UNITED NATIONS
TAJIKISTAN

Joint submission of the United Nations Country Team in Tajikistan prepared for the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Tajikistan

March 2026

1. INTRODUCTION

This submission was prepared by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Tajikistan and draws on contributions from UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, UN Women, OHCHR, WFP and IOM, covering the period from November 2021 to March 2026. It is not intended to provide an exhaustive analysis of the human rights situation in Tajikistan but highlights key issues addressed by the UNCT in the discharge of its mandate in the country.

2. SCOPE OF INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS AND COOPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

Achievements

Tajikistan has continued to engage with the international human rights system. The Government participated in constructive dialogues with the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) in 2022, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) in 2023, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2024.

Tajikistan submitted periodic reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Committee against Torture (CAT) in 2022, follow-up reports to the Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW) in 2022 and the Human Rights Committee (HRC) in 2023, and completed the Beijing+30 national review (2019–2023), while participating in CSW68, CSW69 and regional consultations.

The country hosted visits by the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders in 2022, and the Special Rapporteurs on freedom of religion or belief and on minority issues in 2023. Tajikistan also submitted a mid-term report under the UPR in 2024.

In 2023, Tajikistan adopted its National Strategy on Human Rights Protection up to 2038 and a short-term action plan for 2023–2025, both of which address recommendations issued under international human rights mechanisms.

Issues

While interaction between the Tajikistani authorities and international human rights mechanisms remains generally constructive, greater emphasis is needed on follow-up and implementation of recommendations. Further efforts are required to design national action plans that would include concrete, measurable results and specific indicators. A number of key international human rights instruments remain unratified.

Recommendations

- Ensure systematic follow-up to international human rights recommendations through national action plans with clear indicators, timelines and measurable results.

- Finalize and advance the ratification process of outstanding international human rights instruments, in particular the CRPD, OPCAT and 2nd OP to ICCPR.

3. NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK

Achievements

In 2024, Tajikistan amended the Law on the Commissioner for Human Rights (CHR) to strengthen its mandate and align it more closely with national non-discrimination legislation. The amendments expanded the Commissioner's authority to review discrimination complaints, conduct mediation and assess legislation, and established a dedicated unit on equality and non-discrimination. Although a national preventive mechanism under OPCAT has not yet been created, the Commissioner continues preventive monitoring through visits to places of detention, including with NGO participation. Draft Criminal Code amendments criminalizing domestic violence have been submitted to Parliament, and the Law on Responsibility for Child Education and Upbringing introduced a comprehensive ban on corporal punishment.

Issues

Limited progress has been made in strengthening the mandate, independence and resources of the CHR, who continues to be appointed through a non-transparent process and faces human and financial constraints. Access to legal aid has expanded with the establishment of 68 state funded legal aid centers around the country providing primary legal aid. However, access to secondary legal aid declined by nearly 80% after the shift to state funding and restrictive eligibility criteria[1]. Although corporal punishment is legally banned, implementation is hindered by weak coordination, limited trained personnel, persistent social norms and inadequate monitoring systems, while diversion and restorative approaches and child-friendly complaint mechanisms remain underdeveloped.

Recommendations

- Revise the Law on the CHR to ensure full compliance with the Paris Principles and provide the CHR with adequate human and financial resources to carry out its mandate independently.
- Amend the Law on Legal Aid to expand eligibility for secondary legal aid, ensure access for all juveniles regardless of parental status, and establish clear service delivery mechanisms.
- Establish a comprehensive and enforceable national child protection framework with standard operating procedures, clear referral pathways with time-bound steps, designated focal points at national and district levels, and regular compliance reporting.

4. IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS OBLIGATIONS

Equality and non-discrimination

Achievements

[1]According to the State Agency on Legal Aid Centers, following the introduction of new eligibility standards in 2021, the number of secondary legal aid cases declined from 1,462 in 2020 to 259 in 2021. While 3,548 cases were recorded between 2018 and 2020, only 1,188 were reported between 2022 and 2025; in 2025, the Government of Tajikistan compensated 471 secondary legal aid cases under the Legal Aid Law.

In 2022, Tajikistan adopted the Law "On Equality and Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination," establishing a comprehensive legal framework prohibiting direct, indirect and multiple discrimination and recognizing the right to remedies. The law introduced clear definitions and principles of equality, strengthening alignment with international standards. Equality considerations were integrated into border and economic governance initiatives, including a 2025 gender analysis of cross-border trade and Free Economic Zones that produced disaggregated evidence on barriers to women's participation.

Issues

Implementation of the 2022 Law remains limited, as enforcement, complaint and monitoring mechanisms are not yet fully operational and awareness among authorities and the public remains low. Nationwide training on anti-discrimination standards for judges, prosecutors and public officials has not been institutionalized, while women in border regions continue to face structural barriers to trade and economic participation, including limited access to information, services and gender-responsive administrative practices.

