



COI QUERY

Country of Origin	TAJIKISTAN
Title	<u>Treatment by the Tajik authorities of members of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) and their relatives</u>
Reference period	1 August 2021 to 5 August 2022
Topic(s)	Treatment by the Tajik authorities of members of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) and their relatives
Date of completion	4 August 2022
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Contributing EU+ COI units (if applicable)	N/A

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All sources used are referenced and cited in the bibliography section. A quality review has been performed in line with the above mentioned COI methodology. This document does not claim to be exhaustive or conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. If a certain event, person or organisation is not mentioned in the report, this does not mean that the event has not taken place or that the person or organisation does not exist. Terminology used should not be regarded as indicative of a particular legal position.

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COI QUERY RESPONSE – Tajikistan

Treatment by the Tajik authorities of members of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) and their relatives, between 1 August 2021-5 August 2022

General considerations regarding the treatment of members of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) and their relatives by the Tajik authorities

On 29 September 2015, the Tajik Supreme Court declared the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan a terrorist organisation, banning all its future activities and any distribution of material related to the party.¹ Further information regarding the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan can be found in: [EUAA COI Query Response – Tajikistan: The Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan \(IRPT\) and treatment of relatives of Muhiddin Kabiri \(26 November 2021\)](#).

On 13 August 2021, a United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council report quoted the statements of non-governmental organisations Article 19 and the International Partnership for Human Rights regarding Tajikistan's anti-terrorism laws. The two organisations 'noted the broad and imprecise wording of what constituted "terrorism", "terrorist action", "extremism", "extremist activities" and "extremist materials" in the law, granting too wide discretion in its interpretation and application and, therefore, leading to arbitrariness'.² In addition, the organisation Freedom Now underlined the ongoing imprisonment of individuals on political grounds, and 'the politically motivated prosecutions' of imprisoned opposition activists' relatives and supporters.³ Similarly, Human Rights Watch noted that 'Tajikistan has continued harassing and imprisoning government's critics, opposition, foreign-based dissidents and their family members'.⁴ The UN Human Rights Committee also highlighted in a subsequent report 'the broad and vague definitions of terrorism, extremism and public justification of terrorist and extremist activity, and the reported misuse of legislation to limit and repress the freedom of expression of political dissidents and religious groups'.⁵

In a report covering 2021, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) stated that, since the party's ban in 2015, Tajikistan had 'imprisoned IRPT members *en masse*, with prominent leaders dying in prison under suspicious circumstances, and many more forced to flee the country'.⁶ Similarly, in February 2022, Freedom House reported that during 2021, Tajik 'authorities continued to harass and arrest current and former IRPT members, their families, and other opponents'.⁷

¹ UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression on his mission to Tajikistan, 9 June 2017, [url](#), para. 41; UNOHCHR, Preliminary observations by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Mr. David Kaye at the end of his visit to Tajikistan, 9 March 2015, [url](#); Global Freedom of Expression, The Case of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, 2015, [url](#)

² UN Human Rights Council, Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Tajikistan, 13 August 2021, [url](#), para.15

³ UN Human Rights Council, Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Tajikistan, 13 August 2021, [url](#) para.17

⁴ UN Human Rights Council, Summary of Stakeholders' submissions on Tajikistan, 13 August 2021, [url](#) para.35

⁵ UN Human Rights Council, Compilation on Tajikistan, 24 August 2021, [url](#), para. 15

⁶ USCIRF, Religious Freedom in Tajikistan in 2021, January 2022, [url](#), p.1

⁷ Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2022, 28 February 2022, [url](#)



Mass amnesty bill

On 30 August 2021, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon ‘proposed a mass amnesty’ of some 16 000 prisoners to celebrate Tajikistan’s independence⁸. While the initiative was approved by the Parliament on 6 September 2021⁹, the amnesty did not apply to political prisoners, such as members of the IRPT, who would only benefit by a reduction of their sentences.¹⁰ In October 2021, lawyer Buzurgmekhr Yorov, who was jailed for 28 years ‘for having represented several members of the banned IRPT’, had his sentence reduced by four years under the amnesty.¹¹

