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## U.S. Department of State

### Tajikistan Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998

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#### TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan remains in the hands of a largely authoritarian government, although it has established some nominally democratic structures. The Government's narrow base of support limits its ability to control the entire territory of the country. The Government of President Emomali Rahmonov, which consists largely of natives of the Kulob region, continued to dominate the State, even though some Kulobis were removed from senior positions in 1998 and opposition members were taken into Government. The judiciary is not independent.

Tajikistan took a significant step toward national reconciliation after its 1992 civil war with the June 1997 signing of a comprehensive peace accord. Under the provisions of the accord, the Commission of National Reconciliation (CNR) began work in July 1997, and has made some progress in establishing peace. By year's end, the Government almost had fulfilled its obligation to name United Tajik Opposition (UTO) candidates to 30 percent of senior government positions. The UTO had registered virtually all of its fighters in anticipation of their demobilization or reintegration into regular military units. The return during the year of virtually all exiled UTO leaders and Tajik refugees from Afghanistan constituted further progress. However, implementation of the peace agreement (originally scheduled to be completed during the year) is still behind schedule, and basic issues such as constitutional amendments, legalization of banned political parties, and the disarming or reintegration of fighters remain to be resolved. Parliamentary elections that were scheduled under the agreement to take place in June are not expected to be held until 1999 at the earliest. In addition the United Nations Mission of Observers to Tajikistan (UNMOT) has reported several cease-fire violations. The killing of four UNMOT personnel in July led to the temporary withdrawal of most UNMOT observers.

Internal security is the responsibility of the Ministries of Interior, Security, and Defense. The Russian Army's 201st Motorized Rifle Division, part of a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peacekeeping force established in 1993, remained in the country. The Russian Border Guard Force (RBF) reports to Moscow and has primary responsibility for guarding the border with Afghanistan. It consists mostly of Tajiks with some Russians and a limited number of other Central Asians, although the officer corps remains principally Russian. The Government depends militarily on a handful of commanders who use their forces almost as private armies. The soldiers of some of these commanders are the source of serious problems, including crime and corruption. Some regions of the country remained effectively outside the Government's control, and government control in other areas existed only by day, or at the sufferance of local opposition commanders. Some members of the security forces and government-aligned militias committed serious human rights abuses.

The economy continued to be extremely depressed, and government revenue remains highly dependent on the government-dominated cotton and government-owned aluminum industries. The economy also suffers from narcotics trafficking, other forms of corruption, and crime in general. Most Soviet-era factories operate at a minimal level, if at all. Small-scale privatization is over 60 percent complete, but medium- to large-scale privatization still is stalled. Government figures show a 3.8 percent increase in gross domestic product during the first 8 months of 1998, but also indicate that as much as one-third of the total population is unemployed or underemployed. The Tajik ruble remained stable until its value in August, mainly as a consequence of the economic crisis in Russia. The inflation rate has stabilized at 7 percent, and the Government essentially has followed recommendations by international financial institutions to establish fiscal and budgetary discipline. Many, but not all, wages and pensions are being paid. There were serious shortages of natural gas for heating and industry, largely as a result of continued disputes with Uzbekistan over natural gas purchases. The Government states that per capita gross domestic product is approximately \$230 to \$300; other estimates are lower.

The Government's human rights record is poor and made only limited improvements in a few areas over last year. The Government limits citizens' right to change their government. Some members of the security forces were responsible for killings and beatings, and frequent abuse of detainees. These forces were also responsible for threats, extortion, looting, and abuse of civilians. Certain battalions of nominally government forces operated quasi-independently under their leaders. The Government prosecuted few of the persons who committed these abuses. Prison conditions remain life threatening, and the Government continued to use arbitrary arrest and detention, and lengthy pretrial detention remains a problem. Basic problems of rule of law persist. There are often long delays before trials, and the judiciary is subject to political and paramilitary pressure. The authorities infringe on citizens' right to privacy.

The Government severely restricts freedom of speech and of the press, and essentially controls the electronic media; however, two new opposition newspapers began publishing during the year. The authorities strictly control freedom of assembly and association for political organizations. One new party was allowed to register in 1998, but the registration of another was held up by bureaucratic delays. Three opposition parties and a branch of a fourth affiliated with the armed opposition remained suspended. There are some restrictions on freedom of movement. The Government cooperated to a limited extent with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Dushanbe and in some field offices, but the officer in Pyanj was accused of destabilizing the area and ordered out of the district by local officials for a period of 2 weeks in May. The Government still has not established a human rights ombudsman position, despite a 1996 pledge to do so. Violence against women is a problem, as is discrimination against the disabled.