Recommendations

- Fully implement the 2022 Law by adopting regulations, establishing complaint and monitoring mechanisms, and publishing data on discrimination cases.
- Institutionalize nationwide training on anti-discrimination standards for justice and public officials and strengthen public awareness of equality rights.
- Integrate gender-responsive approaches and gender-disaggregated data into border, trade and sectoral policies, with increased funding for gender equality programmes.

The right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment

Achievements

Tajikistan has strengthened child-focused disaster risk reduction and climate action by integrating emergency training into schools, with over one million students participating in drills, and adopting a national DRR strategy. The country signed the 2024 Declaration on Children, Youth and Climate Action, supported youth engagement through national and local platforms, and advanced water and sanitation policy through the Water Sector Strategy 2040 and updated legislation. Migration considerations have also been integrated into the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2025–2027, addressing the needs of migrant and displaced populations.

Issues

Tajikistan is highly vulnerable to climate risks, with children exposed to heat stress, floods, droughts, glacier melt, seismic hazards and air pollution, while many rural schools and health facilities lack climate resilient and inclusive infrastructure[2]. WASH systems remain a critical bottleneck, with limited access to safely managed rural water and sanitation and insufficient hygiene standards in schools and health facilities, compounded by investment gaps and

[2] UNICEF. (2023). Tajikistan: Children, climate and environment in Tajikistan, Narrative report. UNICEF Tajikistan

fragmented governance.[34] Public finance and data systems are not yet optimized for climate smart, child sensitive planning, and meaningful participation of women, children, persons with disabilities and local communities in climate and disaster risk reduction processes remains limited and not institutionalized. Women in rural areas are disproportionately affected by climate impacts due to reliance on natural resources, limited access to land, finance and climate-resilient technologies, and restricted participation in environmental decision-making.

Recommendations

- Strengthen climate-resilient and inclusive systems for children by scaling climate-resilient WASH in rural communities, schools and health facilities, upgrading social infrastructure, integrating child, gender and disability considerations into climate and DRR legislation, and linking early warning systems with shock-responsive social protection.
- Institutionalize inclusive climate governance and financing by closing the WASH financing gap through a multi-year plan, introducing climate and child budget tagging with stronger monitoring systems, and ensuring participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in climate and DRR planning.

Human rights and counter - terrorism

Achievements

Tajikistan has adopted its Strategy for the Prevention of Extremism and Terrorism until 2040, together with an Action Plan for 2026–2030, following legal and policy reviews under the 2021–2025 national strategy aimed at aligning national legislation and policies with international standards and UPR recommendations[5].Prevention of Violent Extremism advisory groups have been expanded nationwide, strengthening coordination between state institutions and civil society and supporting community-based prevention, anti-stigma messaging and referral mechanisms. Rehabilitation and reintegration programmes in penitentiary settings between 2022 and 2025 reached more than 4,000 detainees, including women, through psychosocial support, vocational training and counselling, while prison staff received training aligned with international standards. Youth initiatives also engaged over 1,700 young people in activities promoting tolerance, civic participation and employability.[6]

Issues

A deteriorating regional security environment has led to intensified security operations, while challenges persist in border management, coordination, infrastructure, training capacity and

[3] UNICEF Tajikistan. (2025). WASH Sector Brief: Challenges, Opportunities, and UNICEF Strategic Positioning. Dushanbe: UNICEF Tajikistan Country Office

[4] Ministry of Health Services and Social Protection of the People of the Republic of Tajikistan and UNICEF Tajikistan (2022). Joint Sector Review: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

[5] https://ct-secretariat.tj/en/background-information/gosudarstvennye-strategii-i-programmy-neposredstvenno-svyazannye-s-predotvrashcheniem-ekstremizma-i-terrorizma

[6] Achieved under the UNDP projects “Strengthening Social Cohesion Through Advancement and Promotion of the Rights of Young Women and Men Vulnerable to Radicalization” (funded by Global Affairs Canada) and “Promoting Resilient Communities to Prevent Violent Extremism in Central Asia” (funded by the Government of Japan).

prevention efforts in vulnerable border and migrant communities. Discrepancies between national definitions of extremism and terrorism and international standards complicate enforcement, and counter-terrorism legislation is not yet fully aligned with the ICCPR and other instruments. Implementation of prevention policies remains uneven due to limited capacity and funding, with insufficient integration of gender perspectives and participation of women and youth. Rehabilitation and reintegration systems remain incomplete, with gaps in post-release support, risk assessment, prison monitoring and community early warning mechanisms, while stigma toward returnees and former detainees continues to hinder reintegration.

Recommendations:

- Strengthen rights-compliant counter-terrorism frameworks through improved training, oversight, coordination and community engagement.
- Review counter-terrorism legislation to align with international standards, ensuring clear definitions, safeguards and protection of fundamental freedoms.
- Expand prevention and reintegration efforts by engaging migrant communities, strengthening local coordination and ensuring meaningful participation of women and youth.

