

**INSTITUTE OF SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION  
FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES  
OF THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES**

**INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES  
OF THE RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES**

**RUSSIA  
AND  
THE MOSLEM WORLD  
3 (325) – 2024**

**SCIENCE-INFORMATION JOURNAL**

Founder  
Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences  
of the Russian Academy of Sciences (INION PAN)

Publishing Department of the Journals  
“Rossiya i Musulmanskij Mir” & “Russia and the Moslem World”

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Scientific materials on the current political, social and religious issues concerning the relations between Russia and the global Islamic Ummah as well as Muslim countries are represented in the form of articles, reviews and abstracts.

Журнал зарегистрирован в Федеральной службе по надзору в сфере связи, информационных технологий и массовых коммуникаций, свидетельство о регистрации СМИ: ПИ № ФС77-83095 от 11.04.2022

ISSN 1072-6403

DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2024.03.00  
Journal is indexed in the Russian Science Citation Index  
© INION RAN, 2024

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## MODERN RUSSIA: IDEOLOGY, POLITICS, CULTURE AND RELIGION

ALEXEY KUZNETSOV. THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCESS  
TO HIGH-QUALITY INFORMATION FOR CONTEMPORARY  
POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

*Keywords: political science research; the  
connection of political science with economics;  
the use of statistics; quantitative methods;  
"classical" works; political geography; research  
on elites.*

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*Citation:* Kuznetsov A. The Importance of Access to High-Quality  
Information for Contemporary Political Science Research //  
Russia and the Moslem World, 2024, № 3 (325), P. 5–18.  
DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2024.03.01

*Abstract. The article shows that within the framework of political  
science research both abroad and in Russia, methodological issues have  
traditionally been given great attention. At the same time, the analysis  
of the problems of access to high-quality information is in the  
background. For example, working with statistics is usually perceived*

*by political scientists only as a characteristic feature of a small segment of research related to quantitative modeling, although most political science publications should, in the author's opinion, rely on the use of statistics, taking into account its inaccuracy and inconsistency. In particular, data on Russian commodity trade with the BRICS member countries of the global South (including the "newcomers" joining in 2024), as well as states producing large GDP, but still remaining outside the association, are given. The second important problem of access to information for political scientists is connected with researchers' neglect of the scientific conclusions from monographs of the second half of the 20th century. The article emphasizes that it is often connected lack of easy access to the texts of relevant books, therefore, as in the case of statistics, measures are proposed to overcome the existing problems, including through the activation of the work of the Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences (INION RAN). Finally, the examples of the research of elections and elites topics show the ignoring of urgent tasks only on the grounds that they require the painstaking work of a scientist, that is, they belong to a "slow" science that does not allow to publish a large number of articles quickly and report on a grant.*

Political science as a science has been growing very dynamically over the past few decades. The increasing intensity of political science research and a noticeable expansion with the corresponding institutionalization of the professional community of political scientists is clearly visible in the example of Russia. In such conditions, it is quite natural to intensify discussions about the methodology of political science. One can cite many illustrations of impressive publications that discuss various approaches to the analysis of various problems of political life and related areas, including the use of statistical modeling and other quantitative methods, other approaches more typical of scientific fields that have not traditionally been the focus of attention of political scientists [Box-Steffensmeier et al., 2008]. At least some Western scientists are fully aware that the continued dominance of

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articles by North American and European authors in leading international journals continues to lead to a certain methodological bias in political science, which will change as political science turns into a truly international science [Wilson, Knutsen, 2022] (if, as we hope, ideological and censorship barriers can be overcome over time).

At the same time, the development of political science work (in the sense of truly observable progress of a scientific discipline that benefits society) even within more or less isolated national clusters does not allow ignorance of the efforts, failures and achievements of foreign colleagues. It is also impossible to talk about the normal state of political science in the country if the majority of authors of publications neglect the generally accepted rules of scientific analysis and presentation of the results to the public. In this regard, it became quite naturally, a significant event in Russia the release in 2019 of a fundamental collective monograph (republished a year later) about several dozen established methodological approaches and paradigms in political science [Modern political science..., 2020]. Undoubtedly, Russian political scientists must understand the essence of the civilizational paradigm, classical political realism, neorealism, liberalism, institutionalism, etc. It is important for researchers to represent related areas, approaches coming from there to political science – anthropological, psychological, cultural, etc.

Moreover, Russian scientists are constantly continuing new research on this topic, which is clearly evident from works in the field of political geography, international relations, and semiotics [Okunev, Tislenko, 2020; Alekseeva, Degterev, 2017; Fomin, Ilyin, 2016]. However, it remains unclear to me why, with such a massive “methodological assault,” the problem of using qualitative information in political science was left unattended. Perhaps, among the famous Russian researchers, the most active in this area is D.A. Degterev (for example, [Degterev, 2020]), however, his emphasis is still on discussing the use of data for quantitative research in political science, while the problem of access and

processing of information is relevant for any methodological approaches. This is exactly what this article is about.

### **Working with Statistics**

Close ties with philosophy in political science at the dawn of its independence as a scientific discipline predetermined a certain bias in modern works towards speculative reasoning. Without denying their productivity, let me remind you that political science develops in a large family of social sciences, including economics and socio-economic and political geography. This means that any conclusions based on political science concepts must be verified using statistical indicators (in the case of geopolitical work, quantitative data obtained from social geography). Let me emphasize that we are not talking about mandatory use of mathematical modeling, however, the facts expressed in statistics cannot be rejected in favor of speculative constructions, consecrated by the names of authoritative political scientists.

Good examples relate to the interpretation of the beginning of the “war of sanctions” between Russia and the collective West in 2014–2015. In connection with the return of Crimea to the Russian Federation following the results of a referendum on the peninsula. In particular, at that time several well-known Russian researchers immediately wrote amateurish works on the insignificant significance of Russian retaliatory measures in food trade with the EU. The apotheosis was the statement of one of the domestic political scientists in the spirit that you don’t have to be an economist to understand that Russian “counter-sanctions” cannot influence the economies of EU countries, being a shot in the foot for the Russian Federation itself. It is clear that in the first year of the response measures it was impossible to say definitively about the long-term effects of import substitution and changes in the geography of supplies that led in 2020–2022 to additional rapprochement between Russia and a number of important countries in the global South. However, already in 2015, available



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EU statistics made it possible to convincingly prove that Russian “counter-sanctions” cost Lithuania 1.5–1.6 per cent of GDP, and a number of neighboring countries in the Baltic region – 0.1–0.2 per cent of GDP [Kuznetsov, 2016].

At the same time, political scientists must understand the approximate nature of the existing statistics of even the most authoritative international organizations and government departments. For example, when analyzing the intensity of relations between states, to illustrate their economic contacts statistics on bilateral foreign trade and counter flows of foreign direct investment are most often used. However, a comparison of “mirror statistics” (i.e., data on the same flow, which is perceived by one partner as incoming and by the other as outgoing) usually shows serious gaps, even indicating opposite trends. Such gaps are usually associated either with the inability to collect the necessary information from companies (as a result, indicators are calculated using various models constructed by experts), or with distortions due to the use of offshore companies and other “transshipment” bases.

This is especially clearly seen in the example of countries of the global South, including BRICS (see table). In 2021, if you believe the statistics of Russian partners, Russia in the BRICS with all its partners had a positive balance of goods trade, although the Russian Federal Customs Service recorded a negative balance with China and South Africa. At the same time, there was no general pattern of overestimation or underestimation of exports or imports. Taking into account the refusal to publish detailed foreign trade statistics in Russia starting from 2022 due to the escalation of the “war of sanctions” with the West, it becomes quite difficult to interpret the dynamics of trade of the Russian Federation in 2022–2023. For example, according to South African data, Russian merchandise exports in 2022 decreased by 12 per cent to \$549 million compared to 2021. Russian imports fell even more – by 31 per cent to \$285 million. However, the turnover of Russian–South African trade could actually increase in 2022 if Russian

statistics are more accurate than South African figures (which is quite possible, given the desire of Russia's partners to hide their contacts with our country from the United States due to fears of "secondary" sanctions). After all, the Federal Customs Service of Russia showed only \$342 million in exports, but \$796 million in imports, and in 2022, according to V. Putin, mutual trade turnover between the two countries increased by another 16.4 per cent, exceeding \$1.3 billion<sup>1</sup> (versus 0.83 billion according to South African statistics).

The discrepancies shown, however, in no case can be interpreted as a convincing reason for the refusal of many political scientists to work with statistics. Knowing the specifics of the methodology for collecting and processing official data, as well as using two or three different sources of information at once, allows you to identify very important fundamental trends. For example, in the above example, it is clearly seen that the expansion of BRICS from January 1, 2024 to 11 members strengthens Russia's position as a participant in foreign trade within this association, since mainly countries with a positive balance of merchandise trade for the Russian Federation joined. So, if you look at the figures for 2021 (and the figures over the past two years have only increased), then trade turnover with BRICS as a result of the expansion increased by 8–11 per cent, and the balance by at least 33 per cent, and maybe even more than 4 times, if we rely on the information of the Federal Customs Service of Russia.

From all this, one important practical conclusion should be drawn: more training courses on working with statistics need to be introduced into Russian political science education. For already established specialists in the field of political science, it is possible to organize separate lectures and master classes – for example, on the basis of INION RAN, which is one of the leading political science centers in Russia, but at the same time has enough specialists in related social sciences, including economics.

Table

**Russia's Foreign Trade in Goods in 2021 with 10 Countries that will be Members of BRICS in 2024, as well as Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, Vietnam and Nigeria<sup>2</sup>**

Country	Data from the Federal Customs Service of Russia, billion dollars (it was decided not to make public the data for 2022)				International statistics data based on statistics from partner countries, billion dollars			
	from the RF	to the RF	turnover	balance	from the RF	to the RF	turnover	balance
China	68,03	72,68	140,70	-4,65	78,14	67,55	145,69	+10,59
India	9,13	4,43	13,56	+4,70	8,70	3,33	12,03	+5,37
Brasil	5,26	2,22	7,48	+3,04	5,70	1,59	7,29	+4,11
South Africa	0,34	0,80	1,14	-0,46	0,62	0,41	1,03	+0,21
UAE	5,08	0,28	5,36	+4,80	3,71	1,45	5,16	+2,26
Egypt	4,18	0,59	4,77	+3,59	2,48	0,40	2,88	+2,08
Iran	3,07	0,97	4,04	+2,10	1,66	0,58	2,24	+1,08
Saudi Arabia	1,92	0,34	2,26	+1,58	1,20	0,08	1,28	+1,12
Argentina	0,37	1,01	1,38	-0,64	0,65	0,68	1,33	-0,03
Ethiopia	0,19	0,03	0,22	+0,16	0,20	0,02	0,22	+0,18
Indonesia	0,68	2,63	3,31	-1,95	1,25	1,49	2,74	-0,24
Thailand	0,49	1,79	2,29	-0,50	1,77	1,02	2,79	+0,75
Bangladesh	1,72	1,27	2,99	+0,45	...	...	...	...
Vietnam	2,24	4,90	7,13	-2,66	2,30	3,20	5,50	-0,90
Nigeria	0,88	0,04	0,92	+0,84	2,11	0,00	2,11	+2,10

Sources: Foreign trade of the Russian Federation by countries. – Access mode: <https://customs.gov.ru/statistic> (date of access: 09/11/2023); Trade Statistics. – Access mode: <https://intracen.org/resources/data-and-analysis/trade-statistics> (date of access: 09/11/2023).

### **Building on the Achievements of Predecessors**

There is another layer of scientific information that is usually underestimated in modern Russian political science – the work of predecessors, many of whom, due to the institutional youth of political science in our country, worked within the framework of other scientific disciplines, primarily representing historical sciences. We emphasize that the visible struggle of the scientific

community in recent years for the correct and abundant citation of colleagues does not solve the problem – thanks to scientometrics and its consideration in the distribution of grants, and other financial incentives for scientists, mainly links to recent journal articles are welcomed. The second problem is the lower availability of fundamental monographs published in the 20th century, compared to contemporary journals, which are gradually being completely posted on the Internet.

Of course, access to “classical” domestic monographs, interesting political scientists, in paper form is not a big problem – there is the Russian State Library, a branch network of the Fundamental Library of INION RAN at academic institutes with specialization in political sciences, the State Public Historical Library of Russia etc. However, we must take a realistic look at the modern process of “production of scientific products” – access to texts in an online format via the Internet, even for a fee, turns out to be preferable for most researchers. Formally, this function should be performed by the project of the Ministry of Culture of Russia “National Electronic Library” (NEL), implemented since 2004. Its website reports the possibility of access to more than 5.8 million publications, including over 4.9 million in the public domain<sup>3</sup>. However, in fact, one can find mainly books published before the start of World War II or texts of dissertations of the 21st century. In other words, the most productive period for domestic social sciences was from the mid-1950s to the turn of the 20th–21st centuries – presented much worse.

At the same time, the search engine of the NEB system is one of the most inconvenient, as can be easily seen. In fact, the NEB from a national project with tens of millions of rubles of annual investment in its development has turned into an electronic library of the Russian State Library, of low quality, but with constant reports on the Internet about exceeding target indicators for the project.

My thesis can be easily tested by trying to find cited books by famous authors on a topic – for example, political geography.

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A query in scholar.google brings up primarily several pioneering monographs and basic textbooks:

“Political geography: problems and methods” V.A. Kolosov 1988, “Political geography: origins, problems, principles of scientific concept” N.I. Kaledin 1996, “Political Geography” R.F. Turovsky 1999, “Geopolitics and Political Geography” V.A. Kolosov and N.S. Mironenko 2001, “Russia in the labyrinths of geographical destiny” Yu.N. Gladky 2006. A simple search query “political geography” in the NEL provides links to 17 pre-revolutionary books, textbooks and atlases. An advanced search allows you to get links to almost a thousand post-war documents that have “political geography” in their titles. However, it turns out that the RSL can provide at least paid online access to only three of the five books named (works from 1988 and 1996 are already available only in paper form), and in fact the textbook by professors Kolosov and Mironenko is freely available on the Internet access.

Foreign “classical” monographs, important for political scientists, are also not always digitized; in many cases, their electronic versions are scattered across a variety of Internet resources, so finding a book, especially a free or cheap version, turns out to be a non-trivial task. Many new foreign books have simply not arrived in Russia in recent decades, so even in the country’s leading libraries it is now impossible to find even paper copies of monographs that were published 15–25 years ago and have become famous during this time. It is enough to recall that in constant prices the annual financing of purchases of foreign books at INION RAN during Gorbachev’s perestroika exceeded the current level by 10–30 times. In this regard, in my opinion, two important applied problems arise. Firstly, it is necessary to combine the efforts of INION RAN and the Russian Association of Political Science for the speedy development of a user-friendly navigator for book publications that are important for political scientists, and over time, the creation of a full-fledged electronic library on political science and related disciplines. Secondly, and

no less important, it is necessary to re-instill the culture of reading books to expand their scientific horizons among the younger generation of researchers who have been deprived of this opportunity in the last couple of decades. The first month of operation of the Fundamental Library of INION RAN in a new building on a historical site, despite the hundreds of new books offered by leading foreign publishers (in paper or electronic form), did not lead to a large influx of political science readers. I seriously fear that there is a risk for Russian political science to slide into imitation of scientific activity through an increase in publications, where, at best, “wheels are reinvented,” and at worst, long-established facts and phenomena are considered at an increasingly less professional level.

