

TAJIKISTAN

Pamiri Tajiks

Activity: 1991-1993; 2014-2020

General notes

NA

Movement start and end dates

- The Pamiri Tajik movement was active already in the USSR. Thus, we code the movement as of 1991, but note prior nonviolent activity.
- In 1992, demonstrators in Khorog, the capital of Gornyi Badakhshan, demanded that status of Gorno-Badakhshan be raised to that of an autonomous republic. At the same time, it was made clear that Gorno-Badakhshan should remain in Tajikistan. The central government refused the demand (Roeder 2007: 316). On April 11, 1992, the regional legislature unilaterally declared an autonomous republic. Subsequently, the Tajik government imposed an economic blockade, cutting Gorno-Badakhshan off from all supplies (Bliss 2006: 276). Self-defense forces were established to maintain order within the Autonomous Oblast's borders, but soon they were involved in the raging civil war (Roeder 2007: 316).
- According to Roeder, the Pamiris then started to make "ambiguous" threats that they would secede (i.e., still in 1992) (Roeder 2007: 316). According to Minority Rights International, Gorno-Badakhshan was de facto independent at the time.
- An agreement with the central government was signed in mid-1993, and Gorno-Badakhshan accepted reintegration into Tajikistan. The leaders of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast officially proclaimed the end of secessionist aims in June 1993. The autonomous status of Gorno-Badakhshan was confirmed in the 1994 constitution (Roeder 2007: 317). The economic blockade was lifted in September 1993 (Bliss 2006: 276). Peyrouse (2012) reports that separatism was no longer on the agenda in the region after 1993. [start date 1: 1989; end date 1: 1993]
- In the 1992-1997 civil war, a group called Lali Badakhshan (Rubies of Badakhshan) fought against the Tajik government as part of the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) forces. Following the end of the civil war, Lali Badakhshan leaders were given senior government jobs in the Gorno-Badakhshan region as part of the peace agreement. Pamiri leaders engaged in drug trafficking and other criminal activities and Tajikistan's authorities have labelled them as mere criminals. By contrast, Lali Badakhshan leaders see themselves as the defenders of the Pamiri identity and autonomy; and they enjoy public support (Eurasianet 2012a; 2012b; International Crisis Group 2018; Pannier 2022).
- In 2008, the Tajik government started to restrict Gorno-Badakhshan's autonomy when it announced plans establish direct rule over six of Gorno-Badakhshan's districts. The move sparked protests that were resolved with a deal between the Tajik government and Pamiri leaders (Pannier 2018).
- In the same year, Pamiri leaders mobilized 800 people to rally against the increased presence of Tajik forces in Gorno-Badakhshan and attacked Tajikistan's Interior Ministry building in Khorog, the capital of Gorno-Badakhshan (Eurasianet 2012b; International Crisis Group 2018). The removal of roadblocks and the military are central demands of the Pamiri Tajiks (Eurasianet 2018; Pannier 2008).
- In 2012, 3,000 people rallied against the murder of a prominent Pamiri leader. In the same year, the head of state security for Gorno-Badakhshan was murdered. The Tajik state blamed Tolib Ayombekov, another prominent member of the informal leaders, for the murder. In the following armed conflict between the Tajik military and well-armed locals, at least 50 people were killed (Eurasianet 2012c; Pannier 2022; Roth 2015: 313).

- In May 2014, widespread protests took place after soldiers killed and injured several civilians in a gunfight. Although government officials accused unspecified ‘foreign states’ of trying to undermine stability in the country, protest leaders made demands for ‘more autonomy’ for the region (MRGI). This is the first evidence for a claim for increased SD we could find since 1993, hence we code a second start date in 2014.
- In 2018, Tajikistan’s president stated the goal of neutralizing the informal leaders. In response, many thousands of Pamiris emerged onto the streets to register their discontent over perceptions the government was seeking to further curtail their autonomy. In the same year, there were reports of possible negotiations between the Pamir’s informal leaders and state officials (Eurasianet 2018). [start date 2014; end date: ongoing]

Dominant claim

- In 1991, the Pamiri Tajiks still sought increased autonomy. When this was rejected, “[t]he Gorno-Badakhshan Oblast made ambiguous threats to secede in 1992 and 1993” (Roeder 2007: 316; also see Bliss 2006: 91). [1991-1992: autonomy claim; 1993: independence claim]
- Since the end of the civil war in 1997, Pamiri Tajik’s informal leaders played a major role in preserving Gorno-Badakhshan’s regional identity and autonomy. Since 2014, the Pamiri leaders have voiced demands for more autonomy (International Crisis Group 2018; MRGI; Pannier 2022). [2014-2020: autonomy claim]

Independence claims

- See above. [start date: 1992; end date: 1993]

Irredentist claims

NA

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Pamiri Tajiks consists of their homeland Gorno-Badakhshan in eastern Tajikistan (Roth 2015: 312f). We code this claim using GIS data on administrative units from the Global Administrative Areas database.