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

Achievements

Tajikistan strengthened the legal aid and justice system through training of state legal aid lawyers[7] and advocates, development of criminal defence modules[8] and a cost analysis of the legal aid system.[9] Judicial capacity was enhanced through training on fair trial standards, gender equality and new legislation. A national study assessed access to justice for persons with disabilities,[10] while measures supporting women in the legal profession increased the number of licensed women advocates[11] and expanded legal assistance for vulnerable women. Tajikistan also strengthened child-sensitive justice through the 2023–2027 Juvenile Justice Reform Programme.

Main issues/gaps:

Juvenile justice reform in Tajikistan remains incomplete, with legislative gaps and limited use of diversion and child-sensitive procedures. The absence of a unified child protection and justice

[7] State legal aid lawyers under the State Agency on Legal Aid Centers received training on national legislation, representation of victims of gender-based violence, digital skills, oral advocacy, representation before government agencies, and prevention of stress and professional burnout.

[8] Training modules on criminal defence were developed at the Union of Advocates in 2025, whose members are solely responsible for providing secondary legal aid in criminal matters.

[9] The Government of Switzerland and UNICEF will help realize children's equitable access to justice in Tajikistan, *UNICEF Tajikistan*, Press Release, 15 March 2024.

[10] https://www.undp.org/tajikistan/publications/experience-solution-access-justice-persons-disabilities-tajikistan

[11] According to the Union of Advocates of the Republic of Tajikistan, completion of the first cohort of the Internship Programme for Young Women Lawyers contributed to a 6 per cent increase in the number of licensed women advocates in the country in 2025.

system leads to fragmented referrals and inconsistent enforcement of children's rights, while detention continues to be used for non-violent offences.[12] Women remain underrepresented in senior justice positions,[13] the legal aid system faces financing and coordination challenges, and constraints on civic space limit independent monitoring and accountability.

Recommendations

- Institutionalize continuous training for justice professionals on fair trial standards, gender equality, disability inclusion and juvenile justice.
- Adopt a comprehensive Juvenile Justice Reform Strategy and prioritize diversion, restorative and non-custodial measures, limiting detention to a measure of last resort.
- Promote gender-inclusive justice and remove barriers for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV).
- Ensure sustainable financing of the legal aid system and expand digitalization, transparency and engagement with civil society.

Prevention of Torture

Achievements

In July 2023, the new Civil Code of Tajikistan entered into force, providing for civil liability for harm, including harm resulting from torture and other ill-treatment. Tajikistan has also maintained a moratorium on the death penalty since 2004. The Criminal Procedure Code formally invalidates confessions obtained through unlawful means, including torture. Monitoring group under Ombudsperson Office continue monitoring closed institutions in cooperation with NGOs.

Issues

Torture and ill-treatment remain persistent problems. In practice, victims do not receive effective remedies or adequate compensation. Courts still lack an established practice of excluding evidence or confessions obtained through torture, thereby undermining legal safeguards. The absence of an independent investigative mechanism for torture allegations remains a key structural gap. The situation in prisons is of serious concern, with reports of deaths in custody, lack of timely and adequate medical care, and several prison riots, indicating systemic problems in detention conditions.

Recommendations

- Establish an independent and effective mechanism to investigate allegations of torture and ill-treatment.
- Ratify OPCAT and create an independent National Preventive Mechanism with full access to all places of detention.
- Ensure prompt, adequate, and effective compensation and rehabilitation for victims of torture.
- Improve detention conditions, including access to healthcare, and ensure effective judicial exclusion of evidence obtained through torture.

[12] Transmonee data on Children sentenced to custodial sentences

[13] Time series of gender indicators related to the Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan, Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan

Civic space

Achievements

In May 2025, Tajikistan amended legislation to remove criminal penalties for "liking" social media content deemed extremist, partially reversing earlier provisions that had led to harsh sentences for online expression. Authorities maintained structured dialogue with civil society through annual National Rule of Law Forums (2022–2025), engaging more than 50 NGOs each year and generating recommendations submitted to state institutions. Civil society contributed to research on access to justice for persons with disabilities, trial monitoring and youth policy dialogue. Youth participation mechanisms also expanded, with youth-friendly platforms increasing from 4 to 17 districts by 2024, including Afghan refugee youth.[14] Internet penetration reached nearly 60 users per 100 inhabitants in 2023.[15]

Issues

NGOs in Tajikistan continue to face significant administrative and regulatory burdens, including complex registration, reporting and oversight requirements that limit their ability to operate freely. In 2025, consultations resumed on a draft law on non-commercial organizations with a limited number of selected NGOs, while the number of active organizations declined during the reporting period, particularly in GBAO, reflecting structural constraints and limited capacity for sustained advocacy and policy engagement. Freedom of expression has further deteriorated: since 2022, around 20 independent journalists and bloggers have been arrested, with at least eight receiving prison sentences of 7.5 to 21 years, often on terrorism or extremism charges linked to reporting on issues such as corruption. Access to information remains restricted, participation in public decision-making limited, and digital inequality persists, with only 16% of public schools and 12% of rural schools connected to the internet,[16] while refugee children's school enrolment fell to 42% in 2024.[17]

Recommendations

- Ensure the draft law on non-commercial organizations is developed through inclusive and transparent consultations with a broad range of stakeholders.
- Protect freedom of expression and media freedom by preventing arbitrary prosecution of journalists and aligning extremism-related legislation with international standards.
- Strengthen access to information and institutionalize meaningful child and youth participation in public decision-making.

