

Tajikistan

Ethnicity in Tajikistan

Group selection

We identify the following politically relevant ethnic groups: **Tajiks, Kyrgyz, Russians, Tatars, Uzbeks, and Pamiri Tajiks.**

In their censuses the government of Tajikistan subsumes the Pamiri Tajiks as Tajiks, which means that the censuses do not contain their numbers (⁴³⁵⁵, 7). The last available group size of the Pamiri Tajiks is from the year 2000 (⁴³⁵⁶). Hence, since 2001, the number of Pamiri Tajiks was subtracted from the number of Tajiks, in order not to count the Pamiri Tajiks twice.

⁴³⁵⁵ [Tajstat, 2012]

⁴³⁵⁶ [Tylskij, 2005]

Power relations

The coding of Tajikistan contains five periods, which are explained as follows:

- 1991-1992: Independence of Tajikistan
- 1993-1997: The Pamiri Tajiks declared independence
- 1998-2000: The Tatars became irrelevant after the civil war and the Pamiri Tajiks revoked independence by signing a peace agreement
- 2001-2010: New population numbers (census in 2000)
- 2011-2017: New population numbers (census in 2010)

Tajiks are the politically dominant majority. There were few members of minorities (**Uzbeks and Kyrgyz**) in the 96-seat legislature and ethnic Uzbeks were represented in the government (⁴³⁵⁷), although not in direct policymaking roles and thus, powerless. In the parliamentary elections in 2010, there were few candidates representing the minorities (⁴³⁵⁸, 20). Yet, most ethnic minorities face socio-economic discrimination, including the Russians, Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Pamiri Tajiks (see ⁴³⁵⁹; ⁴³⁶⁰). While Tajikistan officially has elections, the country is rated as “not free” according to Freedom House and its president Emomali Rahmon leads the country since 1992 (⁴³⁶¹; ⁴³⁶²).

⁴³⁵⁷ [US Department of State, 2009]

⁴³⁵⁸ [OSCE, 2010]

⁴³⁵⁹ [Goble, 2015]

⁴³⁶⁰ [Eurasianet, 2011]

⁴³⁶¹ [BBC, 2017]

A large part of the **Russian** population has left the country since independence. Tajikistan has tried to encourage Russians to remain in the country, as many Russians occupy technical and other skilled positions. For these reasons, schools teaching in Russian have been

maintained and the use of Russian language still is widespread in government and business. Tajik legislation now permits dual citizenship (⁴³⁶³). Nevertheless, given the political dominance of the Tajik majority and the continuing emigration of Russians, they were coded as powerless.

⁴³⁶³ [Minority Rights Group International, 2007]

The number of **Tatars** declined drastically in recent years, that there was no evidence of them being still politically or even culturally organized in Tajikistan. The Tatars became thus irrelevant since 1998.

Although debated, the **Pamiri Tajiks** are considered a separate ethnic group from the Tajiks. This coding reflects a continuation of the distinction between Pamiri Tajiks and Tajiks during Soviet times and meets with the Pamiri Tajiks' involvement in the political upheaval in Tajikistan since the dissolution of the USSR. In 1925, the USSR granted the Pamiri Tajiks autonomy of the Gorno-Badakhshan Oblast as part of the Tajik ASSR. When Tajikistan gained full status as a union of the USSR in 1929, the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast remained a part of Tajikistan (⁴³⁶⁴, 608).

⁴³⁶⁴ [Atkin, Eugene, 1997]

The Pamiris criticize that their language is not part of their school curriculum, that their ethnic representatives only receive symbolic positions in government and that they are politically underrepresented (⁴³⁶⁵). Since the Pamiris opposed the Tajiks in the civil war (1992-1997), a certain degree of mistrust remains (⁴³⁶⁶, 1). Furthermore, they have distinct cultural habits and practice Ismaili Islam. Hence, they are being accused of being “the wrong kind of Muslims”. In 2012 and 2014, the government's military operations killed local commanders (for participating in drug trafficking and radical Islamism according to the government) and civilians, which led to significant protests (⁴³⁶⁷; ⁴³⁶⁸). However, compared to other ethnic minorities the Pamiri Tajiks have a region (on its autonomy, see below). And even if only nominal or token, government positions are sometimes given to Pamiri Tajiks. As Zimmermann argues, the main retaliation of the government of Tajikistan towards the Pamiris for opposing them in the civil war, is disregard and not active discrimination (2012:1).

