

Uzbekistan

Ethnicity in Uzbekistan

Group selection

The **Uzbeks** are the demographic and politically monopoly majority in Uzbekistan. Politically relevant ethnic minorities include the **Tajiks, Russians and Karakalpaks**.

Power relations

There are two periods since Uzbekistan's independence corresponding to the censuses of 1992 and 1996, because the number of ethnic Uzbeks increased whilst the number of Russians declined due to emigration.

Uzbeks are the majority, holding a monopoly of political power in the country. President Islam Karimov and the centralized executive branch dominate political life and exercise nearly complete control over the other branches. The parliament consists almost entirely of officials appointed by the president and members of parties that support him (⁵⁴⁴³).

⁵⁴⁴³ [US Department of State, 2005-2009]

The **Tajiks** are regionally concentrated in two big cities but remain largely excluded in many areas of public life and are thus powerless. After the break up of the SU, Tajiks in Uzbekistan raised some demands (e.g. for an autonomous republic), but due to lack of organization and the repression from the authoritative regime of Karimov these demands quickly faded. At least, Tajiks were recognized as a national group in Uzbekistan and Tajik as an official language. The fight against terror and fundamentalism in Uzbekistan has an ethnic overtone which has severely impacted the Tajik minority, with the forcible resettlement in 2000 of thousands of mostly ethnic Tajik families, burning and bombing of mainly Tajik villages, and the destruction of their homes and fields because of allegations that Islamic militants infiltrated these villages (⁵⁴⁴⁴). Despite this discrimination, the Tajiks are classified as powerless and not discriminated, because just a small part of the Tajik population suffered this discrimination. Observers believe that the statistics may underestimate the actual number of ethnic Tajiks; the figures treat ethnic Tajiks whose mother tongue is Uzbek as ethnic Uzbeks. In addition, some members of other ethnic groups for a variety of reasons choose to declare themselves as ethnic Uzbeks.

⁵⁴⁴⁴ [US Department of State, 2002]

Ethnic **Russians** and other minorities frequently complain about limited job opportunities. Senior positions in the government bu-

reaucracy and business generally are reserved for ethnic Uzbeks, although there were numerous exceptions in the past (⁵⁴⁴⁵). The Russian language is still widely used by state authorities in daily activities, despite the Uzbek language constituting the only official language. Minorities have left Uzbekistan in very large numbers, partly as a consequence of the repressive regime of President Karimov, but also because of the limited opportunities for minorities often linked to discriminatory practices by authorities in favor of the Uzbek majority. By some estimates, almost a million Russian-speakers had left the country by 2006 (⁵⁴⁴⁶). The Russians in Uzbekistan are powerless. They demanded to participate in the government and to be granted equal civil and political rights, but without success.

Thanks to a special autonomy arrangement granted to the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the **Karakalpaks** have in legal and practical terms much greater protection of their rights and in the use of their language (⁵⁴⁴⁷). The Karakalpaks are thus classified as having regional autonomy.

The Kazakhs, who constitute approximately 3% of the population, are classified as irrelevant, because they do not play a role on the national level. Similarly, the small Kyrgyz minority in Uzbekistan is politically irrelevant. There is also a Crimean Tatar minority, making up approx. 1.5% of the population. The Tatars are irrelevant because they are neither politically organized nor politically discriminated, although it is reported that the Tatars are marginalized socially and economically (⁵⁴⁴⁸).

From the 2009 until the 2015 parliamentary elections, there were 11 members of ethnic minorities in the lower house of parliament and 11 members of ethnic minorities in the Senate (⁵⁴⁴⁹; ⁵⁴⁵⁰). In the fall of 2016, President Karimov died (⁵⁴⁵¹) and former Prime Minister Mirziyoyev took over. Since then, no significant changes in the ethnic power relations have been observed (see ⁵⁴⁵², ⁵⁴⁵³, ⁵⁴⁵⁴). Uzbeks remain the monopoly holder of political power.

⁵⁴⁴⁵ [US Department of State, 2005-2009]

⁵⁴⁴⁶ [Minority Rights Group International, 2008]

⁵⁴⁴⁷ [Minority Rights Group International, 2008]

⁵⁴⁴⁸ [UNHCR, 2010]

⁵⁴⁴⁹ [US Department of State, 2013]

⁵⁴⁵⁰ [Legislative Chamber of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2016]

⁵⁴⁵¹ [Human Rights Watch 2017]

⁵⁴⁵² [Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2020]

⁵⁴⁵³ [US Department of State, 2019]

⁵⁴⁵⁴ [Minority Rights Group International, 2020]

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Political status of ethnic groups in U.

From 1991 until 1995

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Uzbeks	0.71	MONOPOLY
Russians	0.08	POWERLESS
Tajiks	0.05	POWERLESS
Karakalpak	0.025	POWERLESS

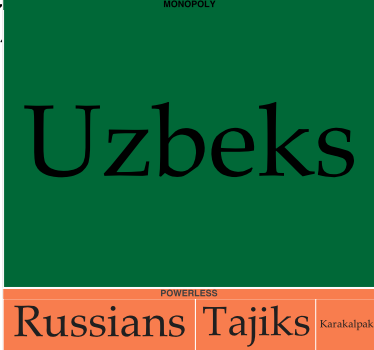


Figure 1103: Political status of ethnic groups in Uzbekistan during 1991-1995.

From 1996 until 2021

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Uzbeks	0.8	MONOPOLY
Russians	0.055	POWERLESS
Tajiks	0.05	POWERLESS
Karakalpak	0.025	POWERLESS



Figure 1104: Political status of ethnic groups in Uzbekistan during 1996-2021.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Uzbekistan

From 1991 until 2021

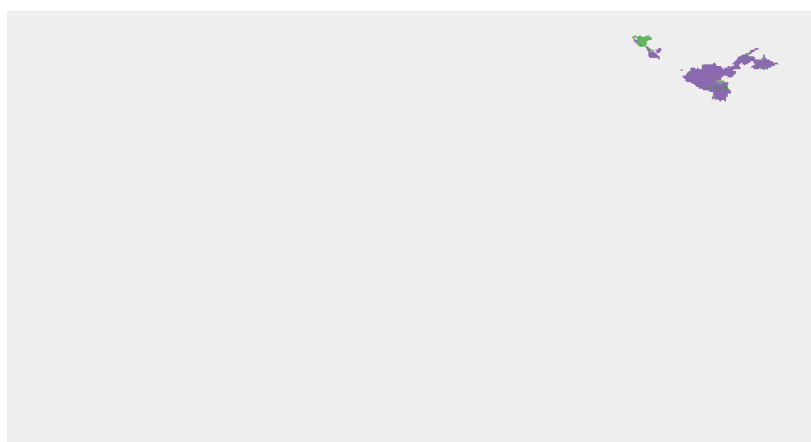


Figure 1105: Map of ethnic groups in Uzbekistan during 1991-2021.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
■ Uzbeks	139 689	Regionally based
■ Karakalpak	11 616	Regionally based
■ Tajiks	7 790	Regionally based
■ Russians	0	Urban

Table 402: List of ethnic groups in Uzbekistan during 1991-2021.

Conflicts in Uzbekistan

Starting on 1999-02-15

Side A	Side B	Group name	Start	Claim	Recruitment	Support
Government of Uzbekistan	IMU		1999-02-15			
Government of Uzbekistan	JIG	Uzbeks	2004-03-28	No	Yes, from EGIP	No