

# KYRGYZSTAN

## Uzbeks

Activity: 1991-2000

### General notes

NA

### Movement start and end dates

- The Uzbek movement in Kyrgyzstan emerged when Kyrgyzstan was still part of the USSR (see Kyrgyz Uzbeks under Russia). In 1989, Kyrgyz Uzbeks demanded local autonomy from Moscow and some pressed for annexation of the Uzbek populated area in Kyrgyzstan by neighboring Uzbekistan. Such demands were raised, in particular, in the context of the Osh riots in 1990. The movement appears to have faded soon after.
- Minorities at Risk notes that demands for union with Uzbekistan or territorial autonomy have not been heard recently, and that demands have shifted to civil rights and greater Uzbek representation in the government.
- Writing in 2007, Fumagalli notes that Uzbeks are wary of any move that might be interpreted from part of the Kyrgyz elites as separatist or autonomist, and that even radical representatives of the Uzbek ethnic movement have gradually moderated their demands. Furthermore, Fumagalli (2007: 583) reports that in interviews conducted in 2003 and 2005, the number of Uzbeks advocating autonomy is practically zero.
- In the aftermath of two revolutions in Kyrgyzstan, there were rallies in 2006 and 2010 in Osh and Jalalabad with demands for the rights of the Uzbek minority (International Crisis Group 2010; Laruelle 2012). However, unlike in 1990, in 2010, the Uzbek minority leader Kadyrjan Batyrov explicitly stated that they did not demand autonomy and noted that their demands were limited to granting official status to the Uzbek language in the majority ethnic Uzbek areas (International Crisis Group 2010: 8).
- Part of the Kyrgyz elite continues to accuse the Uzbeks of separatist agitation. In particular, the mayor of Osh explained the riots in Osh in 2010 as a reaction to a secessionist coup attempt by ethnic Uzbeks. According to the International Crisis Group (2012: 7), this assertion should be dismissed, since the Uzbeks are no longer demanding autonomy. Since we lack a clear date when the self-determination claim was abandoned, we continue to code the movement in independent Kyrgyzstan (noting non-violent prior activity), and peg the end of the movement to 2000, following the 10-year rule. [start date: 1989; end date: 2000]

### Dominant claim

- According to Minorities at Risk and Fumagalli (2007: 572), Adalat, the major organization linked with the Uzbek movement, aimed at local autonomy for the Osh province and eventually integration with Uzbekistan. Melvin (2001: 180), on the other hand, reports that the Uzbeks only demanded autonomy. We were unable to establish which claim is dominant. Since there is evidence for a claim for outright separation from Kyrgyzstan and integration with Uzbekistan, and since this is more extreme compared to a claim for autonomy, we code an irredentist claim. [1991-2000: irredentist claim]

## **Independence claims**

NA

## **Irredentist claims**

- As noted above, the movement began in 1989. However, as Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan were part of the same state, claims before independence in 1991 would indicate a claim to merge with a neighboring republic. Therefore, the above noted irredentism only begins from both countries' independence in 1991. [start date: 1991; end date: 2000]

## **Claimed territory**

- The territory claimed by the Kyrgyz Uzbeks is the Osh region, which has traditionally been predominantly populated by Uzbeks (Rezvani 2013: 67; Fumagalli 2007). We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database (GADM 2019).

## **Sovereignty declarations**

NA

## **Separatist armed conflict**

- We found no reports of separatist violence, hence a NVIOLSD classification. [NVIOLSD]