Human trafficking and prohibition of all forms of slavery

Achievements

Tajikistan adopted National Action Plans on Combating Trafficking in Persons for 2022–2024 and 2025–2027 and was upgraded to Tier 2 in the U.S. TIP Report. Victim identification increased significantly from 47 cases in 2023 to 272 in 2024, supported by strengthened referral

[14] UNICEF. (2024). Tajikistan Country Office Annual Report 2023.

[15] Transmonee data on Internet users per 100 inhabitants

[16] Mike Jensen, ICON-INSTITUTE GmbH & Co. KG Consulting Gruppe, Achieving Universal Connectivity for the Education Sector in the Republic of Tajikistan, Transforming the landscape of digital education in Tajikistan: Assessment, and Strategy for Action, 2024

[17] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). (2025). Annual Results Report – Tajikistan 2024

mechanisms, inter-agency coordination and cooperation with international partners. More than 320 law enforcement officials received training on victim-centred and trauma-informed approaches, including specialized training in 2025 for 25 officers on investigating trafficking linked to organized crime and applying national legislation, the Palermo Protocol and the National Referral Mechanism.

Issues

Regional instability and proximity to Afghanistan increase Tajikistan's exposure to transnational trafficking networks, which increasingly use digital tools and complex financial channels. Legal gaps, limited investigative capacity and challenges in border management hinder effective prosecutions, while reduced NGO funding affects prevention and victim assistance. Practical experience in identifying victims remains limited, and implementation of the National Referral Mechanism is inconsistent due to gaps in procedures and inter-agency coordination.

Recommendations

- Strengthen investigation and prosecution capacities by aligning legislation with international standards, enhancing border management and expanding digital and financial investigative tools.
- Improve victim protection through operationalizing the National Referral Mechanism, strengthening inter-agency coordination and supporting specialized services, witness protection and NGOs.
- Expand practical training for law enforcement and prosecutors on trafficking prevention and victim identification.

Right to work and to just and favorable conditions of work

Achievements

Tajikistan adopted a medium-term programme for productive employment for 2023–2027 under the national employment development concept to 2040. To support women's economic participation, the Government plans to allocate 15 million somoni annually between 2025 and 2030 for 200 presidential grants for women entrepreneurs, supporting start-ups, job creation and innovation. Youth employment has also been strengthened through internships, apprenticeships and entrepreneurship support, providing practical skills, mentorship and incubation support for youth-led enterprises in sectors such as tourism, light industry, green technologies and digital services.

Issues

Women entrepreneurs, particularly in rural areas, face limited access to affordable credit, markets, digital infrastructure and business support services, while monitoring of support programmes remains weak. Women are overrepresented in informal and low-paid sectors and face labour market inequalities, including occupational segregation, wage gaps and limited access to social protection and safe working conditions. A disproportionate burden of unpaid

care work[18] and limited access to affordable childcare, eldercare and flexible work arrangements further restrict women's economic participation. Although youth employment opportunities have expanded, rural youth continue to face barriers related to education quality, digital access, finance and green economic opportunities.

Recommendations

- Expand access to finance, markets, digital tools and business support for women entrepreneurs, particularly in underserved regions, while strengthening monitoring of entrepreneurship programmes and addressing structural barriers to women's economic participation.
- Ensure equal access to social protection, safe working conditions and affordable childcare and social care services to support women's labour force participation.
- Expand youth employment opportunities by strengthening green and digital programmes, improving access to finance for youth enterprises and institutionalizing internships, apprenticeships and business incubation.

Right to social security

Achievements

Tajikistan has integrated migrant-specific needs into its Social Protection Action Plan and in October 2025 approved an agreement with the Russian Federation on medical examination procedures for Tajik workers. Social protection expanded through the 2023–2025 Targeted Social Assistance reform, introducing vulnerability-based child benefits covering about 419,000 children, while COVID-19 support reached over 230,000 households.[19] Community-based disability services expanded to 58 districts, and social assistance increasingly considers household size and vulnerability,[20] with social sector spending averaging 44% of the national budget.[21]

Issues

Tajikistan lacks a comprehensive reintegration programme for returning migrants covering health care, education, employment and social protection, while mechanisms for portability of social benefits, including pensions and recognition of work experience abroad, remain insufficiently regulated. Social protection coverage also remains limited: only 16% of children receive assistance,[22] benefit levels remain below the poverty line and are not indexed to inflation, and spending declined to 3.5% of GDP in 2023.[23] Fragmented data systems and structural gaps leave children in large, rural and migrant households at higher risk of exclusion.