Sovereignty declarations

- April 11, 1992, the regional legislature unilaterally declared an autonomous republic (Roeder 2007: 316). It is somewhat ambiguous whether the aim was for outright secession or autonomy within Tajikistan, but in line with general practice we code the more extreme demand. Note: Minahan (2016: 484) suggests the declaration was in 1991. [1992: independence declaration]

Separatist armed conflict

- In 1992, a civil war broke out in Tajikistan that lasted until 1997 (Sambanis & Schulhofer-Wohl 2019). One of the main rebel groups in that war was UTO (United Tajik Opposition), which consisted of several groups including the Islamist-oriented Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRP, Hizbi Nahzati Islomii Tojikiston), the secular Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT, Hizbi Demokrati Tojikiston), the moderate nationalist and democratic Rastokhez (“Rebirth”) Movement, and the Lali Badakhshan (“Ruby of Badakhshan”) movement (i.e., Pamiri

separatists) (UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia). UCDP/PRIO records > 3,000 battle-related deaths in the UTO-Tajikistan dyad in 1992, and almost 1,400 in 1993. However, it is clear that most of this violence should not be attributed to the Pamiri-Tajikistan dyad.

- Roeder (2007: 316) suggests that Pamiri forces were involved in clashes with government forces in 1992-1993. However, in a book-length treatment of the Pamiris, Bliss (2006: 276) suggests that while there was significant one-sided violence committed against the Pamiris in early 1992, “very few Pamiris actually took part in the armed struggle against the government.” We do not code separatist violence on this basis, though we notably could not find precise disaggregated information on casualties.
- In 2012, there was an armed conflict between the Tajik military and Pamiris in which at least 50 people were killed (Eurasianet 2012c; Pannier 2022; Roth 2015: 313). We do not code this incident as the violence does not seem connected to increased SD.
- In May 2014, widespread protests took place after soldiers killed and injured several civilians in a gunfight. Three people died and five were injured (MRGI). The event is not coded as the number of deaths does not exceed 25 people. [NVIOLSD]

Historical context

- The homeland of the Pamiri Tajiks, Gorno-Badakhshan, lies in the mountains of southeastern Tajikistan and adjoining parts of Afghanistan. Pamiri Tajiks are sometimes considered Tajiks, but many self-identify as a distinct ethnic group. Moreover, there are important ethno-linguistic differences. The language of the Pamiri Tajiks belongs to the eastern branch of the Iranian linguistic family, and is thus distinct from Tajik, which belongs to the western branch. Moreover, there are differences with regard to religion: Pamiri Tajiks tend to be Shia, while Tajiks are typically Sunnis (Atkin 1997: 608; Shirazi 1997: 613; Minority Rights Group International). The Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast was created in 1925, as part of the Tajik ASSR. Tajikistan gained full Union Republic status in 1929; Gorno-Badakhshan remained with Tajikistan and kept the status of an AO. “Soviet policy toward the Pamiri peoples was assimilationist, with education and publications generally being available in Tajik or Russian but not in the Pamiri languages. This began to change in the final years of the Soviet era [...] (Atkin 1997: 608).”
- In 1988 the Supreme Soviet introduced multi-candidate, contested elections at all levels of the Union, which 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). [1988: autonomy concession]
 - o Note that in 1988, multi-candidate but not multi-party elections were introduced. The formation of non-Communist parties remained banned. This changed October 9, 1990, when the Congress of People’s Deputies enacted a law that allowed for the formation of non-Communist parties (Gerner & Hedlund 1993: 126). This is not coded as a (separate) concession.
- In 1989 the Tajik SSR elevated Tajik to the status of the official language (Atkin 1997: 628); however, in article 3 Badakhshan was explicitly excluded and allowed to regulate independently on language issues. Until 1989/1990 (the Republican language laws were sanctioned ex-post via the 1990 All-Union language law, see Grenoble 2003: 205-207; Gorbachev 1999: 99), the Soviet Union did not have de jure an official language. Russian had merely been defined as the language of interethnic communication. However, de-facto Russian had had the role of the official language. This was coded as a concession under the header of the Soviet Union. [1989: cultural rights concession]