The general weakness of the Government and its limited ability to maintain law and order were evident in the armed clashes between the Government and opposition forces at various points during the year.

The actions led by Mahmud Khudoiberdiev in November indicated dissatisfaction among those who feel blocked from participation in the current inter-Tajik peace process. Other clashes during the year involved UTO elements. All of these clashes resulted in civilian deaths, abuse, and property damage. There are credible reports of excesses by both opposition elements and government forces involved in these clashes. Following the November antigovernment action led by Mahmud Khudoiberdiev, there were allegations of heavy-handed treatment of civilians in the Leninabad region by government forces seeking to identify potential insurgents and locate caches of weapons allegedly left behind by Khudoiberdiev's forces. There are credible reports that Ministry of Interior troops killed civilians during and after May and July clashes near Dushanbe.

The armed opposition committed serious abuses, including killings and abductions. There were credible reports that UTO units threatened, extorted, and abused the civilian populations.

## **RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **Section 1 Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom From:**

#### **a. Political and Other Extrajudicial Killing**

There were scores of extrajudicial killings, but it was difficult to attribute responsibility in many individual cases. Some killings were committed by competing government forces for varying motives, both political and economic; some by the opposition; and some by independent warlords.

On April 29, fighting broke out between opposition troops and government security forces in Kofarnihon and spread to eastern Dushanbe. Human Rights Watch reported that, according to witnesses, the opposition troops retreated from the area soon after the arrival of government tanks and reinforcements. Subsequently, government forces burned residential buildings and attacked persons perceived to be opposition sympathizers. The OSCE, the UNMOT, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimate that between 25 and 35 civilians were killed. The Government created a commission in May to investigate the incidents, but it has not issued a report or taken significant action against the perpetrators by year's end.

On July 1, government forces launched a raid against a renegade opposition commander east of Dushanbe. The opposition alleged that Ministry of Interior troops killed civilians and looted and destroyed houses during the raid.

A number of local officials, businessmen, and professional figures were killed during the year, for a variety of political, economic, and ethnic reasons. Victims included UTO field commander Usmon Khojaev, Shahrinai district chairman Galandar Haidarov, Tursunzade mayor Nurullo Khairulloev, and Mullo Giyomiddin, the imam of the central mosque in Dushanbe (see Section 1.b.). Few suspects have been identified; the Government has investigated some high profile cases, usually without any results. The competence of those efforts as well as their independence has been questioned. A number of apparent murders have been essentially concealed, with official news noting only that the individual had died.

Harsh prison conditions and lack of food and adequate medical treatment resulted in a significant number of deaths in custody (see Section 1.c.).

Six individuals charged with participating in the April 1997 assassination attempt on President Rahmanov in Khujand were sentenced to death in March. The Government asserted that Mahmud

Khudoiberdiev's group was responsible for the October 16, 1997 attack on the Presidential Guards. No progress was reported on investigations into the 1997 killings of several Russian servicemen. Also there has been no reported progress in the investigations into the 1996 murder of the mufti of Tajikistan or the murder of the prominent senior academic, Muhammad Osimi. There was no official action against government forces for the deaths of 26 prisoners when they retook Khojand prison in 1997.

Opposition forces also committed extrajudicial killings. After the July 20 killing of four UNMOT personnel in the opposition-held Karotegin Valley, United Nations observers were withdrawn temporarily from field posts throughout the country. Other U.N. and most international nongovernmental organization operations were suspended in the Karotegin Valley pending resolution of the case. The Government and the UTO appear to have cooperated on the investigation. Three suspects, reported to be opposition fighters, were arrested in late August. Since then there has been no further progress reported on the case, and the trial had not begun by year's end. There were also clashes between government and opposition troops that occurred near the town of Kofarnihon on March 24 and 25, violating the peace accords. The fighting resulted in a significant number of casualties and POW's. Representatives of the Commission on National Reconciliation were dispatched to the area and succeeded in negotiating the release of the captured soldiers and restoring calm.