## **Historical context**

- Beginning in the 1730, Central Asia was gradually incorporated into Russia. Confronted with a pan-Turkic nationalist movement, the Soviets introduced the policy of national delimitation, that is, the division of Central Asia into distinctive administrative units, designed to serve as national homelands for their titular populations (Melvin 2001: 167-169). National delimitation was completed with the elevation of the five Central Asian territories to full Republic status in 1936. For the Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan, this equaled an autonomy downgrade. According to Fumagalli (2007: 571): "While Uzbeks occupied a privileged position in Soviet Uzbekistan, they played a secondary role in the life of the neighbouring republics. Because they already enjoyed titular status in the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR), Kyrgyzstan's Uzbeks, or in fact all Uzbeks outside the Uzbek SSR, were not granted territorial autonomy." Moreover, "[following the principles of Soviet ethno-federalism, non-titular groups (co-ethnics living outside their alleged homeland) were not endowed with any form of special protection. This meant that, for example, while Uzbeks living outside the Uzbek SSR would enjoy cultural rights as individuals, they would not be granted the series of privileges that titular groups typically enjoyed (e.g. territorial autonomy, language protection)." Moreover, in September 1989 a new language law was adopted in Kyrgyzstan which makes Kyrgyz the state language and Russian the language of interethnic communication. The requirement to speak Kyrgyz is extended to all management and professional personnel (Huskey 1997: 677). [1989: cultural rights restriction]
- Note that in 1988 multi-candidate, contested elections were introduced throughout the Union, at all levels. This can be read as a measure of decentralization given that it reduced the degree to which local leaders are de-facto appointed by the center (Suny 1993: 461; also see Linz & Stepan 1992). However, this has limited consequences for the Uzbeks in the Kyrgyz SSR as they do not control an autonomous region. Thus, we do not code this as a concession.

## Concessions and restrictions

- Following an agreement signed in 1991, Uzbeks were to receive a share of the positions in the municipal administration of Osh (Minority Rights Group International). However, Minority Rights Group International notes that Uzbeks have continued to be almost completely excluded from government and administrative positions. Calls for raising Uzbek to official language status remain unheard (International Crisis Group 2012)
- Post-independence Kyrgyzstan saw some changes in the power of the regions and within a few years the emergence of a highly unitary state (Melvin 2001: 172). However, the Uzbeks constitute a minority in every district and regional governments are dominated by Kyrgyz (Minority Rights Group International). Thus, we do not code the changes in regional power.
- In October 1995 the state of emergency imposed on the Uzbek-populated Osh region was lifted (MAR). This is not coded as a concession since the autonomy status of the Uzbeks remained unchanged.

## Regional autonomy

- Kyrgyzstan has become increasingly centralized. The Uzbeks constitute a minority in every district and regional governments are dominated by Kyrgyz (Minority Rights Group International). Moreover, the Kyrgyz Uzbeks cannot be considered autonomous as the government posts are staffed by the ethnic Kyrgyz. Uzbeks have been systematically discriminated since the interethnic violence in 2010 (EPR; International Crisis Group 2010).

## De facto independence

NA

## Major territorial changes

- Kyrgyzstan attained independence in 1991, implying a host change. [1991: host change (new)]

## EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Uzbeks
<i>Scenario</i>	1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Uzbeks
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	70305000

## Power access

- We follow EPR. [powerless]

## Group size

- We follow EPR. [0.129]

## Regional concentration

- According to MRGI, the Kyrgyz Uzbeks “are concentrated mainly in the south and western parts of the country, especially the Ferghana valley and the three administrative provinces of Batken, Osh, and Jalal-Abad.” According to MAR, in 1990 > 75% of all Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan resided in that area (see gc7). According to MRGI, the Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan make up a majority in one province, Osh, but census data suggests otherwise: according to the 2009 census, only 28% of Osh’s population (approx. 1 million) was Uzbek. The figures for the two other regions are: Batken: 15% out of 430,000, Jalal-Abad: 24.8% out of 940,000. Overall, according to the 2009 census, 75% of all 768,000 Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan resided in the three named provinces, but they clearly made up less than 50% of the population.
  - o Note: Jalal-Abad was newly created in 1990 and Batken in 1999. Both were split from Osh province, thus earlier figures suggest that the share of the Uzbeks residing in the Osh region is much higher (approx. 60% in the 1990s compared to approx. 36% in the 2009 census).
- This is confirmed by Zokirov (2011: 247): “The proportion of Kyrgyz in Osh province rose from 56.7% in 1989 to 63.8% percent [in 2006], with the percentage of Uzbeks remaining unchanged.” Furthermore: “In Jalalabad province, the percent of Kyrgyz grew from 60.9 percent to 70 percent during this period.”
- Data reported in an OSCE report also points in the same direction. Throughout 1991-2000, the Uzbeks formed a minority within Osh province.
- Finally, we checked district level data from the 2009 census. We found that Uzbeks form a majority in but one district, Aravan district in Osh oblast (59% out of 106,000). [not concentrated]

## Kin

- According to EPR, there is numerically significant kin in Uzbekistan, in other Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan), and Afghanistan. [kin in neighboring country]

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