2nd phase:

- In 2008, the government announced plans to incorporate six districts of western Gorno-Badakhshan into Tajikistan proper. However, the territorial reform sparked protests in the autonomous region and was not implemented (Pannier 2018).
- In 2011, Tajikistan transferred 1,100 square kilometers of Gorno-Badakhshan’s disputed territory to China. Although the transfer of territory required the region’s approval, the regional elites were

not consulted (Eurasianet 2011; Pannier 2016). We code a restriction due to the loss of territory. [2011: autonomy restriction]

Concessions and restrictions

- In December 1992, after Badakhshan had unilaterally declared an elevation of its status, the Tajik government imposed an economic blockade, cutting Gorno-Badakhshan off from all supplies (Bliss 2006: 276). [1992: autonomy restriction]
- An agreement with the central government was signed in mid-1993, and Gorno-Badakhshan accepted reintegration into Tajikistan. The leaders of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast officially proclaimed the end of separatist aims in June 1993. The autonomous status of Gorno-Badakhshan was confirmed in the 1994 constitution (Roeder 2007: 317). Furthermore, the economic blockade was lifted in September 1993 (Bliss 2006: 276). [1993: autonomy concession]

Regional autonomy

- The Pamiri Tajiks appear to have kept their autonomous status when Tajikistan became independent. The autonomous status was confirmed in the 1994 constitution (Roeder 2007: 317). Moreover, there was de facto independence in 1992/1993. [1991-1993, 2014-2020: regionally autonomous]

De facto independence

- After the unilateral SD declaration in April 1992, the Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast established self-defense forces to maintain order within the Autonomous Oblast's borders, which were soon involved in the raging civil war (Roeder 2007: 316). According to Minority Rights Group International, Gorno-Badakhshan at the time was a de-facto ruled breakaway region. An agreement with the central government was signed in mid-1993, and Gorno-Badakhshan accepted reintegration into Tajikistan. The leaders of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast officially proclaimed the end of separatist aims in June 1993. The autonomous status of Gorno-Badakhshan was confirmed in the 1994 constitution (Roeder 2007: 317). Based on this, we code the Pamiris as de facto independent in 1993, following the first of January rule. [1993: de facto independence]

Major territorial changes

- Tajikistan attained independence in 1991. [1991: host change (new)]
- [1992: establishment of de facto independent entity]
- [1993: revocation of de facto independent entity]

EPR2SDM

<i>Movement</i>	Pamiri Tajiks
<i>Scenario</i>	1:1
<i>EPR group(s)</i>	Pamiri Tajiks
<i>Gwgroupid(s)</i>	70206000

Power access

- We follow EPR. [powerless]

Group size

- We follow EPR. [1991-1993: 0.02; 2014-2020: 0.022]
 - o Data from the 2000 census in Tajikistan would suggest a similar number: approx. 135,000 Pamiri speakers, while Tajikistan's total population was approx. 6.128 million (demoscope.ru), group size of 2.2%

Regional concentration

- The homeland of the Pamiri Tajiks, Gorno-Badakhshan, lies in the mountains of southeastern Tajikistan and adjoining parts of Afghanistan. Data from the Soviet Union's 1989 census (which is also used for the group size estimate) suggests that almost all Pamiris resided in Gorno-Badakhshan (approx. 101,000), where they made up approx. 65% of the local population (demoscope.ru). [concentrated]

Kin

- There are Pamiri Tajiks also in neighboring Afghanistan, but they numbered only about 75,000 in the early 1990s according to figures from EPR. No other kin found. We do not count Tajiks e.g. in Afghanistan as ethnic kin because the movement is directed against a Tajik-dominated government. [no kin]

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Uzbeks

Activity: 1991-1998

General notes

- The Uzbeks of Tajikistan make up about 15 percent of the total population, and are the second largest ethnic group in Tajikistan behind the Tajiks. According to Minorities at Risk: “Tajiks and Uzbeks are often portrayed in studies of Central Asia as one people who speak two different languages” (Minorities at Risk Project). The Uzbeks generally live in Leninabad in the eastern Ferghana Valley, Hissar, and the Kurgan-Tyube regions. Ferghana Valley is home to various Islamist organizations that straddle Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. The Uzbek movement described here is separate from those religious movements.