### **Thoroughness in Analysis**

In the world as a whole and in Russia, which in the 21st century adopted from the West not only positive experience, petty topics flourished due to the bias towards easily verifiable reporting and the emphasis on short-term grant funding. It is well known that many researchers are overly enthusiastic about the number of publications at the expense of their quality (just remember the principle of “publish or perish” – if you dream of a scientific career, then “publish or die”). However, over the past 10–15 years, voices have been increasingly heard about the need to revive the so-called slow science, which requires careful analysis by trial and error, numerous discussions of preliminary results with colleagues and long-term reflection on explanatory concepts (see, for example: [Abramov, Gruzdev, Terentyev, 2016]). The situation of political scientists is in many ways even worse than, for example, their economist colleagues. More or less competent economic specialists still constantly discuss their conclusions with colleagues – if not scientists, then practitioners (businessmen and officials), and are also forced to verify them as new statistical data constantly appears. At the same time, political

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scientists often come out with ready-made publications, the ideas of which can “petrify” in a narrow circle of like-minded people, and then such concepts are rarely fundamentally transformed.

When applied to information problems in political science, “slow” science means returning attention to the painstaking analysis of primary statistical, sociological and other data that is collected or collated bit by bit by key researchers. Unfortunately, for many years now one can see disdain for working with this kind of information, as if this is the domain of low-skilled specialists (for example, students), and a real scientist should only build models or create concepts using “ready-made sets” of information. In my opinion, a good illustration is the problems of electoral statistics, for which a huge array of primary data has been accumulated, so far analyzed very fragmentarily, despite the fact that it contains a treasure trove of information about the political preferences and behavioral strategies of the population. In particular, for example, within Moscow, based on published data from precinct election commissions with a comparison of the nature of the housing stock in houses assigned to the corresponding areas, it was possible not only to catch falsifiers, but also to figure out which groups in the population (including those with special social - professional or migration status) are characterized by electoral activity and political preferences. The resulting hypotheses can be tested in other regions and ultimately come to fundamental conclusions that are not described by already existing concepts.

The described task is at the intersection of political science and electoral geography and is by no means archaic in its methods, since it allows the use, for example, of GIS technologies. One can give other illustrations of research problems that political scientists do not even try to approach, despite all their demand by Russian society. For example, the media has repeatedly raised the issue of the Nazi roots of the parents and grandfathers of German and other European politicians who adhere to an openly Russophobic position. However, for now we are only dealing with a large amount of gossip, which upon closer inspection usually turns out

to be fake<sup>4</sup>. In this case, it is wise to use the biographical method. This method is typical for a wide variety of social sciences and humanities, but in the case of Germany, political science analysis should not only be about studying the political career of the characters, their education and other fairly easily accessible information, but also about the painstaking work of identifying the possible Nazi past of their parents and teachers. An example is the former Deputy Foreign Minister of Germany and long-time chairman of the Munich Security Conference. Wolfgang Ischinger was born in 1946 in the town of Beuren near Nürtingen<sup>5</sup>, where his grandfather August Pfänder (who died shortly after W. Ischinger's 25th birthday) became under Hitler mayor in 1943<sup>6</sup>, being an active member of the Nazi party (before that, under Hitler, he was for many years a burgomaster of a smaller settlement). Was it a coincidence that at the beginning of 2023, W. Ischinger gave an interview where he indicated that no concessions should be made to Moscow, but that Russia should be completely ousted from Ukrainian territory recognized by Western countries? Obviously, one such example does not confirm the hypothesis, but if you check the biographies of fifty or one hundred of prominent German politicians with an anti-Russian or, on the contrary, a relatively neutral position, then will we see a correlation with revanchism inspired by the involvement of their ancestors in Nazi aggression against Russia?

In general, the topic of elites is very popular in political science, including in Russia. However, we still have little detailed research on the mechanisms of elite formation and specific factual data on the education, business and other connections between high-ranking politicians and officials, influential intellectuals in the main countries with which Russia interacts – both in the West and in CIS countries, and in the now expanded BRICS. This is research requiring painstaking collection of information and not quickly yielding results in the form of numerous publications, but no one is stopping, for example, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs



from making appropriate targeted paid orders for research to specialized academic organizations.

\* \* \*

To summarize, it should be recognized that many problems remain in Russian political science, especially related to ensuring access and then qualified processing of scientific information. Nevertheless, new opportunities are opening up for researchers in the current difficult international situation for Russia associated with the transformation of the world order, which, with certain efforts by our country, can become more fair, including in relation to the Russian Federation itself. Russian political scientists can get rid of the ideological blinders of recent decades, but at the same time they need to lobby for adequate targeted funding to conduct high-quality research that is necessary for Russian society and the state.

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## Notes

1. Putin assessed the trade turnover between Russia and South Africa in 2022 // PRIME. – July 29, 2023. – Access mode: [https://1prime.ru/state\\_regulation/20230729/841227145.html?ysclid=llqhtmdw2ft12579725](https://1prime.ru/state_regulation/20230729/841227145.html?ysclid=llqhtmdw2ft12579725) (date of access: 09/11/2023).
2. According to the media, these five countries have applied to join BRICS, and in terms of GDP in PPP terms they are noticeably superior to Ethiopia and the UAE, also ahead of Argentina (and Indonesia is even ahead of South Africa and Brazil).
3. NEL in numbers // National Electronic Library. – Access mode: <https://rusneb.ru/neb-figures/?ysclid=llqm4lmew0157944663> (date of access: 09/11/2023).
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## PLACE AND ROLE OF ISLAM IN REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

ILDAR NASYROV. COOPERATION OF RUSSIAN REGIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: FORMATS AND OPPORTUNITIES ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN (Part 1)

*Keywords: international relations of regions; regions and foreign policy; international organizations; models of interaction with integration institutions; up-to-date sectors of cooperation; effectiveness of external relations; multipolarity.*

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*Citation:* Nasyrov I. Cooperation of Russian Regions with International Organizations: Formats and Opportunities on the Example of the Republic of Tatarstan // Russia and the Moslem World, 2024, № 3 (325), P. 19–29. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2024.03.02

*Abstract.* The article studies the issues of interaction between the constituent entities of Russia and international organizations, the importance of this type of international cooperation for the socio-economic

*development of the regions and for the implementation of the Russian foreign policy. The possibilities of participation of the constituent entities in the promotion of national interests on the world stage in the context of increasing external pressure on Russia are considered. The analysis of the issues of political and legal regulation of international and foreign economic relations of the constituent entities of Russia is given, including the questions of participation in the activities of international organizations. The article introduces a classification of formats for the interaction of regions with international organizations and characterizes the features of their implementation; the transformation of the international activity of the regions is demonstrated, according to the evolution of the foreign policy priorities of the state.*

*To evaluate the performance of models of cooperation with integration institutions of various types, the experience of Tatarstan is being studied. The importance for socio-economic development and improving the quality of life of the population by participation of the regions in the activities of international organizations as part of the Russian representation in them, or building relationships with international associations at the level of regions and local authorities, as well as holding events under the auspices of international organizations is confirmed. Alternatives for involving the constituent entities in the implementation of essential areas of Russian foreign policy are proposed. The positive role of the regions in maintaining contacts between Russia and a number of leading international organizations is also discovered, along with the search for new low-politicized formats of cooperation, such as partnerships with international associations and structures at the level of local authorities. The potential of the regions appears highly-demanded in the implementation of Russia's consistent policy to form a multipolar world order.*

### **Russian Regions on the Agenda of International Cooperation**

Amidst ongoing anti-Russian sanctions, attempts to internationally isolate Russia and increasing politicization of the

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world economy at the expense of market competition [1, p. 834–835], the implementation of foreign policy and the development of trade and economic cooperation of Russia is based on a wide variety of tools and opportunities in the field of foreign relations. In this context, the potential of Russian regions for strengthening cross-border cooperation has become a valuable resource [2, p. 66]. Having been involved in international activities since the mid-1990s, the constituent entities of Russia have laid a good groundwork for the development of economic and humanitarian cooperation with foreign partners, as well as the implementation of certain directions of Russian foreign policy [3].

The growing international integration and globalization have resulted in an increasing role of cross-border structures and organizations. International organizations contribute to the regulation of interstate relations on a multilateral basis; in this area, the influence of international non-governmental organizations is also increasing [4, p. 12].

The obligations of the state as a member of international organizations often affect the interests and powers of the constituent entities of the Federation, which draws their attention to this area. Seeking new opportunities for development, regions show interest in interacting with international organizations. Just like other forms of international relations of regions, this requires constant coordination on the part of federal authorities and strict adherence to the principle of unity of the foreign policy of Russia.

Russia's foreign policy is becoming more pragmatic and focused on national interests. Of course, Russian regions should also organize their work in accordance with the country's position on all issues on the international agenda.

At the present stage, one of the key issues regarding the implementation of international relations of Russian regions is adaptation to the growing sanctions pressure, as well as making necessary adjustments to the directions and forms of work with foreign partners. The article examines possible interactions with international organizations by studying the relevant experience

of the Republic of Tatarstan and identifies promising areas of cooperation (taking into account the current foreign policy situation and the powers of the constituent entities of Russia in the area of international and foreign economic relations).

Today, the “Greater Eurasian Partnership” initiative<sup>1</sup>, proposed by Russian President Vladimir Putin, is of particular relevance. As direct participants in the implementation of Russia’s foreign policy, subjects of the Federation are naturally involved in these processes, using opportunities within the framework of “institutionalized relationships” [5, p. 70; 6]. At the same time, we should take into account the high conflict potential of competitive initiatives of the leading Eurasian and Asia-Pacific powers [7, p. 85]. Moreover, in the post-Soviet space, there are simultaneously developing divergent trends of integration and disintegration; political and economic initiatives of the leading actors of world politics overlap. This determines the fundamental principles of Russia’s strategy of Eurasian integration, which includes the development and functioning of supranational institutions [8, p. 3–4].

As will be shown below, federal subjects are successfully engaged in the implementation of other important vectors of Russian foreign policy. This determines the relevance of the conducted study, coupled with the need for a systematic approach to the interaction of the constituent entities of Russia with international and integration structures.

### **Political and Legal Regulation of International Cooperation of the Constituent Entities of Russia. Role of International Organizations**

International activities of the constituent entities of Russia took shape gradually. In the early 1990s, the first contacts with foreign partners showed the potential of international cooperation for the social and economic development of regions,

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but at the same time identified a number of associated challenges for a unified foreign policy and the territorial integrity of the state. It has been studied by Russian authors [9]. During the development of a system of coordination and support for international and foreign economic relations at the regional level, the activities of federal subjects were coordinated with national interests, and the powers of the regions in this area, which is directly related to the issues of state security, were defined [10]. Initially, due to the lack of appropriate legal regulation at the federal level, regions attempted to secure excessive political power. For example, in the first edition of the Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan, state sovereignty was proclaimed an integral qualitative state of the republic<sup>2</sup>. Moreover, Prime Minister of the Republic of Tatarstan Mukhammat Sabirov interpreted the invitation of the Government of Türkiye to visit the country as recognition of the sovereignty of Tatarstan [11, p. 7].

At the turn of the 2000s, a regulatory framework for international and foreign economic relations of the subjects of the Russian Federation was formed as a result of collecting and analyzing the experience of federal executive authorities in coordinating international contacts of the subjects of the Federation, as well as maintaining a consistent course towards strengthening Russian statehood. Federal legislators have adapted it to modern realities by now, taking into account the real-life implementation of legislation; its effectiveness has been confirmed. This is indirectly confirmed by the recently adopted federal law N 414-FZ “On the General Principles of the Organization of Public Power in the Subjects of the Russian Federation” (clause 90, article 44), which refers to the current legislation on issues related to the regulation of international cooperation between regions<sup>3</sup>.

The fact that there are domestic and foreign practices of conducting external relations of regions (consistent with the foreign policy of the state) confirms that they are important for promotion of national interests in the world and dynamic

regional development in an open economy. There are many examples of successful involvement of Russian regions in the implementation of certain foreign policy objectives; they include the creation of 'soft power' instruments, promotion of a positive image of our state and strengthening multi-vector cooperation with friendly countries [12]. The regions proved themselves in the course of development of the situation with Ukraine. For example, during the unification of Crimea with Russia, Tatarstan became involved in the work with the Crimean Tatar population of the peninsula, explaining Russian national policy and supporting the establishment of public institutions in the region. At the present stage, the subjects of the Federation are actively helping the population and authorities of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. In all these cases, the coherence between the regions and federal authorities is of fundamental importance. Currently, international and foreign economic relations of Russian regions are carried out within the limits of authorities granted by federal legislation, and in conformity with the state foreign policy under the overall supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

As for external relations of Tatarstan, in the mid-2010s, the Republic ceased to be heavily involved in the integration of the Türkiye world initiated by Türkiye – in the form of international cultural and humanitarian organizations, educational and Islamic projects. This demonstrated the coordinating role of federal institutions ensuring a unified Russian foreign policy.

The State provides its regions (administrative and territorial units within the country) with an opportunity to participate in international relations and become subjects of international law by giving them the respective rights and obligations. It is with the permission of the state that regions can take part in the activities of international organizations. At the same time, the constituent entities of the Russian Federation have sufficient powers to build relations with international organizations [13, p. 1226]. Coordination of interaction between subjects of the Russian



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Federation and international organizations is entrusted to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs<sup>4</sup>.

Federal Law of January 4, 1999 N 4-FZ “On the Coordinating Role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in Pursuing a Unified Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation” is fundamental in this area; it allows the constituent entities of Russia to participate in the activities of international organizations within the framework of specially created bodies. An example of such a body is the Chamber of Regions of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, where the Russian delegation has been working since 1995<sup>5</sup>. At the level of local authorities, representatives of Russian regions are part of United Nations Advisory Committee of Local Authorities (UNACLA). There are also specially created international organizations both at the regional level (Assembly of European Regions) and at the level of local authorities (World organization United Cities and Local Governments). Also, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) is a project aimed at local authorities.

International organizations contribute to resolving issues regarding political and legal regulation of the activities of regions in the international arena. For example, there is the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities<sup>6</sup>, which was launched in May 1980 in the format of a document open for signature. Russia signed it in 1999 and ratified it in 2002. Additional Protocols to the Convention determined the procedure for creating institutional mechanisms for cross-border cooperation and their shape, and also extended the provisions of the Convention to cooperation between administrative and territorial units that do not share a border. Thus, a legal framework for international interaction between territorial communities or authorities was established<sup>7</sup>.

In 2008, the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States signed the Convention on Cross-Border Cooperation of Member States of the Commonwealth of

Independent States<sup>8</sup>, which regulates cross-border cooperation and defines its principles and main directions. Signed in 2016, the Convention on Interregional Cooperation of the CIS Members States emphasizes the importance of the contractual framework for interregional cooperation, sets out the obligations of the parties that contribute to its development, and determines the areas of interregional cooperation agreed upon by the parties.

In the context of cooperation between Tatarstan and Eurasian interstate structures, it is necessary to note that a number of events at the interstate level have been held in Kazan: the summit of the Heads of State of the CIS in 2005, the meeting of the Council of Heads of Governments of the CIS in 2017, and sessions of the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council in 2017 and 2021.

The integration process is progressing dynamically. In June 2021, at the plenary session of the Kazan International Congress of Eurasian Integration, Farit Mukhametshin, Chairman of the State Council of the Republic of Tatarstan, took the initiative to create a Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the EAEU. The participants of the plenary meeting supported this proposal, and it was included in the final resolution [14, p. 227].

In light of the additional restrictions caused by the coronavirus pandemic, increasing attention has been paid to the possibility of international organizations supporting foreign economic activities by simplifying trade procedures. In this regard, it is essential to develop international standards for harmonization of cross-border trade, facilitate the widespread introduction of information technology and reduce administrative barriers [15, p. 565].

There are variety of forms and areas of participation of regions in the work of international organizations, which sets the stage for the further development of this area of cooperation, thus contributing to the evolution and international legal regulation of the entire complex of cross-border relations at the regional (subnational) level.

