Sold Souls" about Kazakhstan's contribution to the struggle against terrorism at the 2013 Cannes Corporate Media and TV Awards.[[106]](#cite_note-106)[[107]](#cite_note-107) Serik Aprymov’s *Little Brother* (*Bauyr*) won at the Central and Eastern Europe Film Festival [goEast](/wiki/GoEast) from the German Federal Foreign Office.<ref name=EEC>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

### Media[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

Kazakhstan is ranked 161 out of 180 countries on the [World Press Freedom Index](/wiki/World_Press_Freedom_Index), compiled by [Reporters Without Borders](/wiki/Reporters_Without_Borders).[[108]](#cite_note-108) A mid-March 2002 [court order](/wiki/Court_order), with the government as a [plaintiff](/wiki/Plaintiff), stated that [*Respublika*](/wiki/Respublika_(Kazakh_newspaper)) were to stop printing for three months.[[109]](#cite_note-109) The order was evaded by printing under other titles, such as *Not That Respublika*.[[109]](#cite_note-109) In early 2014, a court also issued a cease publication order to the small-circulation Assandi-Times newspaper, saying it was a part of the Respublika group. Human Rights Watch said: "this absurd case displays the lengths to which Kazakh authorities are willing to go to bully critical media into silence."[[110]](#cite_note-110) With support from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL), the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative opened a media support center in Almaty to bolster free expression and journalistic rights in Kazakhstan.<ref name=aba>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

### UNESCO World Heritage sites[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

Kazakhstan has three cultural and natural heritages on the [UNESCO](/wiki/UNESCO) World Heritage list: the [Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yassaui](/wiki/Mausoleum_of_Khoja_Ahmed_Yasawi), Petroglyphs within the Archaeological Landscape of [Tamgaly](/wiki/Tamgaly), and the [Korgalzhyn](/wiki/Korgalzhyn) and Nauryzumsky reserves.<ref name=UNESCOkz>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

### Public holidays[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

Source: [Template:Lower](/wiki/Template:Lower) [Template:Lower](/wiki/Template:Lower)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **English name** | **Local name/s** | **Notes** |
| 1–2 January | [New Year's Day](/wiki/New_Year's_Day) | Жаңа жыл (*Jaña jıl*) Новый Год (*Novy God*) |  |
| 7 January | Eastern Orthodox [Christmas](/wiki/Christmas) | Рождество Христово (*Rojdestvo Xrïstovo* / *Rozhdestvo Khristovo*) | from 2007 official holiday |
| 8 March | [International Women's Day](/wiki/International_Women's_Day) | Халықаралық әйелдер күні (*Xalıqaralıq äyälder küni*) Международный женский день (*Mezhdunarodny zhensky den*) |  |
| 21–23 March | [Nauryz Meyramy](/wiki/Nowruz) | Наурыз мейрамы (*Nawrız meyramı*) | Originally the [Persian new year](/wiki/Nowruz), is traditionally a springtime holiday marking the beginning of a new year. |
| 1 May | Kazakhstan People's [Unity Day](/wiki/May_Day) | Қазақстан халқының бірлігі мерекесі |  |
| 7 May | Defender of the Fatherland Day | Отан Қорғаушы күні (*Otan Qorgaushy kuny*) День Защитника Отечества (*Den Zashitnika Otechestva*) | from 2013 official holiday |
| 9 May | [Great Patriotic War Against Fascism Victory Day](/wiki/Victory_Day_(Eastern_Europe)) | Жеңіс күні (*Jeñis küni*) День Победы (*Den Pobedy*) | A holiday in the former Soviet Union carried over to present-day Kazakhstan and other former republics (Except Baltic countries). |
| 6 July | Capital City Day | Астана күні (*Astana küni*) День столицы (*Den stolitsy*) | Birthday of the First President |
| 30 August | [Constitution Day](/wiki/Constitution_Day) | Қазақстан Республикасының Конституциясы күні День Конституции Республики Казахстан (*Den Konstitutsiy Respubliki Kazakhstan*) |  |
| Last day of [Hajj](/wiki/Hajj) In 2013 October 15 | [Qurban Ayt](/wiki/Eid_al-Adha)a | Құрбан айт (*Qurban ayt*) Курбан айт (*Kurban ayt*) | from 2007 official holiday. |
| 1 December | First President Day | Тұңғыш Президент күні (*Tungysh President kuny*) День Первого Президента (*Den Pervogo Presidenta*) | from 2013 official holiday |
| 16–17 December | [Independence Day](/wiki/Independence_Day) | Тәуелсіздік күні (*Täwelsizdik küni*) День независимости (*Den nezavisimosti*) | Independence From The [Soviet Union](/wiki/Soviet_Union) |

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## Membership of international organizations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=42)]

Kazakhstan's membership of international organizations includes:

* [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations)
* [Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council](/wiki/Euro-Atlantic_Partnership_Council)
* [Commonwealth of Independent States](/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Independent_States) (CIS)
* [Shanghai Cooperation Organisation](/wiki/Shanghai_Cooperation_Organisation)
* [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe](/wiki/Organization_for_Security_and_Co-operation_in_Europe) (OSCE)
* [Individual Partnership Action Plan](/wiki/Individual_Partnership_Action_Plan), with [NATO](/wiki/NATO), Ukraine, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, [Moldova](/wiki/Moldova), [Bosnia and Herzegovina](/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina) and [Montenegro](/wiki/Montenegro).
* [Turkic Council](/wiki/Turkic_Council) and the [TÜRKSOY](/wiki/TÜRKSOY) community. (The national language, [Kazakh](/wiki/Kazakh_language), is related to the other [Turkic languages](/wiki/Turkic_languages), with which it shares cultural and [historical ties](/wiki/Turkic_peoples).)
* [UNESCO](/wiki/UNESCO), where Kazakhstan is a member of its [World Heritage Committee](/wiki/World_Heritage_Committee).<ref name=UNESCO>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>
* [Nuclear Suppliers Group](/wiki/Nuclear_Suppliers_Group) as a participating government.

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=43)]

[Template:Portal](/wiki/Template:Portal) [Template:Div col](/wiki/Template:Div_col)

* [Outline of Kazakhstan](/wiki/Outline_of_Kazakhstan)
* [Index of Kazakhstan-related articles](/wiki/Index_of_Kazakhstan-related_articles)
* [Demography of Central Asia](/wiki/Demography_of_Central_Asia)
* [History of Germans in Russia, Ukraine and the Soviet Union](/wiki/History_of_Germans_in_Russia,_Ukraine_and_the_Soviet_Union)
* [Internet in Kazakhstan](/wiki/Internet_in_Kazakhstan)
* [Kazpost](/wiki/Kazpost), the national postal service
* [Kazakhstan in popular culture](/wiki/Kazakhstan_in_popular_culture) (including [Borat](/wiki/Borat), the character and satirical film with an intentionally inaccurate portrayal of Kazakhstanis and Kazakhstan, actually filmed in [Romania](/wiki/Romania))
* [LGBT rights in Kazakhstan](/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_Kazakhstan)
* [Samruk-Kazyna](/wiki/Samruk-Kazyna), the state's [sovereign wealth fund](/wiki/Sovereign_wealth_fund)
* [Telecommunications in Kazakhstan](/wiki/Telecommunications_in_Kazakhstan)

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## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=44)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## Further reading[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=45)]

[Template:Refbegin](/wiki/Template:Refbegin)

* [Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)
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## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=46)]

[Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

### General[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=47)]

* [Caspian Pipeline Controversy](http://repository.library.georgetown.edu/handle/10822/552643) from the [Dean Peter Krogh Foreign Affairs Digital Archives](http://repository.library.georgetown.edu/handle/10822/552494)
* [Country Profile](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/country_profiles/1298071.stm) from [BBC News](/wiki/BBC_News).
* [Template:CIA World Factbook link](/wiki/Template:CIA_World_Factbook_link)
* [Kazakhstan](http://www.state.gov/p/sca/ci/kz/) information from the [United States Department of State](/wiki/United_States_Department_of_State)
* [Portals to the World](https://web.archive.org/web/20100309085822/http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/amed/kazakhstan/kazakhstan.html) from the United States [Library of Congress](/wiki/Library_of_Congress).
* [Kazakhstan](http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/for/kazakhstan.htm) at *UCB Libraries GovPubs*.
* [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan](http://mfa.kz/)
* [World Bank Data & Statistics for Kazakhstan](http://www.worldbank.org.kz/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/ECAEXT/KAZAKHSTANEXTN/0,,contentMDK:20212143~menuPK:361895~pagePK:1497618~piPK:217854~theSitePK:361869,00.html)
* [Kazakhstan Internet Encyclopedia](http://en.encyclopedia.kz/)
* [Kazakhstan at 20 years of independence, The Economist, Dec 17th 2011](http://www.economist.com/node/21541853)
* ["Blowing the lid off" – Unrest in Kazakhstan, The Economist, Dec 20th 2011](http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2011/12/unrest-kazakhstan)
* [The Region Initiative (TRI)](http://www.theregionaltourism.org/)
* [Template:Dmoz](/wiki/Template:Dmoz)
* [Template:Wikiatlas](/wiki/Template:Wikiatlas)
* [Template:Osmrelation-inline](/wiki/Template:Osmrelation-inline)
* [Country Facts](http://www.kazakhstandiscovery.com/kazakhstan-facts.html) from [Kazakhstan Discovery](http://www.kazakhstandiscovery.com/)
* [2008 Human Rights Report: Kazakhstan. Department of State; Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/sca/119135.htm)
* [Key Development Forecasts for Kazakhstan](http://www.ifs.du.edu/ifs/frm_CountryProfile.aspx?Country=KZ) from [International Futures](/wiki/International_Futures).

### Government[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=48)]

* [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan](http://www.mfa.kz/)
* [E-Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan](http://e.gov.kz/wps/portal?lang=en)
* [Government of Kazakhstan](http://en.government.kz/)
* [Chief of State and Cabinet Members](http://web.archive.org/web/20160101051159/https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/world-leaders-k/kazakhstan.html)

### Trade[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=49)]

* [World Bank Summary Trade Statistics Kazakhstan](http://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/Country/KAZ/Year/2012/Summary)

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[Template:Kazakhstan topics](/wiki/Template:Kazakhstan_topics)

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