⁴³⁶⁵ [Minority Rights Group International, 2017]

⁴³⁶⁶ [Zimmermann, 2012]

⁴³⁶⁷ [BBC, 2012]

⁴³⁶⁸ [Najibullah, 2014]

Officially, the Pamiri Tajiks have an autonomous region called “Gorno-Badakhshan”. As already mentioned, the government of Tajikistan mostly leaves this region in isolation. Hence, its inhabitants are poor, isolated and the government mostly ignores their needs (⁴³⁶⁹). However, the Aga Khan Foundation has taken on the role of the state in most social-economic areas, like providing employment, schooling or food (⁴³⁷⁰). Hence, their isolation “has provided a degree of enshrinement of their rights and much more significant presence in public life and political participation than available to other minorities” (⁴³⁷¹). However, as the events of 2012 and 2014 have shown, if the government wants to exercise power over the region it is able to do so. Gorno-Badakhshan has no own constitution, and the president of Tajikistan nominates its governor and the

⁴³⁶⁹ [Zimmermann, 2012]

⁴³⁷⁰ [?]

⁴³⁷¹ [Minority Rights Group International, 2017]

regional judges (⁴³⁷²). In a recent report of the “Anti-Discrimination Center Memorial” local respondents argued that the autonomy is only nominal, since “the local parliament has little power, even in the economic sphere”. Additionally, “ethnic Pamiri are not allowed into posts in security forces and law enforcement, even within Gorno-Badakhshan”. Hence, the Pamiri Tajiks have only nominal, but not actual regional autonomy.

The only exception is the years 1993-1997 (officially 1992, but consider the January 1st rule) during the civil war. Here, the status is “self-exclusion” combined with regional autonomy. In April 1992, Gorno-Badakhshan declared its independence from Tajikistan (⁴³⁷³, 128). While the government of Tajikistan never acknowledged this declaration, the claims for independence only stopped in 1997 with the end of the civil war and the signing of the peace agreement (⁴³⁷⁴).

⁴³⁷² [Minority Rights Group International, 2008]

⁴³⁷³ [Hyman, 1997]

⁴³⁷⁴ [Conciliation Resources, 2001]

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Political status of ethnic groups in Tajikistan

From 1991 until 1992

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Tajiks	0.623	DOMINANT
Uzbeks	0.235	POWERLESS
Russians	0.076	POWERLESS
Pamiri Tajiks	0.02	POWERLESS
Tatars	0.014	POWERLESS
Kyrgyz	0.013	POWERLESS

From 1993 until 1997

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Tajiks	0.623	DOMINANT
Uzbeks	0.235	POWERLESS
Russians	0.076	POWERLESS
Pamiri Tajiks	0.02	SELF-EXCLUSION
Tatars	0.014	POWERLESS
Kyrgyz	0.013	POWERLESS

From 1998 until 2000

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Tajiks	0.623	DOMINANT
Uzbeks	0.235	POWERLESS
Russians	0.076	POWERLESS
Pamiri Tajiks	0.02	POWERLESS
Tatars	0.014	IRRELEVANT
Kyrgyz	0.013	POWERLESS



Figure 890: Political status of ethnic groups in Tajikistan during 1991-1992.



Figure 891: Political status of ethnic groups in Tajikistan during 1993-1997.



Figure 892: Political status of ethnic groups in Tajikistan during 1998-2000.

From 2001 until 2010

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Tajiks	0.777	DOMINANT
Uzbeks	0.153	POWERLESS
Pamiri Tajiks	0.022	POWERLESS
Kyrgyz	0.011	POWERLESS
Russians	0.011	POWERLESS
Tatars	0.003	IRRELEVANT

From 2011 until 2017

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Tajiks	0.821	DOMINANT
Uzbeks	0.122	POWERLESS
Pamiri Tajiks	0.022	POWERLESS
Kyrgyz	0.008	POWERLESS
Russians	0.005	POWERLESS
Tatars	0.001	IRRELEVANT



Figure 893: Political status of ethnic groups in Tajikistan during 2001-2010.