#### b. Disappearance

There were a number of disappearances during the year. The taking of hostages for revenge or as bargaining chips in negotiations is becoming increasingly common. The bodies of a number of persons who were kidnaped and killed were found.

On July 28, the imam of the central mosque, Mullo Giyomiddin, was kidnaped by an unknown group near Dushanbe. His body was found some days later. His successor, Mullo Khudoiberdi, was kidnaped on September 3, but was released after a few days.

On June 11, UNMOT staff members were detained, beaten, and robbed by an unknown armed group near Hoit in the Karotegin Valley. They were released the same day.

Political pressure and a lack of professional resources hamper government efforts to investigate disappearances. There were no developments in the 1996 disappearance of Zafar Rahmonov, the opposition cochairman of the Joint Commission on cease-fire observation.

Opposition forces based near Kofarnihon, just east of Dushanbe, carried out a variety of attacks against police checkpoints and kidnaped a number of Tajik officials and civilians during the year. Bobojon Murodov, deputy chairman of the Dushanbe city government, was taken hostage by a UTO armed group and was released only after the chairman of the UTO negotiated with the hostage takers.

#### c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

The law prohibits such practices, but in practice the Government violates such prohibitions. Security officials, particularly those in the Ministry of Interior, regularly beat detainees in custody and use systematic beatings to extort confessions. There were credible allegations that security forces illegally detained, mistreated, and beat members of opposition parties or their relatives (see Section 1.d.). Human Rights Watch reported that the Government acknowledged that the security forces were corrupted by criminal elements and that most citizens chose to keep silent in the face of official mistreatment rather than risk retaliation by the police. In the southern region of Shaartuz, the Tadjik Border Forces (TBF) control much of the drug trade, and the local population made numerous complaints of harassment and

human rights abuses against the TBF.

Three bombs exploded in Dushanbe in October. Two were at the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense. There were no injuries and only minimal property damage. There were no reports of any arrests.

Prison conditions remain harsh and life threatening. Prisons generally are overcrowded, unsanitary, and disease-ridden, producing serious threats to many prisoners' health. This problem reflects in part the self-funded status of most prisons, under which before 1992 prisoners grew much of their own food or made goods for sale. The general collapse of governmental programs and of the economy also meant the virtual disappearance of these programs. Although conditions in most prisons were alleviated somewhat due to a food program sponsored by the ICRC, the program was discontinued in July. Some food production has resumed, but it is still inadequate. Family members are allowed access to prisoners only after a guilty verdict, in accordance with the law.

Abdulhafiz Abdullajonov, the brother of a political opponent of the President, was arrested in May 1997 on narcotics charges that appear fabricated. Despite appeals for clemency based on a diagnosis of terminal cancer, Abdullajonov remained in prison and claimed to have been denied proper medical treatment. He was sentenced to death on March 12 (see Section 1 e.).

There was no official action against government forces for the deaths of 26 prisoners when they retook Khojand prison in 1997.

The ICRC succeeded in getting permission for access to convicted prisoners but not those in pretrial detention (where most abuses occur) despite written assurances from senior government officials (see Section 4).

#### d. Arbitrary Arrest, Detention, or Exile

The Criminal Code has not been amended significantly since independence, and it therefore retains many of the defects inherited from Soviet times. The Government continued to arbitrarily arrest and detain citizens. The Government claims that revision of the Criminal Code is a high priority, but due to the size and complexity of the code, the small parliamentary staff, and limited time in session for the Majlisi Oli, progress has been slow. There is no projected completion date. The system allows for lengthy pretrial detention and provides few checks on the power of procurators and police to arrest persons. Public order, which broke down during the civil war, has yet to be restored fully, and the virtual immunity from prosecution of armed militia groups has eroded further the integrity of the legal system.

Police legally may detain persons without a warrant for a period of 72 hours, and the procurator's office may do so for a period of 10 days after which the accused must be charged officially. At that point, the Criminal Code permits pretrial detention for up to 15 months. The first 3 months of detention are at the discretion of the local procurator, the second 3 months must be approved at the regional level, and the Procurator General must sanction the remaining time in detention. The Criminal Code maintains that all investigations must be completed 1 month before the 15-month maximum in order to allow the defense time to examine government evidence. There is no requirement for judicial approval or for a preliminary judicial hearing on the charge or detention. In criminal cases, detainees may be released and restricted to their place of residence pending trial. Once a case is entered for trial, the law states that it must be brought before a judge within 28 days. However, it is common for cases to languish for many months before trial begins; there is no provision for bail.