[18] Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan. (2024). Usage of Time Budget by the Population of the Republic of Tajikistan. Dushanbe
[19] Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population data as of 24 December 2024
[20] UNICEF, Republic of Tajikistan: A Brief Overview of Government Expenditures on Social Protection for the Population and Children
[21] Brief Overview of the National Budget of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2019-2023 with a Focus on Social Sectors, Dushanbe 2024
[22] Transmonee database
[23] UNICEF, Republic of Tajikistan (2024) Brief description of state expenditures on social protection of the population and children

Recommendations

- Strengthen migrant social protection through organized recruitment systems with standardized contracts, guaranteed social benefits and insurance coverage, improved portability of benefits, and effective monitoring of labour conditions abroad.
- Expand and index child sensitive social assistance, including shock responsive mechanisms and disability inclusive support.
- Social protection programmes should address gaps affecting female-headed households, migrant women and women in informal employment.

Right to an adequate standard of living

Achievements

Child poverty declined from 27.2% in 2021 to 20.4% in 2023.[24] The 2023–2025 Targeted Social Assistance reform expanded child sensitive benefits to around 419,000 children,[25] while the national school feeding programme now reaches about 440,000 children.[26] Water sector reforms increased access to safely managed drinking water from 52% in 2015 to 55% in 2022, and community based disability services expanded to 58 districts.[27]

Issues

One in five children remains poor,[28] with strong regional disparities and only 16% covered by social assistance, which is not indexed to inflation. Food insecurity affects 36% of children, [29] and WASH access remains limited in rural areas, with only 12% of schools meeting menstrual hygiene standards[30] and 1% of health facilities meeting basic sanitation standards.[31] Investment gaps, weak child focused budgeting and limited disaggregated data constrain effective targeting. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by poverty and limited access to services, particularly in rural and migrant households.

Recommendations

- Expand and index child benefits, and strengthen shock responsive social protection linked to nutrition and school feeding.

[24] UNICEF (2024). Climate change and child poverty in Tajikistan: Analytical report based on rapid assessments conducted in 2023–2024. Dushanbe.
[25] Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population data as of 24 December 2024
[26] WFP, Government and WFP present the state programme on school feeding development in Tajikistan, 2022
[27] Progress on household drinking water, sanitation and hygiene 2000–2022: special focus on gender. New York: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization (WHO), 2023.
[28] UNICEF. (2024). Climate change and child poverty in Tajikistan: Analytical report based on rapid assessments conducted in 2023–2024. Dushanbe.
[29] UNICEF. (2024). Climate change and child poverty in Tajikistan: Analytical report based on rapid assessments conducted in 2023–2024. Dushanbe.
[30] UNICEF Tajikistan. (2025). WASH Sector Brief: Challenges, Opportunities, and UNICEF Strategic Positioning. Dushanbe: UNICEF Tajikistan Country Office
[31] UNICEF. (2025). WASH Sector Brief: Tajikistan. Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Internal document shared by UNICEF Tajikistan Country Office.

- Increase investment in rural, gender and disability inclusive WASH, supported by costed multi year plans, stronger governance and child budget tagging.

Right to health

Achievements

Under-five mortality declined to 15.2 per 1,000 live births in 2023, while neonatal mortality has nearly halved since 2012.[32] Immunization coverage remains high, with DTP3 at 96%[33] and measles-rubella at 95%[34], and new vaccines have been introduced. Nearly all births are attended by skilled personnel (98%)[35], and maternal and HIV services have expanded through a network of more than 5,100 health facilities. In 2025–2026, access to basic health support was further improved in selected border areas through upgraded medical rooms and mother-and-child spaces at cross-border markets.

Legal and policy reforms have also strengthened the HIV response. Amendments to the Health Code in 2025 modernized the legal framework, replaced stigmatizing terminology with "people living with HIV," mandated a National HIV Programme, strengthened prevention of mother-to-child transmission, recognized the "Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U)" principle, enhanced protections for health workers and extended social benefits for children living with HIV to age 18. The Supreme Court issued guidance on HIV-related criminal cases in 2023, and a new 2026–2030 Programme and Action Plan on Combating HIV and Parenteral Viral Hepatitis was adopted in 2025.

Issues

Health spending in Tajikistan remains low at 2.5% of GDP[36], with over 65% of costs paid out of pocket,[37] while rural facilities are under-resourced and referral systems weak. Only 62% of women receive four or more antenatal visits, 6% of children remain unvaccinated and nutrition challenges persist.[38] Access to comprehensive care in remote border areas remains limited. Article 125 of the Criminal Code continues to criminalize HIV transmission and exposure, raising concerns about due process and medical confidentiality. Migrants face higher levels of trauma and HIV prevalence (0.7% compared with the national average of 0.12%), yet migrant-inclusive HIV prevention and mental health services remain limited, while women and girls continue to face stigma and barriers in accessing HIV and reproductive health services.