Figure 894: Political status of ethnic groups in Tajikistan during 2011-2017.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Tajikistan

From 1991 until 1997

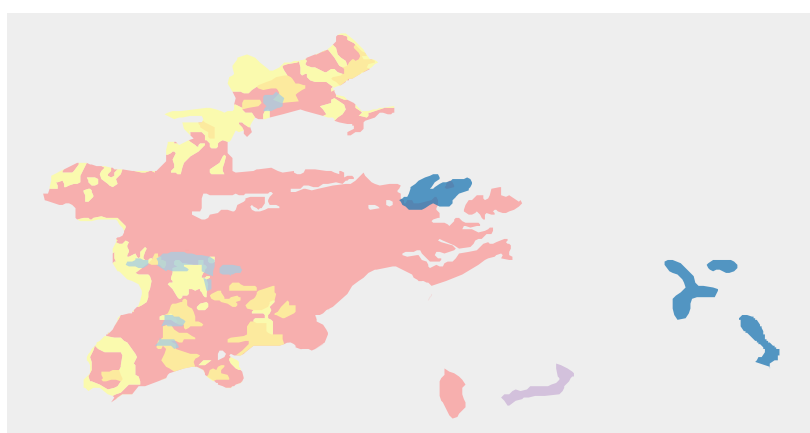


Figure 895: Map of ethnic groups in Tajikistan during 1991-1997.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
Tajiks	66 582	Regional & urban
Uzbeks	16 854	Regional & urban
Kyrgyz	4140	Regionally based
Russians	2075	Regional & urban
Pamiri Tajiks	975	Regionally based
Tatars		Dispersed

Table 300: List of ethnic groups in Tajikistan during 1991-1997.

From 1998 until 2017

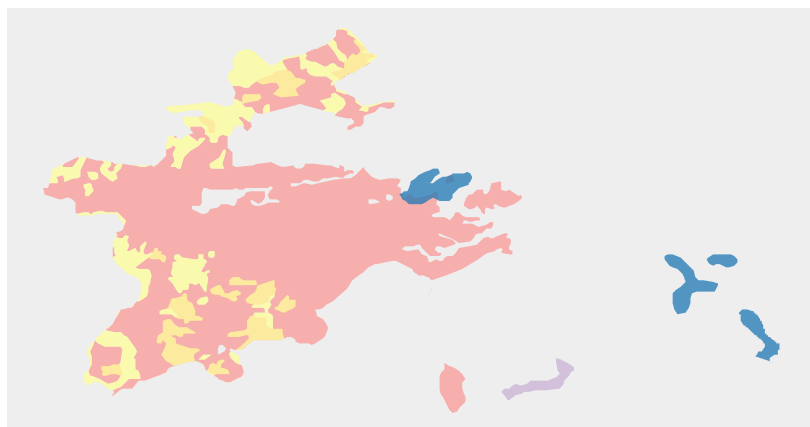


Figure 896: Map of ethnic groups in Tajikistan during 1998-2017.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
Tajiks	66 582	Regional & urban
Uzbeks	16 854	Regional & urban
Kyrgyz	4140	Regionally based
Pamiri Tajiks	975	Regionally based
Russians		Urban

Table 301: List of ethnic groups in Tajikistan during 1998-2017.

Conflicts in Tajikistan

Starting on 1992-05-04

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Tajikistan	UTO	Pamiri Tajiks	1992-05-04	No	Yes	
Government of Tajikistan	UTO	Tajiks	1992-05-04	No	Yes, from EGIP	No
Government of Tajikistan	PFT	Tajiks	1992-09-09	No	Yes, from EGIP	No
Government of Tajikistan	Forces of Khudoberdiyev	Uzbeks	1997-06-16	Explicit	Yes	No
Government of Tajikistan	Forces of Mullo Abdullo	Tajiks	2000-08-31	No	Yes, from EGIP	
Government of Tajikistan	IMU	Uzbeks	2005-01-30	No	Yes	No
Government of Tajikistan	IMU	Tajiks	2005-01-30	No	Yes	No
Government of Tajikistan	IMU	Kyrgyz	2005-01-30	No	Yes	No
Government of Tajikistan	IMU	Uzbeks	2005-01-30	No	Yes, from EGIP	No