*To be continued.*

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*Received: 15.01.2024.*

*Accepted for publication: 26.01.2024.*

## KANYBEK KUDAYAROV. ACTIVITIES OF NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

*Keywords: NPO; non-governmental organizations; Kyrgyz Republic; donors; think tanks; financing; program.*

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*Citation: Kudayarov K. Activities of Non-Profit Organizations in the Kyrgyz Republic // Russia and the Moslem World, 2024, № 3 (325), P. 29–50. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2024.03.03*

*Abstract. The article is devoted to a brief overview of NPOs in Kyrgyzstan. The term “non-profit organization” is defined, the forms of NPOs are indicated, the history of the development of this type of organization in Kyrgyzstan and the evolution of their legal status are*

*described. Based on information officially presented on NPO websites, an attempt has been made to consider the largest non-profit organizations in the country in terms of their areas of activity, as well as their impact on the development of the society and the state.*

According to the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic, a non-profit organization is a voluntary self-governed organization created by physical and (or) legal entities on the basis of community of their interests for realization of spiritual or other non-material needs in interests of the members and (or) all society for which generation of profit is not main objective of activities and the got profit is not shared between members, founders and officials. [1] At the same time, the legislation of Kyrgyzstan does not give a definition of “non-governmental organization”, making this term non-legal. However, some experts believe [2] that NGOs are an integral part of NPOs. There are 15 organizational and legal forms of NPOs provided for by Kyrgyz legislation: public association, foundation, institution (private, state or municipal), association of legal entities, jamaat (community organization), cooperative, homeowners’ partnership (condominium), TPSG bodies, water users association, self-regulatory organization of professional securities market participants, non-state pension fund, employers’ association, trade union, political party and religious organization. All of these are NPOs, while first five are also NGOs [1].

The total number of NPOs in Kyrgyzstan is 29,130 [3]. Moreover, the majority of non-profit organizations (18,500) are located in Bishkek, the capital of the republic [4]. There are approximately 400 actually functioning NPOs [5].

In Kyrgyzstan, the activities of NPOs are tied to permanent external funding, since donors are predominantly foreign (mainly Western organizations). Among them, we can single out the largest sponsors such as the Soros-Kyrgyzstan Fund (SKF)<sup>1</sup>, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation<sup>2</sup>, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation<sup>3</sup>, the National Democratic Institute<sup>4</sup>, the EU [3], UN structures, etc.

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Most often, they sponsor projects of some Kyrgyz NGOs, while frequently being also a customer.

Uncertainty in obtaining funding (which depends on whether a non-profit organization wins a tender, competition or grant to implement a project) determines the activities of NPOs, the dynamics of which can vary significantly from year to year [2].

Judging by the areas of funding indicated by the Asian Development Bank, most of the international organizations and donors working in the Kyrgyz Republic allocate about 40 per cent of funds to human rights organizations, 25 per cent is spent on health care, and 20 per cent – on education. Only a small part of the allocated funds is reserved for promoting gender issues, addressing environmental concerns and sociological research (5 per cent) [3, p. 2].

It is not possible to estimate the entire amount of NGO funding allocated by donors, but at least two organizations – the Soros-Kyrgyzstan Fund<sup>5</sup> and USAID<sup>6</sup> – have provided a total of over \$515 million for the implementation of various projects in the republic.

For example, the Soros Foundation has spent more than \$115.05 million to support civil initiatives in a variety of areas, such as: legal, educational and economic reforms; needs of the media industry, NGOs and academia; as well as initiatives in the field of public policy, healthcare and culture. In 2022, the Fund's expenses amounted to \$3,613,598<sup>7</sup>. Of these, \$848,915 were spent on public healthcare, \$421,956 on the legal program, \$379,690 on the educational program, \$338,976 on media development, \$266,160 on administrative department, and \$216,614 on information program. Administrative expenses amounted to \$1,141,287.

In turn, the US Agency for International Development (according to the official information presented on the organization's website) supports programs promoting democratic institutions, healthcare, education and economic growth [1, p. 3].

Another fund, the equally famous Friedrich Ebert Foundation positions itself as a foundation that supports programs aimed at achieving social justice and inclusive economic development; promoting social and ecological transformation; encouraging civic engagement; and supporting diplomatic policies.

It should be noted that almost all NGOs in the republic are to a certain extent involved in the program for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals<sup>8</sup>. Kyrgyzstan has been very successful in implementing this policy, ranking 45th in the world for this indicator in 2023<sup>9</sup>.

According to data presented by political scientist D. Berdakov, as of 2016, there were 250 thousand people working in the NPO sector in Kyrgyzstan, which is 12 per cent of the total working population<sup>10</sup>.

According to the Ministry of Justice of the Kyrgyz Republic, in 2013, 28 per cent of NPOs operating in the country were receiving foreign funding; experts estimated their total contribution to the GDP of the republic at 2.2 per cent<sup>11</sup>. At the same time, about 62 per cent of NPOs in one way or another recruited volunteers for temporary work. Today, 400 actively working Kyrgyz NGOs employ 17 thousand people [5], while there are only a thousand more civil servants in the country (18 thousand people)<sup>12</sup>. In 2022, actively working NPOs paid more than 363 million Kyrgyz soms to the budget of the republic (equal to 363 million Russian roubles at the som-to-rouble exchange rate as of November 15, 2023). Their annual contribution to the GDP of Kyrgyzstan is estimated at 0.3 per cent. In 2021, 397 actively operating NPOs generated value added worth more than 2 billion soms. The non-profit sector supports local businesses by annually purchasing goods worth 600 million soms. According to other indicators, NPOs pay 125 million soms per year for state and municipal services. In 2021, value added of NPO services in healthcare amounted to 90 million soms; in education – 17 million soms; in environmental improvement – 8.5 million soms; and in social protection – 334 million soms.



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NGOs spent 436 million soms on business training, promotion of female entrepreneurship, as well as training and employment of young people with disabilities [5].

According to information provided by a number of Kyrgyz experts, in 2013, 41 per cent of all funds went to non-profit organizations via membership fees and economic activities; government support and grants accounted for 6 per cent of the total amount; 47 per cent were foreign grants; and 6 per cent – donations for charitable purposes [1, p. 70]. Thus, almost half of all funds spent on the activities of NPOs are provided by foreign sponsors.

*The development of NGOs in the Kyrgyz Republic* began with the establishment of links with the outside world, after the Soros Foundation created in 1993 opened its branch in the republic (earlier than in other states in the region); the Soros-Kyrgyzstan Fund also saw more funding than other republics in the region. Funding in Kazakhstan amounts to \$100 million (in April 2023, the Fund was transformed into the expert and analytical hub “Central Asian Policy Studies”, CAPS Unlock); in Tajikistan – over 70 million (closed in 2022); in Uzbekistan – 20 million (closed in 2004).

Overall, the 1990s was the time when non-governmental and non-profit organizations both in Kyrgyzstan and in other countries of the post-Soviet space were being established. They were most actively growing in the second half of the 1990s, when the number of organizations in the non-profit sector reached 2201 (1997). The policy of the Kyrgyz leadership, which liberalized the economy and promoted democratic values, resulted in the state acquiring a reputation as an “island of democracy” in Central Asia. In subsequent years, the number of NGOs continued to grow, which was associated with geopolitical events in the world and in the Central Asian region (the NATO military campaign in Afghanistan in 2001–2021 and the ever-increasing presence of the US and other Western countries in the region).

Over time, NGOs began to increasingly get involved in the political life of the country, initiating debates on significant issues of social, economic and political nature. The activity of the civil sector resulted in the Concept of Cooperation between Public Associations, Foundations (Non-governmental Institutions) and Government Authorities being adopted in 2004<sup>13</sup>. The government reacted to NPOs strengthening their position by implementing a policy from 2006 to 2023 that limited the influence of the civil sector through relevant regulations (NLA).

Among the legal acts adopted and proposed in recent years, we should take note of those legislative acts of the Kyrgyz Republic<sup>14</sup> that provide for liability of state authorized bodies and non-profit organizations for allowing the creation of conditions that have led to limiting the activities of NPOs; determine the procedure for submission of summary information of non-profit organization on sources of forming of money, the directions of their expenditure, and also about the acquired, used and alienable property<sup>15</sup>, etc.

The adoption of the Law "About Non-Profit Organizations"<sup>16</sup>, which introduced the concept of "foreign representative", caused a public outcry. The justification certificate given by MPs for this law states that this measure is necessary because a significant part of NGOs, contrary to the constituent documents, interferes in the political life of the state, participating, including through funding, in organizing and conducting political actions in the Kyrgyz Republic for the purpose of influencing public opinion [4]. The authors of the bill believe that it is necessary to amend the law on NPOs and clarify the concept of "foreign non-profit organization", as well as determine through which bodies these organizations can carry out their activities. The bill gives a definition of "foreign non-profit organization" [4]; also, it is proposed to introduce a legal definition of "non-commercial organization performing the functions of a foreign representative"<sup>17</sup>. The ultimate goal of this law is to suppress foreign influence on Kyrgyz NGOs in the political life of the state.

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Non-profit sector representatives reacted to the authorities' policy by changing the discourse of NPOs and reforming their activities to some degree, i.e. they significantly cut back on their criticism of the state over its decisions in various spheres of national life.

Below are listed some of the largest NPOs according to their type of activity. Traditionally, the first positions are occupied by *human rights organizations and structures involved in the development of civil society*.

1. The Association of Civil Society Support Centers (ACSSC)<sup>18</sup>, an independent network of nine civil society support centers. It provides information, advice and training in the field of organizational development, financial stability, business development, social partnerships, as well as organizing and conducting advocacy campaigns<sup>19</sup>. The ACSSC approach to training includes studying the needs of clients; conducting pre-training diagnostics of organizations; development of specific training programs to suit the needs of clients; and post-training consultation. The Association also routinely conducts post-training monitoring and analysis in order to assess the impact of consultations and other capacity-building activities. Moreover, it maintains close contacts with the heads of organizations that received institutional support and corporate trainings.

2. Association of Non-Governmental Human Rights Organizations "Human Rights Advocacy Center" (HRAC)<sup>20</sup> is an independent human rights organization operating in the south of Kyrgyzstan. It provides legal services and protects the rights of low-income citizens whose constitutional rights and freedoms have been violated. Every month, 25–30 people (including women, children, people with disabilities and representatives of national minorities) receive counselling at the Human Rights Advocacy Center. The Association has conducted about 50 training sessions and seminars. It has trained 1,200 representatives of government agencies, NGOs, human rights activists and lawyers, heads and members of civil society initiative groups, and law students;

60 judges and court secretaries; as well as 30 journalists. Among other things, they have published over 10,000 works on legal issues<sup>21</sup>.

3. Association for the Protection of Human Rights in Criminal Process “ARTICLE9”<sup>22</sup> is a platform for human rights organizations, as well as individuals and legal entities involved in this area<sup>23</sup>. The Association focuses on the stages of criminal and legal proceedings, during which, as employees of this structure believe, human rights are violated. Experts reveal violations of the law during detention and medical examination; identify instances where detained persons (suspects) were denied legal assistance; and review the legality of court decisions and other stages of criminal cases and litigation. They work on each case from beginning to end. Numerous publications of the Association can be found in the “publications” section on the organization’s website.

4. Coalition against Torture in Kyrgyzstan<sup>24</sup> (consisting of 16 NGOs) is a union of human rights organizations working to prevent torture in the republic. The Coalition was founded in 2011 with the objective of consolidating the efforts of NGOs to eradicate the practice of torture and ill-treatment of detainees and prisoners; highlighting trials involving the victims of torture by law enforcement officials; challenging court decisions by filing cassation appeals, etc<sup>25</sup>.

5. Public Association “Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society”<sup>24</sup> is an independent organization created for promoting civic education; improving the legal culture of voters; independent monitoring of the pre-election process and electoral activities to make sure that all participants in the electoral process observe electoral law; as well as analyzing the current situation in individual regions and in the country as a whole<sup>26</sup>. One of the main objectives of the Coalition for Democracy and Civil Society is to support a transparent electoral system through civic education and independent monitoring, increasing people’s trust in the electoral system. The coalition regularly publishes reports

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on ensuring protection of social and labour rights of employees of state-financed organizations (medical staff in particular), as well as protection of labour rights of women and children; reports on the issues of internal migration; reports on the quality of school education in the republic, etc.<sup>27</sup> In addition to reports, they also publish analytical information, for example, analysis of legal acts regulating the legal status of health workers<sup>28</sup>. A significant part of the publications was released with the financial support of the SKF and USAID.

Many other NGOs can also be considered human rights organizations, including women's organizations, which offer their target groups a fairly wide range of services. In general, NGOs run 95 per cent of crisis centers for victims of domestic violence in Kyrgyzstan [5]. The state recognizes the effectiveness of the centers founded and managed by NGOs, and therefore provides them with funding from the budget through the social procurement mechanism.

Organizations involved in *healthcare* include:

- 1) The Association of Health Managers of the Kyrgyz Republic<sup>29</sup>, created in December 2020 at the initiative of the managers of healthcare organizations<sup>30</sup>. The goal of the Association is to promote the development of a sustainable and effective management system for healthcare organizations by enhancing interaction among all stakeholders, including heads of healthcare organizations, in order to improve the quality and accessibility of medical care for the population. The works published by the Association are dedicated to monitoring and prevention of various diseases, including congenital diseases, vaccination issues, etc.<sup>31</sup> Seminars on the financial management of an organization (document flow, accounting and internal control system) are held periodically.

- 2) The public organization "Initiatives in Medical Education" was founded in 2012. The following year, the foundation joined a consortium with the University Hospitals of Geneva (HUG) in order to implement the "Medical Education

Reforms in the Kyrgyz Republic” (MER) project. The organization’s knowledge of the Kyrgyz healthcare system and medical education system bolstered the reform process, allowing the project to progress at all levels and transform strategic moves into concrete actions on the ground. This approach involves targeted actions at the system and executive levels coupled with the implementation of specific pilot activities. One of the main goals of the organization is the consolidation of efforts and interaction of medical educational organizations regarding the development of the system of undergraduate and postgraduate continuous education, as well as secondary medical and pharmaceutical education in the republic. The NGO’s main donor is the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Organizations involved in *the educational sector* include: the Foundation Education Initiatives Support (FEIS)<sup>32</sup>, the Association for Education Development in Kyrgyzstan (AED)<sup>33</sup>, the Kyrgyz Association of Adult Education (KAAE), the Association of Parents of Disabled Children (ARDI in Russian), the Public Association “Higher School of Management” and many other NGOs.

Among the organizations listed above the most prominent one is the FEIS, which has more than 25 years of experience in implementing projects designed to improve the quality of education<sup>34</sup> by training teachers and school principals; creating educational programs; providing trainings for education system workers; publishing educational, methodological and analytical literature, etc. Among the many publications of the Foundation, we should highlight the following: “The Development and Prospects of the School Parliament in the Kyrgyz Republic”, which was implemented with the support of the EU and the Aga Khan Foundation<sup>35</sup> (2014); “Learning to Think Critically”, “School Parliament” (implemented within the framework of the project “First Steps of a Citizen: Participation of Schoolchildren in Decision Making” (2016), etc.

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The Foundation's main customer is the Ministry of Education and Science of Kyrgyzstan, while the Soros-Kyrgyzstan Fund, UNICEF<sup>36</sup> and other organizations act as donors.

*Environmental organizations* and activists<sup>37</sup> are an equally essential part of the non-profit, non-governmental sector of the republic. According to data provided by ecologist E. Shukurov, as of 2016, there were approximately 150 public organizations in Kyrgyzstan that were either involved in environmental activities or had a relative clause set out in their charter [4, p. 2]. The largest of them can be found on the website of the Climate HUB of Kyrgyzstan<sup>38</sup>: the organization of legal entities "Green Alliance.KG"<sup>39</sup>, the Aarhus Center in Bishkek, the Ecological Movement "BIOM"<sup>40</sup>, the youth environmental movement "MoveGreen"<sup>41</sup>, the public foundation "Ekois"<sup>42</sup>, the Public Fund "Rural Development Fund"<sup>43</sup>, Unison Group<sup>44</sup>, Ozone Center, Central-Asian Institute for Applied Geosciences (CAIAG), the Regional Public Fund "Camp Ala-Too", the Regional Mountain Centre of Central Asia, the Central Asia Regional Environmental Center (CAREC). The exact number of environmental organizations in the republic has not been established.