The Government made politically motivated arrests, and there are credible allegations of dozens of cases of illegal government detention of members of opposition political parties or their relatives. In most cases, the security officers, principally personnel from the Ministry of Internal Affairs or the Ministry of Security, do not obtain arrest warrants and do not bring charges. Those released sometimes claimed that they were mistreated and beaten during detention.

Opposition sources maintain that security forces detained dozens of persons unlawfully without charge. Since the law precludes visits to persons in pretrial detention, it is not possible to assess these allegations. There could be as many as several hundred political detainees, but the absence of ICRC or other access to these persons makes any estimate uncertain.

The OSCE reports that border force units routinely take family members of deserters hostage and hold them until the deserters return to duty.

The Constitution states that no one can be exiled without a legal basis; no laws have been passed so far setting out any legal basis for exile. There were no reports of forced exile. Some opposition party activists are in self-imposed exile.

#### e. Denial of Fair Public Trial

The 1994 Constitution states that judges are independent and subordinate only to the Constitution and the law, and prohibits interference in their activities; however, judicial officials at all levels of the court system are influenced heavily by both the political leadership and, in many instances, armed paramilitary groups. Under the Constitution, the President has the right, with confirmation by the Parliament, both to appoint and to dismiss judges and prosecutors. Judges at the local, regional, and republic level are for the most part poorly trained and lack understanding of the concept of an independent judiciary.

The court system, largely unmodified from the Soviet period, includes city, district, regional, and national levels, with a parallel military court system. Higher courts serve as appellate courts for the lower ones. The Constitution establishes additional courts, including a Constitutional Court. This court began to function in 1997.

According to the law, trials are public, except in cases involving national security or the protection of minors. The court appoints an attorney for those who do not have one. Defendants may choose their own attorney but may not necessarily choose among court-appointed defenders. In practice arrested persons often are denied prompt, and in some cases any, access to an attorney.

Bahrom Sodirov, who was charged in the February 1997 kidnaping of the Minister of Security, 4 UNMOT personnel, and 11 others, was arrested soon after the hostages were released. His trial, from which observers were barred, was suspended in late 1997 and has not resumed.

The procurator's office is responsible for conducting all investigations of alleged criminal conduct. In theory both defendant and counsel have the right to review all government evidence, to confront witnesses, and to present evidence and testimony. No groups are barred from testifying, and all testimony theoretically is given equal weight, regardless of ethnicity or gender of the witness. Ministry of Justice officials maintain that defendants benefit from the presumption of innocence, despite the unmodified Soviet legal statute, which presumes the guilt of all persons brought to trial. Thus, in practice, bringing charges tends to suggest guilt to most Tajiks.

Pressure continues to be exerted on the judicial system by local strongmen, their armed paramilitary groups, and vigilantes who operate outside of government control, sometimes leading to the dismissal of charges and dropping of cases. Bribery of prosecutors and judges also is considered to be widespread.

Abdulhafiz Abdullajonov, who was incarcerated without adequate medical treatment (see Section 1.c.) on apparently fabricated narcotics charges, was convicted and sentenced to death on March 12 on assassination charges. His codefendants later stated that they had been forced under duress, including beating, to incriminate Abdullajonov. His trial was closed and the evidence on which his conviction was based was not made public. Abdullajonov's arrest and unfair trial were politically motivated and he should be considered a political prisoner. At year's end, his circumstances were unknown.

The Government holds political prisoners, including opposition party activists, although estimates of the number of prisoners vary widely. The Government and the Tajik opposition exchanged multiple lists of prisoners of war (POW's) and political prisoners for exchange as a result of the 1997 inter-Tajik talks in Moscow. The largest opposition list totaled 700 names of political prisoners believed by the opposition to be in government custody, while the largest government list totaled over 400 soldiers believed by the Government to be held by the opposition. Both lists undoubtedly include many names of persons missing, dead, or in the case of POW's held by the opposition, who had defected. The Government has released the majority of the UTO prisoners, although the UTO still claims that about 350 of its supporters are in government prisons or other detention. The Government claims that those still held are criminals not subject to amnesty. The opposition UTO has stated that they have released all government POW's.