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[32] Republican Center for Medical Statistics and Information, MoHSPP (2024). *Health of the Population and Activities of Health Facilities in 2023. (HMIS)*

[33] Transmonee database

[34] UNICEF (2023). Strengthening the Health System (HSS) in Tajikistan: Final report to GAVI. Dushanbe.

[35] Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and ICF. (2025). Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2023. Dushanbe, Tajikistan and Rockville, MD, USA: Tajstat and ICF.

[36] UNICEF. (2024). Brief Overview of the National Budget of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2019-2023 with a Focus on Social Sectors. Dushanbe, 2024

[37] Transmonee database

[38] Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and ICF. (2025). Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2023. Dushanbe, Tajikistan and Rockville, MD, USA: Tajstat and ICF.

Recommendations

- Increase public health financing to strengthen primary, neonatal and referral care, reduce out-of-pocket costs, and improve digital health records, nutrition, immunization and adolescent-friendly services, including integrated mental health and psychosocial support.
- Ensure migrant-inclusive HIV prevention, testing and treatment through stronger referral systems and continuity of care.
- Reform HIV-related legislation by removing criminal penalties and discriminatory restrictions, aligning laws with human rights and public health standards, including the U=U principle, and strengthening training and anti-stigma measures, particularly in rural areas.

Right to education

Achievements

Tajikistan maintains strong education access, with primary and lower secondary completion above 98%[39] and compulsory schooling extended to 11 years. Education spending remains around 5.6–6% of GDP.[40] National strategies, including the Education Development Strategy 2030, Inclusive Education Concept 2045 and Digital Transformation Strategy 2040, support equity and quality. Competency-based curricula, 67 Adolescent Innovation Labs and more than 2,000 digital resources support 21st-century skills for about 1.5 million students, while teacher qualification levels have improved.[41]

Youth and skills policies have also advanced. The 2022–2026 Road Map under the State Youth Policy Strategy 2030 was adopted, and in 2024 a Committee on Primary and Secondary Vocational Education was established to lead TVET governance. New skills centres, including six ADB-supported facilities, provide market-relevant training, and a 2023 agreement with the Russian Federation enabled mutual recognition of academic degrees. Tajikistan also progressed toward a nationally funded school feeding programme and strengthened nutrition policies through updated acute malnutrition guidelines and improved regulation and laboratory capacity for wheat flour fortification.

Issues

Early childhood education coverage in Tajikistan remains low at 30%,[42] with disparities affecting rural areas and children with disabilities. Learning outcomes are also weak, with only 28.6% of Grade 4 students meeting reading benchmarks[43] and 31% meeting math standards[44], while 37.3% of girls do not progress to Grade 10[45]. Education infrastructure and digital access remain

[39] United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). (2024). Tajikistan – National analysis: Overview.

[40] Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan. (2024). National Education Management Information System (EMIS) Statistical Yearbook 2024–2025

[41] UNICEF. (2023). *Country Office Annual Report 2022 – Tajikistan*. UNICEF

[42] Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Tajikistan. (2024). National Education Management Information System (EMIS) Statistical Yearbook 2024–2025

[43] USAID. (2021). Read with Me: Endline Report of the Early Grade Reading Assessment in Tajikistan. Dushanbe: USAID and Chemonics International

[44] USAID Learn Together Activity in Tajikistan, Reading, Mathematics, and Social-Emotional Learning Baseline Results 2022, Summary Report, November 4, 2022

[45] EMIS data on transitions calculated by UNICEF

limited, including gaps in WASH facilities, connectivity and data systems. The TVET system faces outdated curricula, shortages of qualified instructors and materials, and limited rural infrastructure. In addition, the long-term sustainability of the school feeding programme depends on predictable domestic financing and stronger oversight and quality assurance.

Recommendations

- Expand inclusive early childhood and school education by modernizing teacher development, upgrading infrastructure with gender-responsive WASH and digital connectivity, and strengthening institutional capacity for implementation of education reforms.
- Strengthen equitable education financing and enforce compulsory education to Grade 11, while integrating TVET into grades 10–11 and expanding safe vocational pathways and targeted support for girls and vulnerable youth.
- Ensure sustainable state financing and effective monitoring of school feeding and nutrition programmes to maintain quality, strengthen nationwide implementation and improve education and nutrition outcomes.

Women's rights and GBV

Achievements

Tajikistan introduced gender quotas of 30–40% and preferential scoring in public service recruitment to increase women's representation from about 23% toward 35–40%. Efforts to expand women's participation in the legal profession included internships for 44 women, with 15 obtaining advocate licenses in 2025 and increasing women's representation in the Union of Advocates by 6%,[46] while legal fellows assisted over 300 vulnerable women. Measures to address domestic violence also advanced: the Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence was revised in June 2024 to extend protection orders and strengthen coordination and services, supported by a 24/7 national hotline, 22 victim support rooms and training for prosecutors and judges. The list of professions prohibited for women was reduced from 334 to 194 in 2023, implementation of the National Strategy for Enhancing the Role of Women (2021–2030) continues, and draft Criminal Code amendments criminalizing domestic violence have been submitted to Parliament.