In terms of realizing its expert potential, the most interesting organization is the Ecological Movement "BIOM", which originated as part of the youth branch of the Aline Ecological Movement and subsequently became an independent organization. BIOM can be considered the largest analytical center in the republic, undertaking environmental projects in Kyrgyzstan and the Central Asian region. BIOM employees believe that the quality of the environment and people's lives can be improved only by encouraging the population to take part in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the preservation of natural ecosystems. The ecological movement works with government agencies and a wide range of local, regional and global stakeholders [5, p. 41]. BIOM is recognized by its high publication activity<sup>45</sup>, having to date published over a

hundred works on environmental issues, including educational and methodological complexes, teaching aids and various manuals. Since 1997, BIOM have implemented about 90 projects in partnership with other organizations; these projects were under programs dedicated to education; climate change; environmental safety and management; and conservation of biodiversity.

The exact number of *women's organizations in the republic*<sup>46</sup> is difficult to determine. According to the 2004 data, the number of NGOs classifying themselves as women's organizations reached 150<sup>47</sup>. Since then, their number has increased significantly, although the exact figure remains unknown. Women's non-profit non-governmental organizations are represented by socially and politically active business women, operating within the framework of certain organizational structures. The largest platforms for cooperation between women's organizations in Kyrgyzstan are: the Alliance of Women's Legislative Initiatives (unites over 150 individuals and legal entities); the Forum of Women's NGOs in Kyrgyzstan (54 organizations); the Social Technology Agency; Women's Forum "Kurak", uniting women entrepreneurs; the Coalition for the Development of Women's Entrepreneurship and the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence in Kyrgyzstan (19 organizations) and other organizations [6, p. 49].

Analytical centers occupy an important niche in the non-profit sector of the Kyrgyz Republic. Among the 24 "thought factories" in the republic, 22 are NPOs [7], while the remaining two – SIAR research&consulting<sup>48</sup> and M-Vector – are consulting organizations engaged in research activities, among other things. This allows us to assume that they may not be classified as NPOs. In any case, this information requires clarification.

Kyrgyz analytical centers cover a wide range of activities, which is reflected in the publications of both Russian and foreign authors<sup>49</sup>. For example, two "think tanks" – the Development Policy Institute and the Institute of Public Policy and



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Administration – are engaged in various areas of law-making, reforms of state and municipal government, and development of local self-government; the Foundation Education Initiatives Support (FEIS) is developing and supporting initiatives in the field of education, culture and science, while the Health Policy Analysis Center (HPAC) addresses health-related issues<sup>50</sup>; ORASAM<sup>51</sup> is in charge of the political, social, cultural and humanitarian aspects of cooperation between Türkiye states; the Social Innovation Lab Kyrgyzstan (SILK) and the Silk Road Research Center<sup>52</sup> are engaged in innovative development of socially significant projects; the Silk Road Research Center and the Center for Political and Legal Studies research democratic values and human rights; the Institute for Youth Development is implementing youth policy in the field of health, education and economics; the Institute for Development Assessment, the Ecological Movement “BIOM” and the Center for Political and Legal Studies work on the environmental projects within the SDG framework. Moreover, there are several structures dealing with international relations; strategic studies; security issues; social, economic and political processes in Kyrgyzstan, Central Asia and the world; and research on various integration projects, namely the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Institute of Strategic Analysis and Assessments of the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (KRSU), the Center for Eurasian Studies of the KRSU, the National Institute of Strategic Studies (NISS), the Center for Political and Legal Studies, Center “Polis Asia” and Center “Reasonable Solutions”. The Center for Political and Legal Research and the Central Asian Barometer<sup>53</sup> conduct applied research devoted to the political, social and economic life of the republic and the region.

There are a large number of NPOs in a relatively small republic as Kyrgyzstan, and if one believes the information presented on the official websites of these organizations, they are capable of influencing the development of various aspects of the social, economic and political life of society and the state.

However, not everything is so simple, since judging by the amendments to the Law “About Non-Profit Organizations”, there are very serious reasons to believe that NPOs are able to exert political, ideological, cultural and other influence on society, which may lead to all sorts of political upheavals and even a split in society. The population of the republic has first-hand knowledge of such cases. Many experts are convinced that all three political crises that occurred in the Kyrgyz Republic (in 2005, 2010 and 2020) were no accident. In part, these events could have been provoked by the activities of NGOs with foreign participation<sup>54</sup>.

According to expert V. Komleva, “the objective of creating foreign NGOs is to help countries fight poverty, advance democracy, and protect the rights of women and migrants. However, these seemingly good goals are precisely the tool that foreign organizations use to promote their interests.”<sup>55</sup>

Back in 2015, some Kyrgyz MPs initiated a revision of the law on NPOs and proposed a number of amendments providing for increased control over their activities by gaining full access to organizations’ documentation and information on funding. However, at that time opinions on this matter were divided in Parliament, and only in recent years this issue has been raised again. Naturally, in addition to some deputies, representatives of NPOs spoke out against the state establishing control over the non-profit sector.

Local experts have different opinions on the issue, but they generally support this initiative, emphasizing that NPOs are unwilling to give government agencies access to their documentation and disclose all sources of funding. This suggests that they have something to hide from regulatory authorities<sup>56</sup>. Civil NGOs should be accountable to the state to the same extent as religious organizations<sup>57</sup>.

At any rate, this issue remains relevant and is going to be the subject of research by the author of this article in the near future.

## Conclusion

The Kyrgyz non-profit sector has extensive experience in interacting with the population and the state. The contribution of NPOs to the economy of the republic is quite significant (approx. 17 thousand jobs and 0.3 per cent of the country's GDP); they also provide assistance to socially vulnerable segments of the population, thus aiding the state to implement welfare policy.

In Kyrgyzstan, there are nearly 30 thousand non-profit organizations, almost one third of which receive some kind of support from abroad, amounting to about 10,000 organizations. However, of the total number of NPOs, only 400 organizations are active, receiving 47 per cent of their funds from foreign donors. Therefore, if we assume that all organizations receive roughly equal funding, it means that about half of all active non-profit organizations in Kyrgyzstan depend on foreign investments.

We have yet to explore the issues regarding financing and the influence of NPOs with foreign funding on the state and society, but it is already clear that in terms of law, the status of NPOs in the Kyrgyz Republic is going to be revised and amended.

## References

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2. We are referring to the authors of the manual "Legal Regulation of Non-Profit Organizations and Institutions of Civil Participation", edited by N.A. Idrisov – Bishkek: T. Kirland, 2020. – 422 p. [In Russian]
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4. Justification certificate of Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Kyrgyz Republic (Law of the Kyrgyz Republic "About Non-Profit Organizations" and the Criminal Code of the Kyrgyz Republic)."

5. Contribution of NPOs to the economy of Kyrgyzstan in numbers // KAKTUSMEDIA: [website]. URL: [https://kaktus.media/doc/489012\\_vklad\\_nko\\_v\\_ekonomiky\\_kyrgyzstana\\_v\\_cifrah\\_infografika.html](https://kaktus.media/doc/489012_vklad_nko_v_ekonomiky_kyrgyzstana_v_cifrah_infografika.html) [in Russian] (date of access: 10.10.2023).
6. Legal Regulation of Non-Profit Organizations and Institutions of Civil Participation [in Russian]; (Tutorial) / Under the general editorship of N.A. Idrisov – Bishkek: T. Kirland, 2020. – 422 p.
7. *Kudayarov K.A.* “Thought Factories” in Modern Kyrgyzstan // Russia and the Moslem World: Science-Information Journal. – 2023. – No. 2 (328). – P. 44–55. [In Russian] DOI: 10.31249/rimm/2023.02.04.
8. Brief Overview of Civil Society in the Kyrgyz Republic / ADB Kyrgyz Resident Mission, Bishkek, November 2011. – 12 p. [In Russian]
9. *Shukurov E.J.* Ecological Movement of Kyrgyzstan / Bishkek, 2016, Ecological Movement “BIOM”. – 5 p. [In Russian]
10. *Kudayarov K.A.* Environmental Policy in Kyrgyzstan (on the Example of the BIOM Movement) // Russia and the Moslem World: Science-Information Journal. – 2022. – No. 4 (326). – P. 40–53. [In Russian]
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## Notes

1. Since 2015, it has been included in the list of foreign and international non-governmental organizations whose activities are recognized as undesirable on the territory of the Russian Federation. Previously, it was represented in Russia by two organizations – the Open Society Foundation and the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation (OSI Assistance Foundation), which are part of the Soros Foundation, a network of international charitable organizations created by the famous American financier George Soros [website]. URL: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/documents/7756/> [In Russian] (date of access: 18.03.2023).
2. The structural divisions of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Russia are excluded from the register of branches and representative offices of international organizations and foreign non-profit non-governmental organizations in accordance with the orders of the Russian Ministry of Justice dated April 8, 2022 [website]. URL: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/events/48807/> [In Russian] (date of access: 18.03.2023).

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3. The structural divisions of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Russia are excluded from the register of branches and representative offices of international organizations and foreign non-profit & non-governmental organizations in accordance with the orders of the Ministry of Justice of Russia dated April 8, 2022 [website]. URL: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/events/48807/> [In Russian] (date of access: 18.03.2023).
  4. Full name is the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. Since 2016, it has been included in the list of foreign and international non-governmental organizations whose activities are recognized as undesirable on the territory of the Russian Federation [website]. URL: <https://minjust.gov.ru/ru/documents/7756/> [In Russian] (date of access: 18.03.2023).
  5. About the Foundation // The Soros-Kyrgyzstan Fund: [website]. URL: [https://soros.kg/home\\_ru/who-we-are/about-us/](https://soros.kg/home_ru/who-we-are/about-us/) [In Russian] (date of access: 03/18/2023).
  6. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) ceased its activities in the Russian Federation in 2012 by decision of the Russian party, since it was revealed that USAID was engaged in influencing political processes in Russia through grants, including elections at various levels and civil society institutions. Between 1992 and 2020, USAID allocated over \$400 million for programs in Kyrgyzstan.
  7. Annual report 2022 // The Soros-Kyrgyzstan Fund [website]. URL: [https://soros.kg/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/FSK\\_AR2022\\_RU.pdf](https://soros.kg/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/FSK_AR2022_RU.pdf) [In Russian] (date of access: 12.10.2023).
  8. The Sustainable Development Goals are a call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection. // The UN Sustainable Development Goals: [website]. URL: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/ru/sustainable-development-goals/> [In Russian] (date of access: 18.10.2023).
  9. In 2023, Kyrgyzstan ranked 45th in terms of the Sustainable Development Goals and is a leader among the countries of Central Asia // National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic : [website]. URL: <https://stat.kg/ru/news/kyrgyzskaya-respublika-zanyala-45-e-mesto-popokazatelyam-celej-ustojchivogo-razvitiya-za-2023-god-i-lidiruet-sredi-stran-centralnoj-azii/> [In Russian] (date of access: 12.10.2023).
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17. A non-commercial organization performing the functions of a foreign representative is a non-commercial organization established in the Kyrgyz Republic that receives funds and other property from foreign states, their government agencies, international and foreign organizations, foreign citizens, stateless persons or their authorized representatives who receive funds and other property from aforementioned sources (except for open joint stock companies with state participation and their subsidiaries) (hereinafter referred to

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- as foreign sources) and participates, including in the interest of foreign sources, in political activities conducted in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic.
18. The association actively cooperates with Western organizations, including USAID, which ceased its activities in Russia in 2012 by decision of the Russian side in connection with its destructive activities on the territory of the Russian Federation.
  19. A campaign aimed at representing and protecting the rights and interests of a certain social group or subject, promoting public interests in government bodies.
  20. It is supported by a number of Western organizations, including the Soros Foundation, which in 2015 was added to the list of foreign and international non-governmental organizations whose activities are recognized as undesirable on the territory of the Russian Federation.
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32. The organization received several grants from the Soros Foundation, which in 2015 was added to the list of foreign and international non-governmental organizations whose activities are recognized as undesirable on the territory of the Russian Federation.
33. The organization is partners with several Western organizations, including Oxfam IBIS, Education Out Loud advocacy and social accountability, GPE Transforming Education, etc.
34. Foundation Education Initiatives Support // FEIS: [website]. URL: <https://feis.asia> [In Russian] (date of access: 18.10.2023).
35. The structural divisions of the Aga Khan Foundation in Russia are excluded from the register of branches and representative offices of international organizations and foreign non-profit non-governmental organizations in accordance with the orders of the Ministry of Justice of Russia dated April 8, 2022.
36. Representative offices of the Children's Fund (UNICEF) were closed in Russia in 2012. However, Russia continued to cooperate with the organization outside the territory of the Russian Federation.
37. Ecological Movement "BIOM", the Aleine Ecological Movement, the "Green Alliance.KG" civil initiative, alliance of environmental organizations "UNISON Group", environmental public organization "MoveGreen", civil initiative "Peshcom", etc.
38. NGO // ClimateHUB : [website]. URL: <https://www.climatehub.kg/%D0%BE-%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%B0%D1%82%D1%84%D0%BE%D1%80%D0%BC%D0%B5/%D0%BF%D0%B0%D1%80%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%8B/%D0%BD%D0%BF%D0%BE/> [In Russian] (date of access: 20.10.2023). (The Soros Foundation is among the organization's many partners).
39. Among the organization's many partners are the Soros Foundation and other Western organizations whose activities are recognized as undesirable on the territory of the Russian Federation.
40. Many "BIOM" projects are financially supported by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, whose structural divisions in Russia are excluded from the register of branches and representative offices of international organizations and foreign non-profit non-governmental organizations in accordance with the orders of the Russian Ministry of Justice dated April 8, 2022.
41. The organization implements projects with the support of a number of Western organizations, including the Soros Foundation, whose activities are recognized as undesirable on the territory of the Russian Federation.



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42. The organization implements projects with the support of the Soros Foundation (among others), whose activities are recognized as undesirable on the territory of the Russian Federation.
  43. The organization's projects are funded by the EU.
  44. Among the organization's international partners is USAID, whose activities are recognized as undesirable on the territory of the Russian Federation.
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Received: 06.12.2023.

Accepted for publication: 20.12.2023.

## KSENIA ATAMALI. AZERBAIJANIS OUTSIDE AZERBAIJAN (Part 1)

*Keywords:* Azerbaijan; diaspora; diaspora organizations; migration; Azerbaijani diaspora; Azerbaijanis in Iran; Azerbaijanis in Türkiye; Azerbaijanis in Russia.

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*Citation:* Atamali K. Azerbaijanis outside Azerbaijan (Part 1) // Russia and the Moslem World, 2024, № 3 (325), P. 50–62. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2024.03.04

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*Abstract. The article examines the life of Azerbaijanis outside Azerbaijan, the activity of Azerbaijani diasporas around the world, the activities of diaspora organizations, the history of migration and territorial distribution. Of the fifty million Azerbaijanis around the world, only one fifth of them lives in Azerbaijan itself. The article pays special attention to the Azerbaijani diasporas in Iran, Türkiye and Russia – the three largest ones in the world. Information on numerous Azerbaijani organizations, communities and cultural centers operating abroad is also provided.*

## **Historical Background**

Today, over 50 million Azerbaijanis live in 70 countries around the world, with less than 10 million in Azerbaijan itself [1]. The majority, about 40 million people, live outside of Azerbaijan. This is due not only to migration, but also to historical changes in borders, when historical regions became part of another state as a result of certain social and political events. Thus, without the fact of migration, ethnic Azerbaijanis reside in the border regions of Iran, Georgia and Russia.

