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Document #2136268

HRW – Human Rights Watch (Author)

World Report 2026; Tajikistan

Events of 2025

In 2025, the Tajik government solidified the power of the ruling party through parliamentary elections held without independent observers and continued its crackdown on dissent by sentencing public figures and journalists to long prison terms.

There has been no independent investigation or accountability for the deadly government crackdown on peaceful protesters in the Gorno-Badakshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) in 2021 and 2022. Members of the Pamiri ethnic group, people who reside in the GBAO, continue to report high levels of harassment and pressure from the authorities. There has also been no accountability for crimes committed by the Tajik armed forces during the 2022 border conflict with Kyrgyzstan.

In October, Tajikistan hosted Russian President Vladimir Putin, an ICC suspect, for an event on regional cooperation and security in Dushanbe, failing to execute the court's warrant against him. The ICC has initiated proceedings to assess whether Tajikistan failed to comply with its obligation to cooperate with the court.

Freedom of belief continued to be tightly controlled by the authorities, while domestic violence remained decriminalized.

Parliamentary Elections

In March, in elections for the lower house of parliament, the ruling People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan won 49 out of 63 seats, with the

remaining seats taken by smaller pro-government parties. The elections were the first since the Tajik Civil War to take place without independent observers. In February, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) announced it was forced to cancel its election monitoring mission after Tajik authorities failed to provide accreditation to its observers less than a month before elections. Independent media outlets, including Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's Tajik Service, were also not accredited to cover the elections.

Repression of Civil Society

In February, Tajikistan's Supreme Court convicted several prominent figures of high treason for allegedly plotting to seize power and sentenced them to between 18 and 27 years in prison. The defendants included Shokirjon Khakimov, a human rights lawyer, publicist, and deputy chairman of the opposition Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan, detained in the summer 2024, who was handed 18 years in prison. Former Foreign Minister Khamrokhon Zarifi and Saidjafar Usmonzoda (former member of parliament and former leader of the opposition Democratic Party of Tajikistan) each received 27-year sentences. Former deputy chairman of the Democratic Party of Tajikistan, Ahmadshokh Komilzoda, the former chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan, Akbarsho Iskandarov, and Nuramin Ganizoda (a retired colonel of the State Committee National Security, or GKNB) were also reportedly sentenced to 18 years in prison.

Political Prisoners

In March, President Emomali Rahmon granted amnesty to 897 prisoners, but did not include any convicted journalists, civil activists, or opposition politicians.

In the first half of the year, five ethnic Pamiri activists died while in custody. All five men had been detained following the May 2022 protests. Some died after being denied medical care. Information about one of the men, who died in February, became public only in late August 2025.

In September, an 83-year-old former member of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT), Zubaidullo Roziq, died in custody after a long illness related to his pre-existing heart disease. A year earlier, he had been briefly hospitalized, but later returned to prison, despite repeated calls for his release on humanitarian grounds.

At least six civil society activists of ethnic Pamiri origin remain imprisoned, including Ulfatkhonim Mamadshoeva (sentenced to 21 years) and Manuchehr Kholiqnazarov (sentenced to 16 years). They were all detained

and convicted on charges related to the violent crackdown on protests by the authorities in the GBAO region in May 2022 and November 2021.

Seven journalists remain in prison for their critical reporting.

Freedom of Expression

In May, the second international conference of Central Asian women journalists, which was to be held in Dushanbe, was abruptly cancelled on the eve of the event with no explanation, and when the organizers attempted to conduct it at a different venue, participants were forced to leave in the midst of introductory speeches by several ambassadors from EU countries who had supported the event. The platform was supposed to be a safe space for discussing issues faced by women in media throughout the region.

In February, the Supreme Court convicted Ruhshona Khakimova, an investigative journalist, on classified charges, with no public record of what she was accused or convicted of, sentencing her to eight years in prison following a closed trial. Khakimova is the niece of Shokirjon Khakimov, whose case is discussed above.

In January, journalist Ahmad Ibrohim, chief editor of the independent weekly newspaper "Payk," was sentenced to 10 years in prison following his arrest on bribery charges related to his newspaper's re-registration in August 2024. In the past, such arrests have been shown to be politically motivated.

Freedom of Belief

In February, authorities prevented Ismaili Shia Muslims in Khorog and Dushanbe from properly mourning the death of their spiritual leader, the Aga Khan IV. In Khorog, capital of the GBAO, law enforcement cut off loudspeaker access to the ceremony for those that were unable to get inside the Ismaili Center, threatening "consequences" for those who protested. In Dushanbe, authorities cut off electricity to the Ismaili Center during the homage ceremony.

In July, authorities prohibited Ismaili athletes from participating in the Ismaili Games, conducted as part of "Global Encounters Festival" 2025 in Dubai, citing "threats of an unidentified nature."

Transnational Repression

In February, Dilmurod Ergashev, a Tajik opposition activist and an asylum seeker, deported from Germany in November 2024, was convicted of "publicly calling for extremist activity" and sentenced to eight years in

prison. Ergashev had been detained immediately upon his arrival in Tajikistan and detained for two months by court order.

In May, a social media activist critical of the Tajik government and an asylum seeker in Sweden, Farkhod Negmatov, was sentenced to eight years in prison on charges of membership in the banned organization "Hizb ut-Tahrir." He was deported together with his three minor daughters from Sweden in December 2024. Negmatov denied the charges.

Refugees

In July, Tajik authorities said that a number of undocumented Afghan nationals had been deported. Authorities claimed they had entered Tajikistan illegally. According to media, several dozen men, women, and children were forced to leave the country. It is unknown, however, who was targeted, on what grounds, and where they were deported to.

Labor Migrants

Tajik migrants working in Russia have faced increased harassment since the March 2024 attack on Crocus City Hall in Moscow, in which Tajik nationals were implicated as organizers. In 2025, Russian authorities imposed additional administrative restrictions on labor migrants to Russia, including bans on employment in a wide range of service spheres.

Conflict at the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan Border

In March, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan signed an agreement over the contested border between the two countries. The agreement includes a plan for land swaps of equal size and the shared management and use of water resources and facilities, as well as a commitment not to fly drones or station any heavy military equipment or auxiliary forces along the border. This follows a border conflict in 2022, during which both countries committed apparent war crimes leading to the deaths of at least 37 civilians and the deliberate destruction of homes. Neither side has publicized information indicating that perpetrators from their own forces were held to account for violations they committed during the conflict.

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ecoi.net description:

Annual report on human rights situation in 2025

Country:
Tajikistan

Source:
HRW – Human Rights Watch (Author)

Published:
4 February 2026

Original link:
https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2026/country-chapters/tajikistan

Document type:
Periodical Report

Language:
English

Available on ecoi.net since:
4 February 2026

Document ID:
2136268

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ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.