Movement start and end dates

- Starting with Tajikistan’s independence, there was agitation for secession in the Sughd province. The first “wave” of secessionism, according to Fumagalli, lasted only a year and petered out by the end of 1992. However, “A second wave of separatist tendencies emerged in the second half of the 1990s, when elements of the northern opposition coalesced under Abdullajonov’s Movement for National Revival” (Fumagalli 2007: 583). Between 1996 and 1998, several uprisings took place but the secessionist leader Khudoiberdiev was eventually forced to flee to Uzbekistan (Fumagalli 2007: 583-584). With Khudoiberdiev forced out of the country, the movement appears to have ended, given that there have been no attempts at secession since then.
- The Uzbeks of Tajikistan have mounted limited protests in the past over language autonomy. Demands include the ability to teach, publish, and deal with the government using the Uzbek language. Minorities at Risk notes that Uzbeks have not expressed these grievances recently.
- The start date of the movement is coded as 1991 to coincide with the beginning of secessionism as well as Tajik independence. 1998 is coded as end date. While it is possible that there was no separatist mobilization between 1992 and 1993, we did not find sufficient evidence to code an end to the movement in 1992 and a re-start in 1996. [start date: 1991; end date: 1998]

Dominant claim

- According to Fumagalli (2007: 83-84) regional elites in Leninabad (today Sughd) with close ties to Uzbekistan’s president, Karimov, began to demand separation from Tajikistan in the early 1990s. No other claim was found. However, it is unclear whether the claim was for independence or incorporation into Uzbekistan; authors typically mention both (see e.g. Fumagalli 2007 and Martin 1997). Given that union with Uzbekistan is defined as more radical in the codebook, and the close ties of the movement to Uzbekistan, we code an irredentist claim throughout. [1991-1998: irredentist claim]

Independence claims

NA

Irredentist claims

- See above. [start date: 1991; end date: 1998]

Claimed territory

- The territory claimed by the Uzbeks in Tajikistan is Sughd province (Fumagalli 2007: 83-84). We code this claim based on the Global Administrative Areas database.

Sovereignty declarations

NA

Separatist armed conflict

- The movement remained nonviolent until the uprisings between 1996-1998 (Fumagalli 2007: 583-584), which are coded LVIOLSD based on casualty reports from Lexis Nexis and UCDP/PRIO coding an armed conflict between the Forces of Khudoberdiyev and Tajikistan in 1997-1998. Fumagalli (2007: 583f) suggests the uprising had secessionist motives. We nevertheless apply an ambiguous code because the violence was primarily over government according to UCDP/PRIO. [1991-1995: NVIOLSD; 1996-1998: LVIOLSD]

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). Tajikistan became an ASSR in 1924, under the administration of the Uzbek SSR. In 1929, Tajikistan was separated from Uzbekistan and was awarded full Union Republic status (Atkin 1997: 605). Uzbeks constitute the largest ethnic minority in Tajikistan, and yet their rights were limited. 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)." Following the example of the Baltic Republics, in July 1989 the government of the Tajik SSR adopted a language law which gave Tajik primacy over Russian as the state language, even if it did not exclude the use of Russian. The law also called for the adoption of Tajik, rather than Russian or Russianized, personal and place names (Atkin 1997: 628; MAR). The law made limited concessions to the Uzbek language; in particular, Uzbek language instruction was maintained (Fumagalli 2007). Still, the language law required government conduct to be in Tajik (which prior to this was in Russian, the 'language of inter-ethnic communication'), thus discriminating against the Uzbek minority. Minority Rights Group International sees the Tajik language legislation as an assertion of Tajik dominance, and suggests that the limited use of Uzbek in the state administration (going back to the 1989 language law) is discriminatory. Hence, we code a prior restriction. [1989: cultural rights restriction]

Concessions and restrictions

NA

Regional autonomy

NA

De facto independence

NA

Major territorial changes

- Tajikistan 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>	70205000

Power access

- We follow EPR. [powerless]

Group size

- We follow EPR. [0.235]

Regional concentration

- The Uzbeks of Tajikistan make up about 15 percent of the total population, and are the second largest ethnic group in Tajikistan behind the Tajiks. Uzbeks in Tajikistan are concentrated in the country's western parts along the border with Uzbekistan; larger concentrations can be found in Sughd province, in Hissar (west of Dushanbe), the Kargon-Tyube province, and Kathlon province (see MRGI; GeoEPR). The Uzbeks do make up an absolute majority in two districts, both in Sughd province (Rowland 2005: 219). Since a substantial number of Uzbeks emigrated since independence in 1991, the number of districts with absolute Uzbek majorities may have been higher in the early 1990s, but also back then, the Uzbeks lived scattered across the country's western parts (Rowland 2005: 214). [not concentrated]

Kin

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

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