The formation of the Azerbaijani diaspora is directly linked to historical events. Although Azerbaijanis moved abroad in ancient times, this process became systematic in the first half of the 19th century due to political and military conflicts, the Russo-Persian wars, as well as forced migration in the Caucasus region. Following the Treaty of Turkmenchay, signed in 1828, the historical Azerbaijani territories were divided, and the northern Erivan and Nakhchivan khanates were ceded to the Russian Empire. On the one hand, this gave impetus to decentralization of peoples, but on the other hand, it triggered the emigration of those dissatisfied with the Tsarist policies [2].

In the 20th century, the emigration of Azerbaijanis spiked against the backdrop of two world wars, radical changes in Northern or Southern (Iranian) Azerbaijan, and social and political revolutions. Emigration took place in waves until Azerbaijan gained independence at the end of the century [2]:

1) The Russian Revolution of 1905, the movement led by Sattar Khan in Iranian Azerbaijan;

2) The First World War, the emergence and collapse of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) between 1918 and 1920, the Khiabani movement, the revolution in the South of Iran;

3) The Second World War, the formation and collapse of the Azerbaijan National Government in South Azerbaijan between 1945 and 1946;

4) Economic migration of Azerbaijanis living in Türkiye to Europe in the 1950-1960s;

5) Voluntary migration from the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic to the Union republics in the 1970-1980s, migration following the Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran, political migration from South Azerbaijan to Europe.

Since 1995, the migration of Azerbaijanis has been purely due to economic reasons.

As mentioned above, about 40 million Azerbaijanis live outside of Azerbaijan, with the bulk (32 million) living in Iran. Türkiye ranks second (more than 3.3 million), and Russia is in third place (2 million).

We should especially note the high cultural and political solidarity of Azerbaijanis scattered all over the world. They zealously protect their national identity and support the political stance of their historical homeland. The goal of the Azerbaijani diaspora is to increase the influence of Azerbaijan in the political arena, raise awareness of the world community about the Armenian aggression and achieve a fair settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This requires a high degree of coordination of Azerbaijani communities, organizations and associations around the world. For this purpose, an initiative to convene the "Congress of World Azerbaijanis" was put forward in 1992. The congress gathers and considers the opinions of delegates from other countries, numerous ideas and proposals, and discusses the socio-political, economic and cultural problems of Azerbaijanis around the world [3]. To date, there have been

five congresses: the first four, in 2001, 2006, 2011 and 2016, took place in Baku, while in 2022 the events were held in Shusha.

### **Azerbaijanis living abroad as of 2015 [1]**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Population</b>
Australia	8 000	Netherlands	20 000
Austria	3 000	New Zealand	2 000
Belarus	7 000	Norway	3 000
Belgium	3 000	Poland	2 000
the UK	17 000	Russia	2 000 000
Hungary	10 000	Northern Cyprus	1 000
Germany	280 000	Syria	45 000
Georgia	500 000	the US	450 000
Denmark	6 000	Tajikistan	5 800
Israel	77 000	Turkmenistan	48 000
Iran	32 000 000	Türkiye	3 300 600
Spain	5 000	Uzbekistan	68 000
Italy	2 000	Ukraine	280 000
Kazakhstan	90 000	Finland	3 000
Canada	170 000	France	75 000
Kyrgyzstan	20 000	Czech Republic	2 000
China	30 000	Switzerland	4 000
Latvia	4 000	Sweden	30 000
Lithuania	1 500	Estonia	1 800
Moldova	6 000	Japan	10 000

In 2002, President Heydar Aliyev signed a decree “On state policy towards Azerbaijanis living abroad”, which was supposed to get people to coalesce around national interests. In the same year, the “State Committee on Work with Azerbaijanis Living Abroad” was established. In 2008, it was transformed into the “State Committee on Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan”, which is still functioning [4].

Various Azerbaijani communities around the world actively participate in the social, political and cultural life of the countries where they are located. Diasporas have their representatives in legislative and executive bodies, and in various local governments; they offer language courses and open Sunday schools in places of compact residence of Azerbaijanis; they have

their own television and radio channels, as well as websites; they publish numerous newspapers and magazines; and they also organize events aimed at popularizing Azerbaijani culture [2].

It is also worth mentioning that International Solidarity Day of Azerbaijanis (December 31) has been celebrated since 1991. On this day in 1989, border fences between Soviet Azerbaijan and Iran were dismantled.

### **Azerbaijanis in Iran**

The territory of modern Iran is a traditional area of settlement of Azerbaijanis. There is ambiguous data on the number of Azerbaijanis in Iran, population estimates provided by different sources vary greatly, but most sources put the number between 30 and 32 million, which is about 37 per cent of the country's total population [5]. Azerbaijanis are the largest ethnic minority in Iran. They live mainly in the northwest of the country, in Iranian Azerbaijan (West Azerbaijan, East Azerbaijan, Ardabil and Zanjan), where they constitute the majority. In total, about 9.5 million ethnic Azerbaijanis live in four provinces. A significant number of Azerbaijanis also live in such provinces as Hamadan, Qazvin, Markazi, Gilan and Kermanshah [6]. Also, according to expert estimates, the Azerbaijani community in Tehran may make up a third of the city's population (approx. 4.5 million). Iranian Azerbaijan has a developed agriculture and is often called the "breadbasket" of Iran; the four provinces together have 43 seats in the Islamic Consultative Assembly [7].

Iranian Azerbaijanis are predominantly Shiites (Ja'fari madhhab), with a very small number of Sunnis also present [8]. Ever since the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Bahá'ís have been discriminated against and subjected to constant persecution [9]. As for language, most Iranian Azerbaijanis are bilingual and are fluent in Persian. Although the multi-million Azerbaijani population of Iran tends to use their native language in everyday life, Farsi is the only official language in the country. Currently,

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more than 130 Azerbaijani newspapers and magazines are being published in Iran, and television and radio are broadcasting programs in Azerbaijani [10].

Separately, it is worth noting that the Azerbaijanis contributed greatly to the Iranian Revolution, and Tabriz in the East Azerbaijan became one of the main revolutionary centers. People there were dissatisfied with the Shah's policy, which suppressed their national culture and infringed on their rights, including economic ones. In addition, family members of many Azerbaijanis suffered after the fall of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in 1946, formed on the territory of Iranian Azerbaijan with the assistance of the USSR [11]. Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the main leader of the Islamic Revolution, was an ethnic Azerbaijani, as is the current Supreme Leader of Iran, Grand Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Nationalist sentiments are strong in Iranian Azerbaijan. In 1991, a separatist organization, the South Azerbaijan National Liberation Movement (SANLM or CAMAH), was founded. Its founder, writer Piruz Dilanchi, was forced to flee abroad and now lives in Canada. In 2002, Professor Mahmudali Chehregani resigned as head of the SANLM and, together with his followers, founded a new nationalist organization, the Southern Azerbaijan National Awakening Movement (SANAM or GAMOH). Unlike the SANLM, which advocated the separation of Iranian Azerbaijan from Iran, the SANAM advocates federalization of Iran, promotes the right to self-determination for Iranian Azerbaijanis and the idea of secularism, as well as advocates for the protection of Azerbaijani cultural and linguistic identity [12]. From time to time, mass demonstrations break out in north-western Iran, for example after a cartoon depicting the Azerbaijani language was published in 2006 [13] and an offensive TV show aired in 2015 [14].

## Azerbaijanis in Türkiye

There are no clear statistics on the number of Türkiye citizens of Azerbaijani origin. Some estimates put their number at 800,000, while the Azerbaijani diaspora in Türkiye reports 4.5 million people, which is rather questionable [15]. There are large Azerbaijani communities in the city of Iğdır and Kars Province in the eastern part of the country.

The number of Azerbaijanis in Türkiye increased significantly in the early 19th century amid the Russo-Persian Wars. Following the Russo-Turkish War in 1829, some Azerbaijanis immigrated to Türkiye, settling in the east of Anatolia (especially in the provinces of Erzurum and Ağrı) [16]. Mass resettlement of Muslims from a non-Muslim country to a Muslim one is called *muhajirism*. It is worth noting that Erzurum dialect was strongly influenced by the Azerbaijani language. Also, in the early 19th century, Azerbaijanis from Karabakh moved to the south of Afyonkarahisar; despite significant assimilation, the “Karabağlı” are still considered a separate ethnic group. At the same time, a group of Sunnis from Shirvan settled in Amasya, where they became known as “Şirvanlı”. In 1894, a unique Şirvanlı Mosque in the Baroque style was erected there. Their descendants still retain their Azerbaijani ethnic identity. In addition, the Terekeme people (the Karapapakhs) live in the north-eastern part of Türkiye (Kars and Iğdır); they are a sub-ethnic group of Azerbaijanis. They speak a dialect of the Azerbaijani language and are mainly Sunni (unlike the Iranian Karapapakhs who are Shiite) [17].

After the collapse of the ADR, many Azerbaijanis fled to Türkiye, escaping from Armenian nationalists (the Dashnaks) [18]. Many Azerbaijani aristocrats, industrialists and members of the overthrown government of the ADR settled in Istanbul, Bursa and Ankara. At that time, the Azerbaijani diaspora in Istanbul published a large number of newspapers and journals, for example, *Yeni Kafkasya* (1923–1927), *Azeri Türk* (1928–1931),



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*Bildiriş* (1929–1931), etc. From 1947, statesman and political figure Mahammad Rasulzade was the head of the Azerbaijani National Center in Ankara; in 1949 he founded the Association of Azerbaijan Culture [2].

By the early 1990s, about 400,000 Azerbaijanis lived on the Türkiye side of the border between the USSR and Türkiye [19]. In 1990, an international congress of Azerbaijani societies was held at the Atatürk Cultural Center, attended by representatives of the Azerbaijani diaspora from England, Germany, France, Sweden, Norway and other countries. At the congress, it was decided to create regional centers of the Azerbaijani diaspora in Istanbul, Baku and Hamburg, as well as to establish the Union of Cultural Centers of Azerbaijan [2].

In the early 1990s, a new wave of emigration occurred when tens of thousands of citizens of newly independent Azerbaijan left for Türkiye for economic reasons. We should also note the high level of integration of Azerbaijanis into Türkiye society due to cultural closeness between the two peoples. However, there are some significant differences: Azerbaijanis are mainly Shiites, while Turks are Sunnis. Among Türkiye Azerbaijanis, there are a large number of successful businessmen, athletes and cultural figures. For example, in 2023, Sinan Oğan, a politician from Iğdır, a member of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye and an activist of the Azerbaijani diaspora, ran for president of Türkiye [20].

There are many diaspora organizations in Türkiye. In the 1990s, Azerbaijani houses and cultural circles were established in Izmir, Manisa, Bursa, Istanbul, Ankara, Antalya, Kocaeli, Adana, Edirne, etc. In 2004, the Federation of Azerbaijani- Türkiye Circles (TADF) was founded in Iskenderun, uniting Azerbaijani diaspora organizations in Türkiye. The Federation promotes the interests of Azerbaijan in the region and is engaged in coordinating the activities of diaspora organizations. The circles take an active part in the social, political, economic and cultural life of the country.

Also, since 2004, the circle in Istanbul has been publishing the “Azerbaijan’s World” journal [21].

### **Azerbaijanis in Russia**

The exact number of Azerbaijanis residing in Russia is difficult to determine: some estimates put their number at over 2 million people [1]; however, according to the 2010 Russian census, only 603 thousand Azerbaijanis are officially registered in the country. According to the census, the bulk, almost 131 thousand people, live in Dagestan, making up the majority (58 per cent) of the population of Derbentsky District and a third of the population of the city of Derbent. Since 2000, they have been included in the List of Indigenous Peoples of Dagestan, and Azerbaijani is recognized as one of the official languages of the Republic. The remaining Azerbaijanis are scattered throughout the regions and make up communities in large cities, mainly in Moscow (57.1 thousand) and St. Petersburg (17.7 thousand). A significant number of Azerbaijanis also live in Tyumen Region (43.6 thousand), Saratov Region (14.8 thousand), Samara Region (14 thousand) and Sverdlovsk Region (14.2 thousand), as well as Stavropol Territory (17.8 thousand) and Krasnoyarsk Territory (16.3 thousand) [22]. The history of the settlement of Azerbaijanis in Russia and the ethnogenesis of Azerbaijanis in Dagestan stretches back into the depths of time and spans several centuries. As for the 20th century, during the Soviet era, many Azerbaijani specialists worked at various enterprises in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and stayed there even after 1991. It is worth noting that the flow of migrants increased sharply with the beginning of the Karabakh conflict.

The Azerbaijani diaspora in Russia is one of the largest in the world and is actively supported by Baku through the embassy. There are numerous diaspora organizations operating throughout the country. Established in 1999, the Federal National Cultural Autonomy of Azerbaijanis in Russia (FNCA AzerRos) is

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the largest and most influential public organization that united fragmented Azerbaijani organizations. AzerRos provides legal protection to citizens of the Russian Federation of Azerbaijani nationality; works to strengthen the role of the diaspora in the social and political life of the country; protects national culture, language and traditions; and forges ties between the diaspora and its historical homeland. The organization was formed on the basis of the Azerbaijan Cultural Center and the Compatriots Society in Moscow. At that time, national and cultural autonomies were also established in other cities and regions of Russia: in St. Petersburg, Tver, Yaroslavl, Kostroma, Kaluga, etc. They were united into a single federal structure, which held its first congress in June 1999. FNCA AzerRos closely cooperates with Russian ministries and departments, defending the interests of the Azerbaijani community. Since 2000, the organization has been publishing the “Azerbaijanis of Russia” newspaper [23].

We should also mention the All-Russian Azerbaijani Congress, established in 2001. The Congress had branches in 73 constituent entities of the Russian Federation; it was comprised of numerous national societies and communities, such as the Ojag Cultural Center (Moscow), the Azerbaijan Society (Moscow), Ozan (Chelyabinsk), etc. The Congress contributed to the development of friendly relations between Russia and Azerbaijan. It also supported the work of several newspapers and a television and radio company broadcasting in the Azerbaijani language. In the 2010s, some regional branches faced criminal charges related to their long-term illegal activities, including trade. In 2017, the Congress was liquidated by a decision of the Supreme Court of Russia. [24]

Azerbaijanis in Russia are active in business, primarily in the services and trade sectors. Among Azerbaijanis in Russia, there are famous figures of culture and art, athletes and scientists; for example, singer Muslim Magomayev and oil geologist Farman Salmanov. In Derbent, there are the Azerbaijan State Drama Theatre, numerous Azerbaijani newspapers and magazines, and

schools with teaching in the native (Azerbaijani) language. The Azerbaijani diaspora also regularly holds national events, holidays, exhibitions and festivals [25] in various cities of Russia.

In conclusion, there are five times more Azerbaijanis living around the world than in Azerbaijan itself. The diaspora is remarkably close-knit; there are numerous diaspora organizations that are working to preserve the national community, traditions and ties of Azerbaijanis with their historical homeland. In this article, we examined the three largest Azerbaijani diasporas in the world (in Iran, Türkiye and Russia) and also made an attempt to outline the historical background, identify the main waves of migration of Azerbaijanis and highlight the activities of diaspora organizations.

The second part of the article will examine the Azerbaijani diasporas in Europe, the US, the CIS countries and other states with a significant proportion of Azerbaijanis.

