

Polity IV Country Report 2010: Tajikistan

<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 15%;">Score:</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2009</td> <td style="width: 15%;">2010</td> <td style="width: 15%;">Change</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Polity:</td> <td>-3</td> <td>-3</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Democ:</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Autoc:</td> <td>4</td> <td>4</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Durable:</td> <td></td> <td>12</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tentative:</td> <td></td> <td>No</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	Score:	2009	2010	Change	Polity:	-3	-3	0	Democ:	1	1	0	Autoc:	4	4	0	Durable:		12		Tentative:		No		
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SCODE	TAJ	CCODE	702	Date of Report	1 June 2011																				
Polity IV Component Variables																									
XRREG	XRCOMP	XROPEN	XCONST	PARREG	PARCOMP																				
2	1	4	3	3	3																				
Date of Most Recent Polity Transition (3 or more point change)																									
End Date	27 June 1997		Begin Date	13 November 1998																					
Polity Fragmentation: No																									
Constitution	1994																								
Executive(s)	President Emomali Rahmon (HDKT); initially directly elected 1992; most recently reelected 6 November 2006, 79.3%																								
Legislature	Bicameral: Assembly of Representatives (63 seats; 41 directly elected, 22 proportionally elected; most recent elections, 28 February 2010) People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (HDKT): 55 Communist Party of Tajikistan (CH): 2 Islamic Renaissance of Tajikistan (IRP): 2 Agrarian Party of Tajikistan (APT): 2 Party of Economic Reform (PER): 2 National Assembly (33 seats; indirectly elected, 25 selected by local deputies, 8 appointed by president)																								
Judiciary	Supreme Court																								

Narrative Description:¹

Executive Recruitment: Designation (3)

President Rahmonov, although subject to an election procedure, has gained and retained office through private negotiations with a relatively small cadre of established political elites. Elections in Tajikistan remain simply a legitimizing ritual. The 1999 presidential election in Tajikistan followed the implementation of the 1997 peace accord between the Tajik government and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO). The peace accord ended the bloody five-year civil war that pitted secular, pro-Communist

¹ The research described in this report was sponsored by the Political Instability Task Force (PITF). The PITF is funded by the Central Intelligence Agency. The views expressed herein are the authors' alone and do not represent the views of the US Government.

government forces against an alliance of democrats and Islamists. Over sixty thousand Tajiks were killed and over ten percent of the population was internally displaced in this conflict. After a number of setbacks in the peace process, the UTO finally gave its support to the reelection of President Rahmonov (who subsequently won the election with ninety-six percent of the votes cast). As the reelection of the president was predetermined by the terms of the peace agreement, executive recruitment was (and continues to be) coded as designation.

In 2003 President Rahmonov further consolidated his hold on power by rewriting the rules of executive recruitment. Like the rulers of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, Rahmonov has used a popular referendum to extend his rule. In June 2003 a package of constitutional amendments was approved with ninety-three percent of the vote that increased the powers of the president and held the door open for Rahmonov ruling for another seventeen years. The most controversial of the amendments, originally initiated by Parliament, is Article 65. This article allows the president to serve two seven-year terms instead of the one term agreed to under the 1997 peace accord. The passing of this amendment allowed the Rahmonov to run for another term in the 2006 elections, which he won with seventy-nine percent of the vote. In March 2007, President Rahmonov changed his name to Rahmon, dropping the Russian ending “-ov.”

Executive Constraints: Slight to Moderate Limitations (3)

President Rahmonov, along with government officials from his home region of Kulyab, dominates the political system in Tajikistan. Despite significant reforms of the political system in the wake of the civil war, Tajikistan's present-day polity has inherited deeply entrenched features of the Soviet-style one-party state. The conditions of the 1997 peace agreement included the allocation of thirty percent of all government and judicial posts to the opposition. While the 1997 peace accord established some "horizontal accountability" of the chief executive, nevertheless, deeply flawed parliamentary elections have ensured a permanent legislative majority for President Rahmonov's People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan and the judiciary remains under the tight control of the executive branch. Nevertheless, with the UTO now acting as a legitimate competitor for political office and influence, greater transparency in the government's decision-making process has developed. However, a troubling sign for the future of democratic institutions in Tajikistan developed in 2002-2003 as a movement to reform the constitution in favor of a strong presidency emerged. Previously, Tajikistan's constitution provided for, at least in theory, a strong legislature. The constitutional reforms of 2003 seem to fully institutionalize the powers of a dominant executive president, allowing, for example, Rahmonov's elongated stay in power.

Political Participation: Factional/Restricted Competition (6)

Corruption and regionalism have undermined the full implementation of the 1997 peace accord that ended five years of civil war in Tajikistan. The conflict, which was waged between pro-Communist secularists in the government and democratic and Islamist opponents, also had a regional dimension. Government forces loyal to President Rahmonov had their stronghold in the northern and southern regions of the country while the opposition UTO was most powerful in the center of the country and in the remote Pamir area. Despite efforts to bring stability to this poor Central Asian country (where over eighty percent of its citizens live below the poverty line), problems persist in demobilizing and reintegrating former opposition troops into the constitutional order. Elite power struggles between regional groups continue to weaken the power of the central government in the country. In places like Gharm and the Karategin Valley in central Tajikistan, where the government has failed to control field commanders who did not accept the 1997 peace accord, armed bands terrorize the population at will. Operating largely outside the control of the central government, these areas are rife with drug trafficking, racketeering and hostage-taking.

In addition to regional factionalism, Tajikistan is also divided by intense political and religious rivalries, as indicated by continuing challenges by Islamic groups both inside and outside of existing government structures. Despite the peace accord with the UTO, radical Islamist groups continue to challenge the government. The largest group, Islamic Revival (Hizbut-Tahrir), seeks the establishment of an Islamic Caliphate throughout Central Asia. Security issues in the country have also been seriously complicated in recent years by spillover effects from the civil war in neighboring Afghanistan, the presence of Russian security forces in Tajikistan and simmering hostilities between the Tajik majority and Uzbek minority.

The group supporting President Rahmonov (primarily members of the former Soviet bureaucracy) uses its power to restrict the political activities of the democratic opposition in the country. Elections have

been accompanied by opposition complaints about the government's refusal to properly register opposition candidates, excluding opposition representatives from election commissions, and widespread vote rigging. The human rights record of the government remains poor and the freedom of the press is severely curtailed. Over sixty independent journalists have been killed in the past decade. Despite these restrictions, a secular opposition remains active and continues its attempts to mobilize support.

Parliamentary elections held on 28 February 2010 produced a landslide victory for President Rahmon's People's Democratic Party, winning 45 out of 63 seats in the chamber. An additional ten "independent" seats went to politicians seen as loyal to the President. The opposition Islamic Revival Party won two seats. Independent international observers noted that the polls were marred by widespread fraud. President Rahmon rejected this criticism, citing that Tajikistan has a viable independent press and eight active political parties (including the only legal Islamist party in Central Asia). While all key positions in the parliament went to members of the President's People's Democratic Party, as in previous parliaments, the key posts were distributed widely among representatives of the country's various regions.