#### f. Arbitrary Interference with Privacy, Family, Home, or Correspondence

The Constitution provides for the inviolability of the home and prohibits interference with correspondence, telephone conversations, and postal and communication rights, except "in cases prescribed by law." The authorities, however, continued to infringe on citizens' right to privacy. Except for some special circumstances, police may not enter and search a private home without the approval of the procurator. When they do enter and search without prior approval, they must then inform the procurator within 24 hours. Police also are permitted to enter and search homes without permission if they have compelling reason to believe a delay in obtaining a warrant would impair national security. There is no judicial review of police searches conducted without a warrant.

Government forces beat and arrested the relatives of members of opposition parties (see Sections 1.c. and 1.d.). Security forces also detained relatives of deserters in order to compel deserters to return to duty (see Section 1.d.). In April government forces burned residential buildings

(see Section 1.a.).

## **Section 2 Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:**

### a. Freedom of Speech and Press

Despite the Constitution and the 1991 law protecting freedom of speech and the press, the Government severely restricts freedom of expression in practice. Journalists, broadcasters, and individual citizens who disagree with government policies cannot speak freely or critically. The Government exercises control over the media both overtly through legislation and less obviously through such mechanisms as "friendly advice" to reporters on what news should not be covered. The Government also controlled the printing presses and the supply of newsprint and broadcasting facilities, and subsidizes virtually all

publications and productions. Editors fearful of reprisals exercise careful self-censorship.

Two new opposition newspapers began publication. Sadoi Majahed (Voice of the Mujahad) is published in Gharm and Kofarnihon and calls itself the newspaper of the UTO military. Originally published in Afghanistan in the early 1990's, it began publishing in Tajikistan in April. Beginning in May, Muzhda (Good News) has been published by opposition members of the Commission on National Reconciliation using copy machines in their offices in Dushanbe. Both papers have very small circulation.

In July the Government revoked the accreditation of Russian television correspondent Elena Masyuk and expelled her from the country based on the Law on Press and Mass Media that prohibits the abuse of freedom of expression. The accompanying government statement accused Masyuk of attempting to discredit the Tajik leadership and interfering in the country's internal affairs.

The number of local newspapers is increasing, but only a handful of them attempt to cover serious news. Several are organs of political parties or blocs. There were allegations of threats of closures against newspapers critical of the Government. There is one national television service with several local offices that cover regional and local issues from an official point of view. There are 11 independent television stations,

2 of which are not functioning due to financial problems. Some have independent studio facilities and do not have to use official studios.

Safareli Kenjaev, chairman of the parliamentary committee responsible for broadcasting, initially had trouble publishing his Socialist Party newspaper Ittihod. After removing an editor, however, he has not had further difficulty.

To obtain licenses, independent television stations must work through two government agencies, the Ministry of Communications and the State Committee on Radio and Television. At every stage of the very time consuming bureaucratic process, there are high official and unofficial fees. Nevertheless, no station that wanted a license has been prevented from obtaining one.

Academic expression is limited principally by the complete reliance of scientific institutes upon government funding, and in practical terms by the need to find alternate employment to generate sufficient income, leaving little time for academic writing. The assailants of the rector of the Tajik technological university in 1997 were not identified or apprehended. He has, however, continued his work without further interference.

#### b. Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association

The Constitution provides for freedom of peaceful assembly; in practice, however, the authorities exercise strict control over organizations and activities of a political nature. Nonpolitical associations, such as trade unions, are allowed to meet. Registered organizations must apply for a permit from the local executive committee in order legally to organize any public assembly or demonstration. Sometimes this right is honored, but the Government subsequently has been known to take reprisals against organizers. There were demonstrations in the Penjikent district in June and Isfara in May in which persons gathered to demand the release of the imams of the local mosques. Authorities arrested some of the participants in these demonstrations. On February 28, a scheduled meeting of the members of the Congress of Popular Unity, led by prominent politician and businessman Saifuddin Turayev, was prevented from taking place by government troops.