Issues

Persistent patriarchal norms in Tajikistan continue to limit women's participation in public and political life and contribute to labour market inequalities. Women remain overrepresented in informal and low-paid sectors, face wage gaps and limited access to social protection, while unpaid care burdens and limited childcare and eldercare services restrict economic participation. Women remain underrepresented in the judiciary, comprising about 20% of judges and 4 of 42 Supreme Court judges. Legal and institutional gaps in addressing GBV persist, with pending Criminal Code reforms and uneven enforcement of existing laws, particularly in rural areas where shelters, legal aid and psychosocial services are scarce. Women left behind by migration—about 33% of rural households—often lack decision-making power, with only 17.5% managing their own income, while returned women migrants face high unemployment (63%),

[46] Based on the Union of Advocates reporting in 2025.

stigma and increased risks of violence. Women are also underrepresented in the justice sector, and their share of state legal aid applicants (around 60%)[47] reflects continued vulnerability in family and GBV-related cases.

Recommendations

- Ensure consistent application of gender quotas and incentives across public institutions and introduce regular public reporting to track progress toward gender parity in leadership.
- Promote women's economic participation by expanding access to social protection, safe working conditions, affordable childcare and gender-disaggregated data systems.
- Adopt comprehensive Criminal Code reforms in line with CEDAW General Recommendation No. 35, including full criminalization of domestic violence and stronger survivor protection and services.
- Integrate gender and GBV considerations into migration and reintegration policies and strengthen support for women through expanded legal aid, justice sector participation and access to finance and markets.

Rights of children

Achievements

Tajikistan has strengthened child-sensitive justice through the 2023–2027 Juvenile Justice Reform Programme and the 2024 Law on Responsibility for Child Education and Upbringing, which introduced a comprehensive ban on corporal punishment. Child protection reforms include transforming Baby Homes into Family and Child Support Centres[48], prohibiting institutionalization due to poverty and enabling children to file complaints independently under amended appeals legislation. Deinstitutionalization has progressed with declining residential care placements, while birth registration remains high at 97%[49], supported by mobile services. In response to child labour concerns in the cotton harvest, authorities strengthened enforcement and victim identification, adopted the 2024–2028 National Programme on Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour and approved a related action plan in Dushanbe.

Issues

Tajikistan lacks a unified child protection system, resulting in fragmented referrals, weak gatekeeping and limited foster care, while psychosocial and legal services remain concentrated in urban areas. Diversion is not yet institutionalized nationwide, and custodial sentencing has increased. Violence against children, child labour and child marriage remain underreported, while online risks are rising and children still enter residential care without proper assessment. Child marriage persists, particularly in rural and vulnerable communities, driven by socio-economic pressures, gender norms and limited opportunities for girls, leading to school

[47] As reported by the State Agency on Legal Aid Centers under the Ministry of Justice.
[48] Coram International. (2024). Formative and summative evaluation of the childcare and deinstitutionalisation reforms in eight countries in Europe and Central Asia 2009–2022: Tajikistan country report. UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO).
[49] Agency on Statistics under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population of the Republic of Tajikistan, and ICF. (2025). Tajikistan Demographic and Health Survey 2023. Dushanbe, Tajikistan and Rockville, MD, USA: Tajstat and ICF.

dropout, early pregnancy and increased exposure to GBV.[50] Coordination between labour inspectorates and law enforcement also remains weak, with insufficient oversight of seasonal labour recruitment and underdeveloped victim protection and referral mechanisms.

Recommendations

- Establish an integrated child protection and justice system with standardized referrals, foster care, a trained workforce and diversion and non-custodial measures as the primary response, limiting detention to a last resort and expanding legal, psychosocial and rehabilitation services.
- Strengthen prevention and enforcement of laws on violence against children, child labour and child marriage, including coordination among authorities, oversight of seasonal labour and clear victim identification and referral procedures.
- Expand community-based prevention and reintegration programmes addressing harmful norms and socio-economic drivers of child marriage, promote girls' retention in secondary education and strengthen monitoring through improved child protection services and disaggregated data.

Persons with disabilities

Achievements

Tajikistan strengthened services for women and girls with disabilities affected by violence by training and equipping seven forensic medical departments and six NGOs to provide disability-inclusive, victim-centred support. A national guideline on service provision in cases of violence was introduced, improving providers' capacity to apply human rights and non-discrimination standards and strengthen documentation and case management.