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*Received: 29.07.20024.*

*Accepted for publication: 05.08.2024.*

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## ISLAM IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

BOZKURT UGUR. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF TÜRKIYE IN THE CONTEXT OF MODERN MIGRATION PROCESSES

*Keywords: immigration; refugees from Syria and Afghanistan; problems of social adaptation; competition in the labour market; unemployment; demographic problems.*

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*Citation:* Ugur B. Social and Economic Problems of Türkiye in the Context of Modern Migration Processes // Russia and the Moslem World, 2024, № 3 (325), P. 63–75. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2024.03.05

*Abstract.* The purpose of the study is to examine the economic problems arising from the ongoing refugee reception process in Türkiye. The volume of immigration has been increasing over a long period and has reached its peak at the present time. Many people were forced to immigrate to Türkiye due to the recent wars in the Middle East. Most immigrants enter our country illegally, which puts Türkiye in a difficult situation, but migrants also face problems. It is obvious that economic problems are particularly acute, and these problems have two different aspects. Firstly, there are the economic problems faced by immigrants themselves who want to achieve better opportunities in

*Türkiye; secondly, there are the problems of inflation and unemployment that the Türkiye government faces due to immigrants. At the same time, problems arise between residents and aliens.*

## **Introduction**

Migration is an interdisciplinary field that has many definitions but no general rule. We can divide migration into forced and voluntary; the purposes for migration may be labour or asylum; and methods of reaching the destination can be either legal or illegal [1, p. 1686]. The concept of international migration is used to describe the movement of citizens of one country across state boundaries to another country for reasons that are determined by push and pull factors. Push factors encourage people to leave their country and pull factors instil a desire to achieve a higher and safer standard of living in other countries. While not all cross-border movements fall within the definition of international migration, long-term and settlement movements of people do [2, p. 311].

It is known that the determining factor for all migrants is the improvement of living and working conditions. Thus, the main reasons that prompt people to move to another locality are unsatisfying conditions in the place of residence or a desire for better opportunities. However, no matter the motive, people setting off on such a journey face many problems, primarily economic ones [3, p. 166]. In addition, globalization leads to increasing the wealth gap between countries, which, in turn, stimulates migration [4, p. 164]. Although migration appears to be a one-way movement, when we take into account the return of economic and social capital, it becomes clear that migration is actually a multi-directional movement. In this regard, many countries view the migration process as an opportunity not only to reduce the level of unemployment and lower the population affected by it, but also to receive additional remittance [1, p. 1692]. However, when assessing the current situation in



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Türkiye, it becomes obvious that migration does not always yield the same results and is often fraught with economic problems. Therefore, it is advisable to examine the history of international migration in Türkiye, as well as the scale of migration and the regulation of migration policy.

### **Overview of the History of International Migration in Türkiye**

Türkiye is located at the crossroads between Europe and Asia, which has witnessed numerous migration events throughout history. Due to its location on international migration routes, Türkiye is either a destination or transit country for migration. In the 19th century, migration to Türkiye intensified and is still intense to this day. According to the country's migration history, more than 6.5 million people have migrated to Türkiye since 1859. It is believed that in the 19th century a large number of Circassians from the Caucasus and a small number of Jews, immigrated to Türkiye. In the 20th century, there was a mass migration of Muslims, especially from the Balkan Peninsula [5, p. 209-210; 6].

Throughout its history, Türkiye has received millions of immigrants; however, there is also external migration in the country. In the 1950s, there was an active labour migration from Türkiye to Europe in accordance with the agreement on attracting labour from Türkiye to the countries of the European Economic Community. Judging by the reports, the largest number of departures from Türkiye to Europe took place in 1980 [2, p. 182-183].

Since 1980, Türkiye has experienced a massive influx of refugees or asylum seekers. In 1989, more than 300 thousand Bulgarian citizens of Türkiye and Pomak origin were forced to flee to Türkiye, where they sought asylum (Pomaks are those whose ancestors converted to Islam). Another wave of refugees hit Türkiye in 1991, when requests for asylum came from half a

million people, mostly Kurds; fleeing persecution by Saddam Hussein and his army, they tried to cross the mountains and enter Türkiye [7, p. 297].

In 2011, due to the outbreak of the civil war in Syria, more than 3.6 million people migrated to Türkiye in a short period of time, thus starting a period of migration unprecedented in history. Many of the country's citizens were fleeing ISIS forces or fearing reprisals from government troops. Seeking refuge in Türkiye, millions of Syrians moved there thanks to Türkiye's "open door policy". It is widely known that in 2014 Türkiye became the host of the largest number of refugees in the world [8, p. 40]. In 2018, it retained this status for the fifth year in a row, accepting 3.7 million refugees, mostly Syrians. In 2021, the number of Syrian migrants in Türkiye continued to grow; they are under temporary protected status. In addition, Türkiye has recently experienced a large number of incidents related to illegal migration. Between 2015 and 2021, more than 1.5 million illegal migrants were detained, mainly from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. Among the detained illegal migrants, the largest groups are citizens of Afghanistan (470 thousand people) and Pakistan (196 thousand people). However, thousands more illegal migrants continue to live in Türkiye [9, p. 34].

In the post-Cold War period, Türkiye's experience with migration was shaped by many internal and external factors. Globalization has become an important external force that has contributed to the rapid transformation of Türkiye into a "country of transit". In addition, in the 2000s, Türkiye faced problems in developing migration policies. This was due to the national-state structure of Türkiye society. Since a nation-state is a community that regards itself as one people with a common territory and a single narrative, then international migrants could not be part of this narrative in Türkiye, which violated the fundamental principle of the nation. In this context, the country's traditional immigration policy in the 20th century was largely determined by state building processes, as well as the desire to

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preserve a homogeneous national identity [10, p. 178]. It is obvious that both the political and economic aspects of this situation in Türkiye are volatile and problematic.

### **Social and Economic Challenges of Migration**

The influx of migrants to Türkiye in recent years has brought with it many challenges, especially social and economic ones. Türkiye's various policies, especially regarding Syrian migrants, have been aimed at finding temporary solutions to problems. The practice of granting "guest" status, which was initially adopted with the expectation that the crisis in Syria would be short-lived and asylum seekers would return to their countries, soon had to be adjusted. It became clear that the integration of refugees was possible, first by granting them temporary protection status (2014), and then by granting them the right to work and access to Türkiye citizenship (2016), albeit very limited in nature. After 2017, there was the question of the expulsion of Syrians in government discourse. In 2019, it was noted that, on the one hand, specific policies reflected this intention of "repatriation", but, on the other hand, there were plans developed for the integration of Syrians [11, p. 319–320].

One of the issues is that the implementation of this policy implies an official and public acknowledgment that the majority of Syrian refugees are not going to return to Syria and are staying in Türkiye for a lengthy period of time. The priority for the Turkish government is to mitigate this highly politicized issue, as well as the increasingly negative public sentiment against the continued presence of Syrian refugees. Therefore, it is necessary to effectively demonstrate the economic benefits to the host community, as well as the benefits of social cohesion between refugees and the host community through integration, as opposed to the social and political problems that will arise if refugees are continuously isolated [12, p. 7].

There is an opinion that societies with cultural similarities will not have problems coexisting. However, an in-depth analysis of Syrian immigration in Türkiye shows that while cultural proximity initially plays a positive role, its favourable effects decrease as the duration of stay in the country increases. There are many factors, the most relevant of which is the size of the later inflows of migrants; it can even be argued that it is the key factor. Moreover, a large number of immigrants can be a basis for discrimination and interfere with the construction of a new identity. This situation can become a serious obstacle to adaptation processes. The fact that there are publicized discriminatory statements against migrants and their children is an issue that Türkiye should pay attention to [9, p. 328].

With 1 million refugees reaching school age in 2018, Türkiye committed to including all Syrian refugee children previously attending temporary education centres in the national education system by 2020 [8, p. 193]. However, this poses many problems. Listed below are the major barriers to schooling for Syrian children living outside the refugee camps in Türkiye.

1. *A language barrier.* Due to the fact that migrant children speak only Arabic, they face a language barrier in Türkiye schools. Research shows that schoolchildren in Türkiye are not receiving proper education and are lagging behind.

2. *Economic hardships.* Due to economic hardships, immigrant families cannot afford the cost of education of their children. To meet their basic needs, many families are forced to make their children work.

3. *Social cohesion.* Some Syrian families are reluctant to enrol their children in schools due to fears that their children are going to be bullied at school and have difficulty socializing with their classmates [13, p. 57]. It is clear that migrant families' fear of their children getting hurt outweighs their desire for them to benefit from education.

It is known that migrants have problems with education and healthcare. Although Arabic language training was provided

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in temporary educational centres for immigrants, the desired results could not be achieved due to the lack of accreditation. This situation slows down the adaptation and social integration of immigrant children.

However, the employment of Syrian doctors and teachers in the fields of healthcare and education is progressing well. Still, technical issues and an increase in the number of school-age children have resulted in many endeavours not taking place. In addition, children with special needs could not receive the necessary care due to the lack of experienced teachers [8, p. 248].

Another issue the government is worried about is a high birth rate among immigrants. Moreover, this is happening against the background of a decline in the birth rate among Türkiye women (in 2022, the fertility index was 1.38, whereas in 2017 it was 2.1). This situation threatens Türkiye's demographic structure [9, p. 64–65; 14, p. 599]. In addition, migrants have changed the ethnic and religious balance in many regions, especially in Kilis, Hatay and Gaziantep. We can say that contradictions between Sunnis and Alawites have intensified in many regions [15, p. 3].

Apart from the social problems caused by migration in Türkiye, which we have tried to explain above, there are also many economic issues. In the early years of migration, there were no major economic problems and migrants were not a subject of debate. However, after the currency devaluation and debt crisis in 2018, the impact of migrants on the economy became a focus of controversy. As noted above, rising unemployment and an influx of refugees slowed economic growth. In addition, competition for jobs and in business was rising, which significantly soured relations between the host society and immigrants [16, p. 2].

Competition in the labour market is one of the main economic challenges immigrants face. When migrants arrive in a host country, they often enter competition with local workers for jobs, especially in low-skilled industries. Such competition can lead to stagnation and even salary reduction for local employees [17,

p. 3–4]. Moreover, migrants may face discrimination in the labour market, which can limit their employment opportunities and result in lower wages than that of local workers [18]. We can say that there are similar cases in Türkiye. Native-born workers face wage stagnation and unemployment, especially due to the fact that migrants agree to work for lower wages. At the same time, it is obvious that migrants are unable to work for adequate wages.

Without a work permit, Syrian refugees face major financial hardships. In the Türkiye labour market, there are particularly many illegal Syrian immigrants who are not registered as refugees. These immigrants typically use their savings to rent small apartments and work under the table in textile factories, clothing stores, restaurants, construction and agricultural sites. If such Syrians are caught by the police, they are sent to refugee camps. As illegal workers, they earn less than the minimum wage, which is reported to be \$250–300 per month, an amount sufficient to cover basic living expenses. Some manage to scrape together enough money to send some of their earnings back to their families in Syria [15, p. 10].

The situation was further complicated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Most refugees in Türkiye have limited access to essential items that help stay healthy during a pandemic, such as hygiene supplies and personal protective equipment. The economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has left hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees in an even more drastic situation [19, p. 130]. In 2019, the share of Syrian migrant workers was 37.9 per cent, dropping to 29.4 per cent in 2020 due to the pandemic. It is clear that many migrants, whose psychological state was negatively affected by the situation, lost their jobs [9, p. 292].

Today, Afghans are another group of migrants that have social and economic problems. Due to recent political events in Afghanistan, Türkiye faces numerous cases of illegal migration from this country [20, p. 81]. These unregistered migrants are known to work in many regions of the country. Therefore, it is not possible to assess the extent to which informal employment is

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affecting the economy. However, the arrival of millions of migrants in Türkiye has led to an increase in housing prices. In addition, the shrinking of zones of employment led to a decrease in wages and the level of social welfare. Migrants also had an important role in the sharp increase in inflation [16, p. 4].

Afghans migrate to Türkiye to either settle there or move to a third country. The goal of those Afghan migrants who are planning to stay in Türkiye is to improve living conditions. Housing, healthcare, employment and economic environment are not particularly migrant-friendly. Those who arrive in Türkiye as temporary asylum seekers with the purpose of resettlement to a third country are lingering there as long as possible. However, Afghan migrants face problems in both cases. Migrants who want to get the best opportunities for employment and living conditions find themselves in a difficult situation and do not register. In addition, Afghan migrants who choose to resettle to a third country are faced with a long relocation process, reduced quotas for entry into third countries, uncertainty in obtaining the status, no work permit and the inability to use public services [21, p. 106].

Certain steps are being taken in order to address the challenges that Afghan migrants and the government of Türkiye face in connection with the migration process. Due to the strengthening of migration to Türkiye, especially through Afghanistan and Pakistan, security measures were strengthened at the Iranian border. To prevent migrants from entering the country, Türkiye managed to build border walls in a short period time. In 2019, a 182 km long wall was built on the border with Iran. Moreover, in 2020, Türkiye constructed an 81 km long wall along the Iranian border in the Ağrı Province. And finally, in 2021, the construction of 43 kilometres of wall on the border in the Hakkâri Province was completed. These partial fences are supposed to cover the entire Iranian border [22, p. 26]. Having spent significant funds on the accommodation of migrants,

Türkiye also had to finance the erection of protective structures in order to keep new refugees from entering the country.

Lastly, it should be noted that the economic consequences of migration are the subject of constant debate. Some experts argue that mass migration can stabilize the population and contribute to the development of multicultural societies [23]. However, since the economic consequences of migration are complex and multi-layered, for their full understanding an additional research is being called for [24].

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we would like to note that Türkiye was a witness to many migration events both in the past and present. Mass migration phenomenon that started in the 19th century is especially noticeable. During that period, Türkiye with an agriculture-based economy was not wholly susceptible to the negative impact of migration. However, it is clear that migration affected the economic activities that developed and diversified starting in the 20th century. In addition, recent migrations to Türkiye, especially from Syria and Afghanistan (the latter is illegal) put many problems on the agenda. We can say that both migrants and Türkiye are facing diverse challenges.

According to the data, migrants most often experience economic problems that have a far-reaching impact on their well-being. These problems include financial difficulties, troubles adjusting to the new economic conditions, discrimination and limited employment opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic aggravated these economic issues, widening the inequality and making it more difficult for migrants to earn their livelihood. At the same time, inflation in Türkiye increased at the expense of migrants, while competition for jobs between local residents and labour migrants did not ensure economic prosperity of any of the parties. As you can see, there are situations where the basic need for housing is not being met fully. Therefore, politicians and



interested parties should address economic problems related to migration. To eliminate economic problems, it is crucial to ensure the well-being of migrants and the local population, as well as the successful integration of migrants into a new society.

It is clear that migrants face many social challenges. There are issues with ensuring access to housing, medical services and education opportunities. In addition, various migrant-related problems give rise to tensions in society. As a result, as the Türkiye economy is increasingly confronted with such problems as recession, high inflation and devaluation of the lyre, resentment towards refugees is growing, fuelling nationalist sentiments. Time will tell what means Türkiye will resort to in order to address challenges in connection with international migration.

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Received: 11.12.2023.

Accepted for publication: 28.12.2023.

## VLADIMIR KIRICHENKO. IRAN-SAUDI RECONCILIATION: IMPACT ON THE SITUATION IN THE REGION

*Keywords: Saudi Arabia; Iran;  
diplomatic relations; Arab-Israeli conflict.*

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*Citation:* Kirichenko V. Iran-Saudi Reconciliation: Impact on the Situation in the Region // Russia and the Moslem World, 2024, № 3 (325), P. 75–89. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2024.03.06

*Abstract.* The article reveals the resumption of diplomatic relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran in 2023. Diplomatic relations were interrupted in 2016 after the destruction of Saudi diplomatic missions in Tehran by protesters against the execution of the famous Shiite theologian Nimr al-Nimr in the kingdom. Also, a significant part of the article is devoted to the escalation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, which began on October 7, 2023. The reaction of the main regional actors to this event is considered.

The relations of such major regional players as Iran and Saudi Arabia impact on the situation in the Middle East.

In March 2023, representatives of Iran and Saudi Arabia signed an agreement on the renewal of diplomatic relations. Due to the fact that China actively assisted in establishing contacts between the countries, the agreement was signed in Beijing after lengthy negotiations.

