

# Kazakhstan

## *Ethnicity in Kazakhstan*

### *Power relations*

The size of the ethnic groups dramatically changed during the last twenty years. At the end of the Soviet Union, in 1991, the Kazakhs and Russians were almost equal in numbers (approximately 40% each), since then the amount of Kazakhs increased to 63% in 2009 and the Russians' size declined to 23%. This mass-exodus of Russians occurred due to the empowerment of the Kazakhs, the loss of influence of the Russians, the growing use of Kazakh language and the unpromising economic situation in Kazakhstan. Hence, a new period from 2006 until 2009 was added that considers the recent changes in the population sizes of the relevant ethnic groups. The power relations did not change, the Kazakhs are dominant and all other groups are powerless. It is possible that some groups sooner or later become irrelevant should their numbers continue to decline. The Russian minority in Kazakhstan has become increasingly depoliticized in the 2000s. Political movements and associations, such as the Cossacks, "Lad" and "Russkaya obshchina" failed to mobilize the millions of Russians living in the country (<sup>1681</sup>), but nevertheless such organizations prove the political relevance of Russians. The Ukrainians were also represented by the "Lad", which is a movement representing all Slavic speaking people in Kazakhstan (<sup>1682</sup>). The "Lad"s demands include equal rights, a share of national property and participation in the state administration. However, since Russians lost their status as junior partners in 1995, due to the loss of power of the old Soviet elite and due to emigration, we do not explicitly distinguish between ethnic Russians and Ukrainians but combine them in the umbrella group "Russian-speakers". Political claims are usually made in the name of Slavic minorities or Russian-speakers but do not refer to Ukrainians as a distinct group from the Russians.

Despite a strong sense of communal identity, accented by linguistic and religious distinctiveness, Kazakhstan's Germans are not highly mobilized or organized politically. They are represented primarily by cultural organizations, which also act as political mouthpieces to advocate for German cultural and political rights (<sup>1683</sup>). The Uzbeks are concentrated in the densely populated areas in south Kazakhstan bordering Uzbekistan. Although being organized in groups, for example demanding education in Uzbek language, the

<sup>1681</sup> [Peyrouse, 2007]

<sup>1682</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2008]

<sup>1683</sup> [Minorities at Risk Project, 2009]

Uzbeks are mostly excluded of the state administration <sup>(1684)</sup>. The Tatars are rather politically inactive, although each Kazakhstan oblast has its own Tatar-Bashkir cultural center, dedicated to preserve ethnic identity <sup>(1685)</sup>. There are different Uyghur organizations politically representing the Uyghurs, such as the Uyghur Association of Kazakhstan <sup>(1686)</sup>. The Uighurs are underrepresented in terms of employment in state administration and other areas of employment in the public sphere <sup>(1687)</sup>.

*Update 2010-2013:* The ethnic power relations did not change. Kazakhs are the dominant majority and the other ethnic minorities powerless. Kazakhstan experienced an influx of ethnic Kyrgyz and Tajik during the last decade because of the comparably better economic conditions in Kazakhstan, however, these new minorities are immigrants, have no citizenship rights and are not politically relevant. The Kazakh law prohibits parties established on an ethnic, gender, or religious basis <sup>(1688)</sup>, but some candidates in the last parliamentary elections in 2012 were representatives of minority groups. In particular Russian-speaking minorities were better represented in this legislative compared to previous ones <sup>(1689)</sup>. At the executive level, there were/are few ministers with ethnic minority origin, such as the prime minister who is supposed to have Uyghur origins, a German minister (at least according to his name), and Russian ministers, such as the minister of finance in the years 1994-1998, 2002-2003, 2006-2007 <sup>(1690)</sup>. However, they are clearly token members of these groups and, for instance, there was no sufficient evidence that they made any demands in the name of their ethnic groups.

<sup>1684</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2008]

<sup>1685</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2008]

<sup>1686</sup> [Embassy of Kazakhstan in the United Kingdom]

<sup>1687</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2008]

<sup>1688</sup> [US Department of State, 2013]

<sup>1689</sup> [Minority Rights Group International, 2012]

<sup>1690</sup> [Government of Kazakhstan, 2014]

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## Political status of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan

*From 1991 until 1994*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Kazakhs	0.397	SENIOR PARTNER
Russians	0.374	JUNIOR PARTNER
Germans	0.058	POWERLESS
Ukrainians	0.054	POWERLESS
Tatars	0.02	POWERLESS
Uzbeks	0.02	POWERLESS
Uighur	0.011	POWERLESS

*From 1995 until 2005*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Kazakhs	0.534	DOMINANT
Russian-speakers	0.337	POWERLESS
Uzbeks	0.025	POWERLESS
Germans	0.024	POWERLESS
Tatars	0.017	POWERLESS
Uighur	0.014	POWERLESS

*From 2006 until 2013*

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Kazakhs	0.631	DOMINANT
Russian-speakers	0.258	POWERLESS
Uzbeks	0.028	POWERLESS
Uighur	0.014	POWERLESS
Tatars	0.013	POWERLESS
Germans	0.011	POWERLESS



Figure 406: Political status of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan during 1991-1994.



Figure 407: Political status of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan during 1995-2005.



Figure 408: Political status of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan during 2006-2013.

## Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan

*From 1991 until 1994*

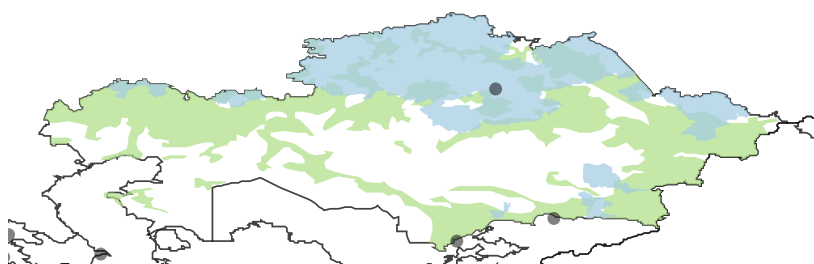


Figure 409: Map of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan during 2006-2013.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
<span style="color: green;">■</span> Kazakhs	1 187 411	Regional & urban
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Russians	659 557	Regional & urban
Germans		Dispersed
Uzbeks		Dispersed
Ukrainians		Dispersed
Uighur		Dispersed
Tatars		Dispersed

Table 122: List of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan during 1991-1994.

*From 1995 until 2013*

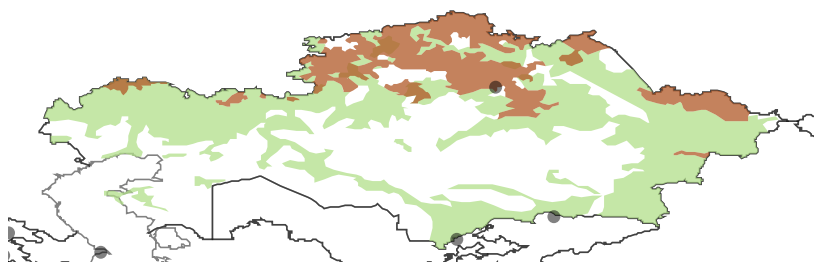


Figure 410: Map of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan during 2006-2013.

	Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
■	Kazakhs	1 187 411	Regional & urban
■	Russian-speakers	341 686	Regional & urban
	Germans		Dispersed
	Tatars		Dispersed
	Uighur		Dispersed
	Uzbeks		Dispersed

Table 123: List of ethnic groups in Kazakhstan during 1995-2013.