Specific incidents regarding the treatment of members of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan and their relatives by the Tajik authorities

On 4 August 2021, the Tajik Minister of Internal Affairs Ramazon Rahimzoda stated that, during the first half of the year 2021, ‘law enforcement authorities [had] detained more than 140 persons on suspicion of participation in banned movements, organizations, and groups the government deemed to be terrorist and extremist’, of which ‘33 were members of banned opposition organizations, including the IRPT’.¹² According to unnamed NGOs quoted by the United States Department of State (USDOS), Tajik authorities ‘continued to arrest and detain individuals suspected of membership in, or of supporting, banned extremist organizations’ throughout 2021.¹³

On 6 October 2021, relatives of jailed IRPT members expressed in an open letter their fear that the imprisoned party members would suffer harm, due to them being ‘held in the same cells as violent radicals’.¹⁴ The letter pointed out that the jailed spokesman of the IRPT, Hikmatullo Sayfullozoda, had been attacked in a prison hospital during the previous month, while a second prisoner and IRTP member Rahmatullo Rajab, had reportedly been threatened with a knife.¹⁵

On 11 November 2021, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) reported that jailed IRPT members Zubaidullo Roziq and Rahmatullo Rajab had been placed ‘in solitary confinement for two months’, for allegedly sending a letter without permission to President Rahmon.¹⁶

In April 2022, USDOS reported that the 14-year-old son of IRPT member Mahmazarif Saidov remained held, since November 2019, ‘by court order at a school for children who “engage in misconduct”’, and had not been allowed to see his family.¹⁷

On 8 July 2022, journalist Zavqibek Saidamini was detained by police officers¹⁸ and, according to RFE/RL, he was subsequently charged ‘with participating in an extremist group’, with prosecutors

⁸ RFE/RL, Tajik President Proposes Bill On Mass Amnesty To Mark 30th Anniversary Of Independence, 30 August 2021, [url](#)

⁹ RFE/RL, Tajik Lawmakers Approve Amnesty Bill To Mark Independence Anniversary, 6 September 2021, [url](#); RSF, Tajik journalist who could die in prison must be included in amnesty, RSF says, 9 September 2021, [url](#)

¹⁰ RFE/RL, Tajikistan Begins Release Of Thousands Of Prisoners Under Mass Amnesty, 22 September 2021, [url](#); RSF, Tajik journalist who could die in prison must be included in amnesty, RSF says, 9 September 2021, [url](#)

¹¹ Amnesty International, Tajikistan 2021, 29 March 2022, [url](#)

¹² USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 – Tajikistan, 2 June 2022, [url](#)

¹³ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 – Tajikistan, 2 June 2022, [url](#)

¹⁴ Eurasianet, Families of Tajik political prisoners plead for international help, 6 October 2021, [url](#)

¹⁵ Eurasianet, Families of Tajik political prisoners plead for international help, 6 October 2021, [url](#)

¹⁶ RFE/RL, Jailed Tajik Opposition Politicians Placed In Solitary Confinement For Sending Letter To President, 11 November 2021, [url](#)

¹⁷ USDOS, Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2021 – Tajikistan, 12 April 2022, [url](#)

¹⁸ RFE/RL, Tajikistan Steps Up Attacks On Independent Media To ‘Control Public Opinion’, 19 July 2022, [url](#); CPJ, Tajikistan authorities arrest 2 journalists who criticized other journalists’ detentions, 14 July 2022, [url](#)



claiming that he had links to ‘two banned opposition parties’, including the IRPT. The same source noted that Saidamini ‘has repeatedly denied supporting any political group’.¹⁹

On 27 July 2022, the Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation asked the Russian Supreme Court to include the IRPT on Russia’s terrorist list, at the request of the Prosecutor General of Tajikistan.²⁰

¹⁹ RFE/RL, Tajikistan Steps Up Attacks On Independent Media To ‘Control Public Opinion’, 19 July 2022, [url](#)

²⁰ Islamic World News, Russia designates the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan as terrorist organization, 27 July 2022, [url](#); Azernews, Central Asia Weekly Review: Summit of Central Asian leaders, social, energy issues high on the agenda, 27 July 2022, [url](#)



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