Diplomatic relations between Tehran and Riyadh were interrupted in 2016 after protesters who were against the execution of the famous Shiite theologian Nimr al-Nimr in the kingdom destroyed Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran. However, 6 years later, in an interview with Atlantic in September 2022, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said that it is necessary to build relations with Iran as with a neighboring country [Iranian Foreign Ministers..., 2023]. In June 2023, Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal ibn Farhan Al Saud visited Tehran, where the parties discussed the normalization of relations [Turak, 2023]. Describing progress in relieving tensions between Riyadh and Tehran brokered by China during his visit to the Saudi capital, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian declared during a joint press conference with his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan: "Relations between Tehran and Saudi Arabia are on the right track and we are witnesses of progress," and also called the negotiations successful.

In Damascus, these agreements between Iran and Saudi Arabia were called an important step towards strengthening security and stability in the Middle East [Kogalov, 12.03.2023]. It should be noted that even at the summit in May 2023, Saudi Arabia advocated the return of Syria, a key ally of Iran, to the Arab League [Iran's foreign..., 2023].

One of the consequences of the rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran was the exchange of prisoners (March 2023) between Houthi rebels\*, with ties to Iran and the Yemeni

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\* Houthis - the group is named after its founder and former leader Hussein al-Husi, (1960-2004), adherents of the Zeidite branch of Shiite Islam.

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government, which enjoys the support of Saudi Arabia. The exchange was long hope, especially as many prisoners reported being abused and tortured by Houthi rebels [Matsko, 2023].

Lebanon's Hezbollah expressed satisfaction that the agreement, in their view, ended Iran's international isolation and Saudi Arabia's seemingly unwavering commitment to US policy.

Lebanon's acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and Migration, Abdallah Bou Habib, said that "the trilateral Iran-China-Saudi statement and the agreement of Tehran and Riyadh to resume diplomatic relations will have a stabilizing effect on the entire course of events in the region," adding that "this step gives great hope for a way out of the crisis for Lebanon, which throughout its history has been a victim of regional disputes and cruelly paid for them" [Kogalov, 12.03.2023]. Hence Tehran and Riyadh intensified diplomatic contacts, exchanged views on current events in the Middle East, and coordinated their actions to support other Arab states.

On October 7, 2023, members of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) attacked Israel. After that, the Israeli army began shelling the Gaza Strip, which led to civilian casualties [WP: Saudi prince..., 2023].

On the same day, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia called the situation in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict unprecedented and called on the parties to de-escalate and protect civilians [In Saudi Arabia..., 2023]. In turn, the Iranian government called the Palestinian attack on Israel "a powerful response to criminal actions" [Iran supported..., 2023].

On October 12, 2023, Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman and Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi held a telephone conversation, the topic of which was the aggravation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In particular, Raisi and bin Salman discussed "the ongoing military escalation in the Gaza

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In 2004, the Houthis revolted against the Yemeni government. In 2011, they took an active part in the events of the Arab Spring. In 2015, they managed to capture the capital of Yemen, Sanaa, and actually assert their power in Yemen.

Strip” [Western News..., 2023]. The prince noted that Saudi Arabia is making “maximum efforts to interact with all international and regional parties” to stop the war [Western news..., 2023].

Bin Salman stressed that Riyadh will defend the “Palestinian issue” in order to achieve “a comprehensive and just peace that guarantees the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people” [Western news..., 2023]. Both the crown prince and the president of Iran said that “the crimes of the Israeli regime and the green light of the United States for atrocities can lead to destructive instability” [Prince of Saudi..., 2023].

It is revealing that at the meeting of US Secretary of State Blinken in Riyadh with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, held on October 15, 2023, the Secretary of State emphasized the problem of Israeli hostages, and the Saudi party, in turn, drew attention to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza [Bhadrakumar, 2023]. At the same time, according to The Washington Post, the crown prince made Blinken wait several hours for a meeting, which was supposed to take place in the evening of October 14, but bin Salman did not appear on it until the next morning [media: Saudi prince..., 2023].

On October 12, 2023, Israel attacked the airports of Damascus and Aleppo, the Syrian newspaper Al-Watan reported. Both airports came out of action [Israel inflicted..., 2023]. It is worth believing that the strikes were carried out due to Israel’s fears about arms supplies to Syria from Iran. On October 14, 2023, Saudi Arabia suspended negotiations on the normalization of relations with Israel amid its war with Hamas. This was a blow for the United States, since it was they who promoted the Kingdom’s peace treaty with Israel [AFP learned..., 2023].

Perhaps one of the reasons that prompted Hamas and Islamic Jihad (an organization banned in the Russian Federation) to attack Israel on October 7, 2023, was the desire to crumb the deal between Israel and Saudi Arabia. These groups want relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia to normalize solely assuming the aspirations of the Palestinian people. It is believed

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that it was this circumstance that prompted the radical Palestinians led by Hamas to launch such a desperate attack on Israel [Hamas..., 2023].

On October 15, 2023, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian met with the political leader of the Palestinian movement Hamas Ismail Haniya in the capital of Qatar, Doha. Following the meeting, Hamas representatives said that Abdollahian and Haniya “confirmed the continuation of cooperation to achieve the goals of resistance of the Palestinian people” [Iranian Foreign Minister..., 2023].

On October 17, a terrible tragedy occurred in Gaza, when 471 people died as a result of a missile blow against a hospital. In Israel, they claim that the rocket was Palestinian, and in Palestine – that it was Israeli. The opinions of the international community are divided. For example, US President Biden supported the Israeli version. Russian military experts (General E.P. Buzhinsky) believe that Hamas did not have such missiles. The Russian Foreign Ministry demanded satellite images from Israel, proving that the rocket didn't belong to it. Moscow considered the incident proof that the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian movement Hamas should be stopped immediately [Belenkaya, 2023].

The authorities of several countries, such as Türkiye, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, condemned the strike on the hospital and blamed Israel. The Iranian Foreign Ministry expressed the hope that “the international community, especially the UN and the Security Council, will fulfill their obligations to investigate quickly the scale of this war crime and bring criminals to justice” [Kogalov, 18.10.2023].

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After the aggravation of the situation between Israel and Palestine, Hezbollah fired at the border areas of Israel, and Israel attacked southern Lebanon. In mid-October 2023, the Yemeni Houthis also announced their readiness to take the side of the

Palestinians. In the Yemeni capital Sanaa and other cities of the country, mass demonstrations were held in support of the Palestinians, which were organized by the Houthis [Yemeni Houthis announced..., 2023].

On November 3, 2023, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in his first speech since the war began said that a broader regional escalation could not be ruled out if Israel continued its war in Gaza. In his lengthy speech, Nasrallah said that “all scenarios are open on our Lebanese southern front” and that “the situation on the Lebanese front will depend on what happens in Gaza,” urging Israel to stop its attacks on the besieged sector to avoid a regional conflagration.

Nasrallah said Hamas’ attack on October 7, 2023 on southern Israel was “100 per cent Palestinian” and expressed support for the Palestinian group, but didn’t declare all-out war on Israel as many feared [All scenarios..., 2023]. Such a restrained position can be explained by the reluctance of the Hezbollah leader to lure Lebanon into large-scale hostilities, which could be a disaster for the country. Meanwhile, the exchange of strikes between Hezbollah and the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) in areas bordering Israel continues.

November 12, 2023 was the most difficult day on the border of Lebanon and Israel since the aggravation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Intense clashes were observed between the IDF and the Lebanese Hezbollah near the settlement of Mays al-Jabal (Lebanon). Hezbollah representatives carried out a series of attacks and mortars from MLRS on IDF positions, after which the Israelis responded with incendiary ammunition.

In November 2023, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Galant said that “a full-fledged war is already underway on the country's northern border.” He also threatened Hezbollah with an attack on Beirut [Intensity is growing..., 2023].

In December 2023, Israel inflicted a blow on the roof of a house next to the funeral of a Hezbollah member in the southern Lebanese city of Aita al-Chaab. [Israeli Strike..., 2023]. On January 2,



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Hamas deputy leader Saleh al-Aruri was killed in an Israeli strike on a suburb of Beirut. Al-Aruri was deputy head of Hamas' political bureau and one of the founders of the armed wing of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, part of Hamas [Who was..., 2024].

Saudi Arabia's armed forces went on increased readiness state after unsurvivable clashes with Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who also tried to fire a missile over the kingdom toward Israel, according to people familiar with the matter.

At the end of October 2023, four Saudi soldiers were killed in a battle with Houthi forces in the mountainous southwestern province of Jazan on Yemen's border. The incident occurred against the background of the exacerbation of the conflict between Israel and Hamas. The death of the Saudis is the first known loss of the country's armed forces since a preliminary ceasefire with the Houthis that was reached in April 2022. The world's largest oil exporter tried to negotiate an end to the war with the Houthis, which began in 2015.

Earlier, the Saudi defense forces intercepted a missile in Saudi Arabia launched by the Houthis towards Israel [Dagher, 2023].

On November 11, 2023, a joint Summit of the League of Arab States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation were held on the situation in the Gaza Strip. In opening remarks, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman called for an immediate end to military operations in Gaza and the release of all prisoners [WP: Saudi..., 2023].

"This is a humanitarian disaster that proved the failure of the international community and the UN Security Council to end Israel's outrage of international humanitarian law and prove the double standards accepted by the world." - said the Crown Prince [Saudi Crown Prince..., 2023]. According to the Crown Prince, the only way to achieve peace in the region is to "end the Israeli occupation and illegal settlements, restore the established rights of the Palestinian people and create a 1967 state with East Jerusalem as its capital" [Saudi Crown Prince..., 2023].

On October 22, 2023, the American base Ain al-Assad, located in Syria, was attacked by Shiite armed groups belonging

to the Islamic Resistance of Iraq. The base was subjected to missile strikes.

Earlier, on October 19 and 20, the Ain al-Assad base had already been attacked by drones launched by Shiite groups. Also in October 2023, UAV attacks on the Harir military airfield in the vicinity of the administrative center of Erbil (Iraq) and on the American base Camp Victoria (the area of Baghdad International Airport) were defeated. At the same time, representatives of Shiite formations made a statement that “American troops must immediately leave the region, otherwise their bases will be constantly attacked” [media: they inflicted in Iraq..., 2023].

Therefore, in November 2023, the US Army inflicted a defeat on two targets of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and pro-Iranian groups in eastern Syria [Otradnov, 2023]. After that, when hitting the US base “Koniko” in Syria, the American military was killed. Also, three drones attacked the Al-Shaddadi base in the province of Hasaka in northeastern Syria. Shiite groups claimed responsibility for the attacks [media: during attack..., 2023].

On October 19, 2023, Yemen-based Houthi rebels announced that they had taken control of a cargo ship in the Red Sea en route to India, proposedly belonging to an Israeli businessman. Israeli media described the ship as British-owned and Japanese-operated, with no Israeli citizens on board. However, the ship’s owners are associated with Ray Car Carriers, which was founded by Israeli businessman Abraham Ungar [Houthi Rebels..., 2023]. It concerns the cargo ship Galaxy Leader with a crew of 22 people on board [Houthis decided..., 2023].

Houthi spokesman Yahya Sarie explained that the operation was in response to ongoing human rights violations committed by the Israeli occupying forces against Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, and called on the international community to end Israeli aggression against Gaza.

Houthi rebels have carried out operations since October 7 not for the first time. Over the past month and a half, the group

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has launched several missile strikes and drone operations against Israeli targets.

Their involvement was also acknowledged by Hezbollah's regional ally Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah in a speech he delivered on November 3, 2023, where he praised the Houthis for their support of the Palestinian resistance.

The Houthis announced that they planned to attack any ship belonging to Israel or its supporters in the Red Sea, and confirmed the continuation of their operations until the Israeli aggression in Gaza and the West Bank stopped [Houthi Rebels..., 2023]. Houthi attacks led to the fact that the traffic of ships through the Suez Canal decreased by at least 30 per cent [Due to Houthi attacks..., 2023]. In addition, the revenues of the Israeli port of Eilat fell by 80 per cent for a month. Israel's economy has suffered from Houthi attacks. Also, the situation in the region affects the prices for transportation from Asia to the Mediterranean. Due to fears of attacks, shipping companies do not use the route through the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, but prefer to put ships around Africa. As a result, Israeli shipping customers have to wait longer for delivery and pay \$50 extra for 20-foot containers and \$100 for 40 and 45-foot ones [Still Ahead..., 2023].

In December 2023, the container ship Maersk Gibraltar was attacked by the Houthis. The attack was carried out using a drone. The Houthis said they would continue to impede the movement of ships to Israel until it lifted the blockade of the Gaza Strip [Yemen's Houthis said..., 2023]. Later it became known that the United States are considering the issue of possible strikes on groups in order to secure shipping in the Red Sea [USA with allies..., 2023].

On December 19, the United States announced the launch of Operation Prosperity Guard in the Red Sea. Its goal is to protect the water area from Houthi attacks on merchant ships [the United States announced..., 2023].

On December 31, the Maersk Hangzhou ship was subjected to another Houthi attack. After that, American helicopters sank

three rebel boats, killing several of their crew members. The fourth boat managed to get away [US army attacks..., 2023].

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From November 24, 2023 to December 1, 2023, a truce was in effect between Israel and Hamas. Due to this, it was possible to exchange over 200 hostages and prisoners. The truce expired on December 1 at 8:00 Moscow time. After that, the IDF announced the continuation of fighting in the Gaza Strip. The truce was extended twice – on November 27 and 29.

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After the expiration of the official truce, the parties did not announce its extension. At 8:06, the Israel Defense Forces announced the resumption of fighting in the Gaza Strip, accusing Hamas of violating the ceasefire [Israel resumed..., 2023]. The aggravation of the situation in the Middle East contributed to the strengthening of defense ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia. On November 30, 2023, the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, Major General Mohammad Baqeri, in a telephone conversation with the Minister of Defense of Saudi Arabia, Prince Khalid bin Salman, said that the country's Armed Forces were fully ready to develop military ties with Saudi Arabia [Iran fully..., 2023].

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On December 6, 2023, Russian President V. Putin met with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud in Riyadh. During the event, cooperation in trade, economic and investment spheres, as well as interaction in multilateral formats were discussed. The parties also discussed the prospects for the North-South International Transport Corridor. Following the meeting, Prince Salman said that the positions of Russia and Saudi Arabia

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coincide, including in terms of an approach to solving a number of international problems, for example, in the Gaza Strip. The prince agrees that Israel must immediately stop bombing the Palestinian territories [Saudi Prince Al-Faisal..., 2023].

It is noteworthy that on December 7, 2023, Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi visited Moscow and met with the President of the Russian Federation.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian noted on his social networks that the talks between the presidents also affected the situation in Palestine. The minister wrote on social networks that: "The parties during the conversation emphasized the need for an early cessation of hostilities, an end to the massacres of civilians in the Gaza Strip and its suburbs, an end to the forced resettlement of civilians under the guise of" evacuation "and the immediate opening of a humanitarian corridor through the Rafah point, for the unopposed delivery of a large consignment of humanitarian aid throughout Gaza" [What became most important..., 2023].

On December 25, 2023, during an Israeli airstrike in southern Syria, General of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Sayed Razi Mousavi [Hezbollah is called..., 2023] was killed. He was a senior military adviser to the IRGC in Syria. After this event, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said that the Israeli regime would definitely pay back for the criminal act of killing the general [Raeisi: Israel will..., 2023].

In conclusion, it should be noted that the intensification of Iranian-Saudi contacts could become the beginning of stabilization of the situation in the region, but a new round of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict significantly complicated the situation in the region. It is worth noting that Muslim states, despite solidarity with the Palestinians, are in no hurry to get involved in a large-scale conflict with Israel and the United States.

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*Received:* 09.01.2024.