Issues

Tajikistan has not yet ratified the CRPD. As of July 2024, 164,631 persons with disabilities are registered, including 33,648 children, yet accessibility remains limited and barriers persist in education, employment, health care, social protection and public infrastructure. Children with disabilities face low enrolment in mainstream education[51], limited early identification and intervention, and restricted access to assistive devices[52] and rehabilitation services, increasing risks of unnecessary institutionalization.[53] Women and girls with disabilities experience intersecting discrimination, heightened risks of violence and economic dependency, while physical barriers and limited access to information in accessible formats continue to restrict participation in universities, courts and other public institutions.

Recommendations

[50] Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. (2024). *Concluding observations on the seventh periodic report of Tajikistan*
[51] Transmonee database
[52] Statistical Agency under the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, JICA, & IOM. (2024). *Working Paper: Support to the National Action Plan for the Preparation of the Republic of Tajikistan for Ratification and Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Volume 2* (p. 30). Dushanbe.
[53] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). (2021). Seen, counted, included: Using data to shed light on the well-being of children with disabilities. New York: UNICEF

- Ratify the CRPD and adopt a national disability inclusion strategy integrating disability across national policies with meaningful participation of OPDs.
- Strengthen disability- and gender-sensitive services in health, education, social protection and justice, including accessible legal aid and professional training.
- Improve accessibility and inclusion through nationwide audits, removal of physical barriers, enforcement of employment quotas and strengthened community-based rehabilitation, supported by better disability-disaggregated data.

Refugees and Asylum-Seekers

Achievements

As of 31 December 2025, Tajikistan hosted 9,912 refugees and asylum-seekers—primarily from Afghanistan—the largest refugee population in Central Asia, most residing near Dushanbe and in Jabbor Rasulov. The country maintains a national asylum framework reflecting key protection principles. Cooperation with UNHCR has strengthened case management, institutional coordination, including expanded birth registration for refugee and those at risk of statelessness. Following developments in Afghanistan in 2021, Tajikistan also enhanced emergency preparedness and reception capacity through inter-agency coordination and temporary accommodation arrangements, while broader inclusion efforts extended beyond youth platforms, with community and institutional mechanisms increasingly integrating refugees into initiatives that promote participation, social cohesion, and peaceful coexistence.

Issues

Since August 2021, access to territory in Tajikistan has become increasingly restricted, with entry largely limited to visa holders, reducing access to asylum. Between November 2021 and December 2024, at least 270 Afghan nationals were deported without full due process, and returns intensified in 2025, with at least 1,953 Afghans forcibly returned by mid-February 2026, including 1,667 refugees and asylum-seekers. Legislative inconsistencies persist, as Article 335 of the Criminal Code criminalizes irregular border crossing despite the Refugee Law's non-penalization principle, while residence restrictions and procedural barriers limit access to asylum, employment and services. Durable solutions remain limited due to restrictive naturalization requirements and barriers to formal employment and access to social protection. School enrolment of refugee children has declined, while the asylum system remains paper-based, poorly coordinated, and provides minimal support for refugees' integration into society.

Recommendations

- Ensure access to territory and fair asylum procedures by establishing border referral mechanisms, removing administrative barriers, aligning the Criminal Code with the Refugee Law and fully respecting the principle of non-refoulement and due process.
- Remove residence restrictions and ensure refugees' access to employment, social protection, naturalization, birth registration, health care, free legal aid, and full school enrolment for children.
- Ensure quality refugee status determination also by including UNHCR as an observer to the process and strengthen national coordination mechanisms.

Statelessness

Achievements

Tajikistan strengthened civil registration and efforts to address statelessness through a new Law on State Registration of Civil Status Acts adopted in 2025, which removes time limits for birth registration and allows late registration even when parents lack identity documents based on requests from medical or guardianship authorities.[54] Data collection on statelessness has improved through identification activities and follow-up to the 2020 Census, while continued implementation of the 2019 Amnesty Law has enabled previously undocumented individuals to regularize their status and obtain residence permits. Mobile civil registration units have also expanded access to birth registration in remote areas and among refugee and undocumented families.[55]

Issues

Tajikistan is not party to the statelessness conventions and lacks a formal statelessness determination procedure, leaving the number of stateless persons unknown. Gaps in civil registration create barriers, including unclear grounds for registration and court requirements to confirm some home births, which particularly affect rural areas. Stateless persons and those of undetermined nationality face risks of irregular stay, limited access to services and discrimination, with females comprising about 73% of those without valid identity documents. Citizenship law provisions and documentation barriers also increase risks of childhood statelessness, particularly for children of stateless, refugee, migrant and undocumented families.

Recommendations

- Accede to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions and establish a fair statelessness determination procedure.
- Amend citizenship and civil registration laws to prevent childhood statelessness and ensure universal, simplified birth registration for all children, including refugees and undocumented families.
- Strengthen mobile registration, legal aid and data systems to identify and support persons at risk of statelessness.

[54] Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. (2024). Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on State Registration of Acts of Civil Status (adopted December 27, 2024). Dushanbe: Government of Tajikistan
[55] UNDP, Free birth registration at doorsteps to make sure no child remains invisible, 2022