The Constitution provides for freedom of association; however, although this right is permitted for nonpolitical associations (including trade unions), freedom of association is circumscribed by the requirement in the law on nongovernmental associations that all organizations first must register with the Ministry of Justice. This process often is slowed by the requirement to submit documents in both Russian and Tajik. The Ministry of Justice's verification of the text inevitably delays the granting of registration. In practice the authorities exercise strict control over organizations and activities of a political nature. Once registered an organization may apply for a permit to hold a public assembly or demonstration.

There are 12 political parties officially registered with the Government. The new Party of Justice and Progress was allowed to register this year. Three of the four political parties suspended in 1993--the Islamic Revival Party, the Rastohez National Movement, and the Lali Badakhshan Movement for the Autonomy of the Pamirs--and a branch of the Democratic Party remain suspended (The Democratic Party was banned in 1993. In 1994 a splinter group was formed, and in 1995 the other part of the party reregistered under the old title of Democratic Party. Thus there are two Democratic Parties functioning, one banned and one legal.) The Agrarian Party has not been able to register, but its application was not refused and it was suggested that the party attempt again to register in 1999.

On May 23, the Parliament passed a law prohibiting the creation of political parties with a religious orientation. The opposition UTO, international organizations, and foreign governments strongly criticized the law for violating the spirit and the letter of the 1997 peace agreement. On June 2, President Rahmonov established a Special Conciliation Commission to resolve the dispute. On June 18, the Commission reported that it had devised compromise language for the law, banning political parties from receiving support from religious institutions. A new version of the law including the compromise language was passed in the November parliamentary session.

In some cases, members of suspended political parties have been unable to find employment, apparently at the direction of the security services.

### c. Freedom of Religion

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and neither the law nor the Government places restrictions on religious worship. However, according to the Law on Freedom of Faith, the Committee on Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers registers religious communities and monitors the activities of the various religious establishments. While the official reason given to justify registration is to ensure that religious groups act in accordance with the law, the practical purpose is to ensure that they do not become overly political. Although unregistered, recently organized religious communities, such as Baha'i and Hare Krishna groups function with no apparent formal restriction and only limited experiences of prejudice. However, regularly throughout the year, President Rahmanov aggressively defended secularism and occasionally criticized Islam as a political threat.

In 1997 the Council of the Islamic Center was subordinated to the Government Committee on Religious Affairs. This move took place quietly, and with no apparent objection from the observant Muslim community.

### Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation

The Constitution provides for the right of citizens to choose their place of residence, to emigrate, and to return. In practice the Government generally respects these rights, with some restrictions.

The Government has stipulated that both citizens and foreigners are prohibited from traveling within a 25-kilometer zone along the republic's borders with China and Afghanistan without permission from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This restriction is not always enforced along the western part of the border with Afghanistan, but a special visa generally is required for travelers, including international workers and diplomats, to Gorno-Badakhshan. Travel to border areas in the southwest is not restricted significantly, except occasionally at the border, which is closed intermittently by one side or the other.

Residents of Dushanbe and those travelers who wish to remain longer than 3 days are supposed to register with central authorities, and regulations require registration at the local Ministry of Interior office upon arrival and departure from a city. However, these regulations largely are ignored in practice. There are no legal restrictions on changing residence or workplace.

The Ministry of Security inhibits freedom of travel by requiring citizens who wish to travel abroad to obtain an exit visa. This process sometimes includes lengthy interviews. The Ministry of Security sometimes withholds or delays exit visas when it believes that other ministries or NGO's are infringing upon its jurisdiction and have not adhered to its formalities for foreign travel.

There is no law on emigration. Persons who wish to migrate within the former Soviet Union notify the Ministry of Interior of their departure. Persons who wish to emigrate beyond the borders of the former Soviet Union must receive the approval of the relevant country's embassy in order to obtain their passport. Persons who settle abroad are required to inform the Tajikistan embassy or Tajikistan interests section of the nearest Russian embassy or consulate.

Persons who wish to return to Tajikistan after having emigrated may do so freely by submitting their applications to the Tajikistan embassy or Tajikistan interests section of the nearest Russian embassy or consulate. The Government adjudicates requests on a case-by-case basis. There is no indication that persons, other than those who fled Tajikistan for political reasons after the civil war, are not permitted to return freely. Some persons currently active with the Tajik opposition, whose travel documents expired, at times have had difficulty obtaining new documents permitting them to return.

There remain over 12,000 internally displaced persons (IDP's) as a result of the 1992 civil wa