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Uzbekistan: Treatment of ethnic Russians (2003 - 2005)
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Information on the current treatment of ethnic Russians in Uzbekistan was scarce among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

In 2005, Russians accounted for four per cent of Uzbekistan's population (Uzbekistan 2 Sep. 2005). Russians, as other minorities, "enjoy representation in nationwide political institutions but do not have separate party representation based on nationality or ethnicity" (Freedom House 2005). Stop Violence Against Women (VAW) reported that Ethnic Russians "[were] experiencing official discrimination. ... [D]iscriminatory laws, such as restrictions on Russian political parties, refusal to grant dual citizenship to Russians, and the refusal to grant official language status to the Russian language, have been implemented" (28 Jan. 2004). According to *Country Reports 2004*, Uzbek is the official state language, but under Uzbek law Russian is the language used for communication between different ethnic groups (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5) Use of the Russian language is prevalent among Uzbekistan's population (*Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5).

According to the Constitution of Uzbekistan, there are

equal rights for all citizens, irrespective of national or ethnic, religious or linguistic affiliation. All citizens are equal before the law. The population of Uzbekistan includes Koreans, Russians, Tatars, Meskhetin Turks, Jews, Bashkirs, Ukrainians, Germans, Poles and other nations and peoples. All nations and peoples are accorded equal rights for the development of their cultures, the study of their mother tongue, and their national attributes and traditions. Conditions are created for the development of national schools at which representatives of national minorities can receive education in their mother tongue. Recognizing that "positive measures by States may also be necessary to protect the identity of a minority and the rights of its members to enjoy and develop their culture and language and to practise their religion in community with the other members of the group" Uzbekistan has established schools that provide instruction in the Korean, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Russian, German and other languages (ibid. 3 Aug. 2004).

In 2004, Russian-language instruction was available at 762 schools (Uzbekistan 24 June 2004). Transitions Online reported that "nearly 10,000 Uzbek secondary school classes [were] conducted in minority languages, including Russian" (n.d.). According to *Country Reports 2004*, two or three newspapers, as well as "a variety of tabloid and lifestyle publications" were published in Russian (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 2a). Television programs are also available in the Russian language (Uzbekistan 2 Sep. 2005; *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 2a).

According to *Country Reports 2004*, "Russians and other minorities frequently complained about limited job opportunities" (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5). *Freedom in the World 2004* stated that even though "racial and ethnic discrimination is prohibited by the law, the belief that senior positions in government and business are reserved for ethnic Uzbeks is widespread" (Freedom House 2004; see also *Country Reports 2004* 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5)

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

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Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites, included: Amnesty International, Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, Central Eurasian Studies Review, Central Intelligence Agency, Euroasianet.org, European Union, Factive, Human Rights Internet, Human Rights Watch, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Crisis Group, International Peace Research Institute Oslo, International Press Institute, IRIN News.com, NATO, Minorities At Risk, News Central Asia, Radio Free Europa, Reuters Foundation.

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