*Accepted for publication:* 24.01.2024.

## OLGA BIBIKOVA. THE SITUATION OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES LIVING IN ARAB COUNTRIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST (Part 1)

*Keywords:* Palestinians; refugee camps; UNRWA; HAMAS; problems of adaptation and identity.

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*Citation:* Bibikova O. The Situation of Palestinian Refugees Living in Arab Countries of the Middle East (Part 1) //

Russia and the Moslem World, 2024, № 3 (325), P. 89–103.  
DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2024.03.07

*Abstract. There are currently more than five million Palestinian refugees in the world. Most of them live in the Arab countries of the Middle East: Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. The UN has secured in numerous documents the right of Palestinians to create their own state. However, the United States offers Arab countries to accept Palestinians as their citizens. Palestinian political organizations have rejected the plan because they believe it would call into question their rights to return to their land.*

*General Moshe Dayan (1915-1981), speaking on March 19, 1969  
at the Technion University (Haifa) said:*

*“Jewish villages were built on the site of Arab villages. You don't even know the names of these Arab villages, and I don't blame you, because these Geography books no longer exist. Not only no more books exist, but the Arab villages no longer exist either. (...) In this country there is not a single place built where there was no Arabic population before...”\**

After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait (August 1990), the issue of attitude towards the Palestinian problem was reconsidered in a number of countries. The Palestinians ostentatiously supported Iraq, despite the fact that Kuwait had provided financial assistance to the PLO for many years.

Saddam Hussein argued his actions against Kuwait, allegedly by the fact that Kuwait was conducting illegal oil production in the border Rumaila field<sup>1</sup>. Baghdad demanded to provide it with gratuitous assistance, writing off accumulated debts<sup>2</sup>, and also to cede part of the territory of Kuwait, claiming that the territory of Kuwait was once part of Iraq. At the same time, probably to ensure support from the “Arab street,” Saddam Hussein said that fulfilling his conditions would contribute to

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\* Genèse du conflit Israélo-Palestinien: entre mensonges et oublis. Géopolitique Profonde / - URL: <https://geopolitique-profonde.com/articles/conflit-israelo-palestinien> 10/27/2023 (date of access: 01/04/2024).

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“achieving justice in the region.” Let me remind you that a few months before the Iraqi invasion (May 1990), on the initiative of the PLO, a meeting of heads of state and government of Arab countries was held in Baghdad. Syria and Lebanon refused to take part in it, and Morocco, Oman and Algeria sent only government members. At this meeting, Saddam Hussein stated that “some Persian Gulf countries began to produce oil in excess of the quotas established by OPEC, as a result of which the price of a barrel of oil fell to \$7, while the agreed price of one barrel of oil was \$18... Saddam Hussein noted that a drop in the price of each barrel by just one dollar means Iraq’s loss of \$1 billion annually. This, in his opinion, in the current economic conditions for Iraq was tantamount to an “act of war”” [Invasion..., 2010].

Later, participants in an emergency meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Cairo, when discussing the current situation, demonstrated their agreement with UN Security Council resolutions (Nos. 660, 661, 662), which recorded the requirement to immediately withdraw Iraqi troops to positions held before the invasion (as of August 1 1990). However, there was no unity among the summit participants in assessing the conflict. In particular, the Maghreb countries and Oman avoided participating in the meeting.

This can be explained by the fact that in the 80s of 20th century new trends emerged in the foreign policy of Arab countries. A bloc of moderate Arab states was formed, integration processes intensified, which resulted in the emergence of new regional associations (Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Persian Gulf - 1981, Council of Arab Cooperation and the Arab Maghreb Union - 1989). Palestinian delegation was on the Iraqi side, which is explained by the fact that Baghdad motivated its actions against Kuwait as the first step towards the creation of a Palestinian state. The Palestinians were supported by Islamist organizations, which viewed Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait as jihad against the United States.

But for countries where the Palestinian presence was significant, a difficult situation arose. First of all, for Jordan, where a large number of Palestinians gradually resettled, as a result of which by the early 2000s the majority of the population of this country are of Palestinian origin. King Hussein of Jordan refrained from condemning Iraq's actions. The neighboring kingdom of Saudi Arabia imposed a ban on Palestinians entering its territory. In addition, Saudi Arabia punished Yemen for its openly pro-Iraqi position by abandoning the Yemeni workforce, whose earnings constituted a significant part of the budget of the Yemeni state [Abilov..., 2007].

After the liberation of Kuwait (February 1991), repressions against Palestinians began in the country and about 200 thousand Palestinians were forced to leave the country. An exodus of Palestinians was also observed from neighboring countries of the Arabian Peninsula. Most of them (150 thousand) moved to Jordan [Secret ethnic..., 2015].

### **Palestinian Refugees in the Kingdom of Jordan**

Jordan remains a unique example in the Arab world in terms of demographics, geography and culture. After the *Nakba*<sup>3</sup> of 1948, the percentage of Palestinians (with, partially or without Jordanian citizenship) in this country remains the highest in the world: today it is already about 70 per cent of the population. Some of them have refugee status, some have received Jordanian passports. However, Palestinians who arrived later, after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, do not have the full scope of rights.

After the 1967 war, Jordan received the largest number of Palestinian refugees. At that time, King Hussein, accepting Palestinian refugees, was guided, first of all, by the desire to include all Palestinian lands in his state. To resettle Palestinians in the country, thirteen official refugee camps were created in five different governorates, which still exist [Hzaineh L. ..., 2023]. According to UNRWA<sup>4</sup> data for 2023, the number of Palestinians

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registered as refugees in camps in Jordan is estimated at approximately 2.2 million people [Hzaineh L. ..., 2023].

UNRWA provides social, educational and health services in ten of the thirteen camps, but does not provide or supervise security, which is the responsibility of host country authorities. The most famous of these camps are: Zarqa (founded by the International Committee of the Red Cross - ICRC - in 1949), which is located in the city of Zarqa. The Jebel al-Hussein camp (founded in 1952) is located directly in the capital of Jordan in Amman. According to UNRWA, it is seriously overpopulated. Baqaa camp, the largest in area (1.4 sq km), like Jerah camp, was established in 1968. The camps are run by UNRWA, which controls schools where political activity is prohibited. In particular, information about the Palestinian issue is excluded from the school curriculum.

From 1956 to 1970, the headquarters of the Palestine Liberation Organization was in Jordan. It is known that the Palestinian leadership initially tried to settle in Egypt, but Egyptian President G.A. Nasser, realizing that this threatened the country to be drawn into another conflict with Israel, refused Arafat. The PLO settled in Jordan, and it soon became clear that its presence threatened the very existence of the kingdom.

Without going into the intricacies of the Palestinians living in Jordan (which they consider part of the territory of historical Palestine), it should be noted that their stay in this country was marked by a number of events that negatively affected the social climate in the country. In 1970 (from September 16 to 27), a conflict occurred between militants of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Jordanian armed forces, called "Black September,"<sup>5</sup> about 150 thousand Palestinians were forced to leave Jordan. The PLO, along with its leadership, was expelled from the country on the grounds that it posed a threat to national security. After this, the process of "Jordanization" of the state began in the country. There are fewer and fewer Palestinians in the military and administrative structures and more and more

Jordanians (primarily people from Bedouin tribes) who occupy high positions in the army. The Palestinians retained control of the private sector.

However, some Palestinians (those who moved to Jordan in the late 1950s) received citizenship of this country, which suggests that Jordan was the only Arab country to fully integrate the Palestinian refugees of 1948. Today they form a significant part of the intelligentsia, as well as the commercial and entrepreneurial bourgeoisie of the country.

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Jordan does not possess any significant mineral resources. The country's mineral resources are represented by large deposits of phosphates, potash, limestone and marble, as well as dolomite, kaolin and salt. Jordan is one of the world leaders in potash salt production. It is one of the top ten global manufacturers. Significant reserves of phosphates are used in the chemical industry, as well as in the production of fertilizers. It is known that there is even oil in the depths of Jordan, but it lies at a depth of 5-7 thousand meters. Oil production at such a depth is practically impossible due to the high cost of equipment [Laskaris..., 2018].

Until recently, it received financial assistance from the United States annually. The focus on the United States is explained by the fact that the kingdom sees it as a protector against Israel. For the United States, Jordan, due to its geographical location, is a convenient place for a military presence in the region: an agreement was signed between the United States and Jordan on the access of American armed forces to the country's military facilities. In addition, the US Air Force has the right to use local airports for its needs.

The US is Jordan's largest donor. So, in 2013-2015 Washington has allocated \$3.75 billion in loans to Amman [Laskaris..., 2018]. For 2023, the United States has planned assistance in the amount of \$1.45 billion [Biden announced..., 2022].

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Unlike most Arab states, Jordan maintains relations with Israel. In 1994, the kingdom signed a peace treaty and diplomatic relations were established with Israel<sup>6</sup>, which was dictated by economic problems. This allowed Jordan, the second most water-stressed country in the world, to receive 35 million cubic meters of water from Israel annually. Before this, in the 1980s, Jordan wanted to build a dam on the Yarmouk River (a tributary of the Jordan River). But after threats from Israel, Jordan was forced to abandon the project [Amiot H. ..., 2018].

In 2017, as a result of drought, the Yarmouk River (a tributary of the Jordan River) became shallow, and at the same time, water reserves in Jordan's reservoirs dried up, reducing to one-fifth of the required volume [In Jordan..., 2017]. Since 2021, due to the worsening climate situation, the volume of water received from Israel has been doubled [What Israel..., 2021]. Against the backdrop of drought, which has been observed in the region for several years, Jordan's agreement with Israel was the only possible solution to replenish the water shortage.

In 2016, an agreement was signed on the import of gas from Israel<sup>7</sup>, the direct injection of which began only in 2020. Jordanian citizens responded to this with protests and demanded the cancellation of this agreement. Many demonstrations were organized under the slogan "The enemy's gas is occupation."

At the 2021 Dubai Expo, Israel and Jordan signed an agreement to exchange desalinated water for solar energy. It is expected that Jordan will export about 600 megawatts of electricity generated by solar energy, in turn, Israel will transfer up to 200 million cubic meters of desalinated water to Jordan [Israel, Jordan, UAE..., 2021].

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Part of the Palestinian population still has a negative attitude towards the leadership of the country that sheltered them. At one time, there were attempts to assassinate King

Hussein (1970). Let me also remind you that it was the Palestinian Mustafa Ashu who, on July 20, 1951, shot and killed the first king of Jordan, Abdullah I ibn Hussein (1882-1951), on the threshold of the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem.

Researchers note that there is no consensus in the country between three population groups - Bedouins, Circassians and Palestinians. Moreover, the first two groups are considered "indigenous". People of Bedouin origin are considered "the purest Arab stock", and they are also related to the Saudi tribes. Note that a feature of Arab society is the great importance of tribal ties. In Jordan, these connections extend to the Arabian Nejd, which predetermines many steps of the Jordanian ruler. And since some tribes have family ties with the Arabian tribes (even the Anaza tribe, where the Saudi dynasty comes from), this puts them in a privileged position.

In recent years, tribal leaders have repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the deteriorating economic situation in the country. In July 2022, the sheikhs of the largest tribes (Haweitat, Majali, Abadi and Bani Hasan) gathered for a closed meeting where they criticized the king for his economic policies, harassment of political activists and the luxurious life of his family [Jordan's tribal..., 2022]<sup>8</sup>.

Not all the reforms undertaken by the king are liked by the Bedouins, and then the tribes begin to turn to Saudi Arabia. Relations between the tribes of Jordan and Saudi Arabia have never been interrupted, but since 1996 they have intensified. As Hannah Jaber, a researcher at the Lokman Slim Foundation, notes, the Saudis sometimes resort to political pressure [Entretien avec Hana' Jaber..., 2021]. This is explained by the fact that at one time "an agreement was concluded with the Bedouin tribes: to accept the monarchy, in exchange for the fact that a new generation of people from the tribes would have wide access to work in the army and in the administration. At the same time, to structure the state at the senior leadership level, King Abdullah I



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(the first king of Jordan) attracted prominent figures from Syria” [Entretien avec Hana’ Jaber..., 2021]<sup>9</sup>.

However, Jordan’s relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, despite the presence of related tribes, were not always cloudless.

At one time, Saudi Arabia was a major investor in the construction of road infrastructure in Jordan [What do Saudi Arabia..., 2022]. Khaled Shneikat, head of the Jordanian Society of Political Sciences, assessing the nature of Jordanian-Saudi relations, notes: “Saudi Arabia recognizes the importance of Jordan and the need for its stability in an unstable region. Jordan is a buffer for the Saudis from Syria and Israel, and that is why it is extremely important to ensure security inside Jordan” [What do Saudi Arabia..., 2022].

As for the Circassians [Kushkhabiev..., 2012]<sup>10</sup>, their resettlement from the Caucasus to the Ottoman Empire took place in the second half of the 19th century<sup>11</sup>. This process lasted several decades; in Jordan the Circassians themselves cite 1903 as the date of their settlement on the lands of present-day Jordan. From the very beginning, they encountered local Bedouins, who saw them as supporters of Ottoman power. Istanbul, by resettling the Caucasians, hoped to thereby establish control over the Bedouin and Druze tribes of Southern Syria. In addition, Caucasians were used to guard the Hijaz railway, which was being built at that time. Its route followed the traditional routes of pilgrimage caravans, which undermined the economic base of the Bedouins in the area.

In March 1921, in the territory east of the river Jordan, under the British protectorate, the Emirate of Transjordan was created, led by Emir Abdallah from the Hashemite dynasty. Under these conditions, the Circassians relied on the support of the king, and repeatedly proved their loyalty to him. After the formation of the independent Hashemite Kingdom in 1946, the king granted significant privileges to the former highlanders.

The Circassian Guard was formed, which until recently was the guarantor of the security of the ruling dynasty.

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For more than half a century, Jordan has faced the enormous challenge of forming a national identity that could satisfy all citizens. A French orientalist Delphine Froment notes that even King Abdullah I tried to create “a hybrid identity based on four fundamental ideas: recognition of the monarchy with the king being the symbol of Jordan; an identity that will represent and express Arabism, making Jordan a refuge for all Arabs and giving it a mediating role in the region; commitment to peace and justice for Palestine, a Palestinian cause to which Jordan has always been committed; unity of two communities” [Froment D. ..., 2013].

However, the very idea of “Jordanization” of identity causes rejection among Palestinians, as it leads to the disappearance of the very concept of “Palestine<sup>12</sup>”. In turn, “indigenous” Jordanians of Bedouin origin the Palestinians view as a threat. Firstly, because of their demographic and economic weight; and secondly, because they fear Palestinian nationalist claims against Israel that threaten the security of Jordan.

The difficult economic situation led to Jordan taking third place in the number of militants who joined the ranks of the Islamic State (more than 3 thousand people). The International Center for the Study of Extremism in its report for 2017 noted that the reason for the participation of people from Jordan in ISIS is unemployment, especially among young people [Unemployment level..., 2023]. But at the same time, this indicates that Islamist ideas are popular among the Palestinians. Let me remind you that the terrorist organization “Al Qaeda in Iraq” (banned in the Russian Federation) was headed by Jordanian al-Zarqawi (1966–2006).

After a number of terrorist attacks, both in Iraq and abroad (including in Jordan itself: three explosions in Amman hotels in

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November 2005), as well as threats against the king, the government introduced criminal liability for participation in terrorist organizations. A training center for combating terrorism was even created. Jordanian intelligence services monitored the situation within Palestinian society, and as a result, the government resorted to measures to revoke the Jordanian citizenship of some Palestinians. These actions were condemned by the Jordanian public. Human Rights Watch prepared a report on Jordan's discriminatory measures against Palestinians. In recent years, the government has repeatedly organized deportations of Palestinians who fled Syria.

Thus, within Jordanian society the Palestinian problem remains an irritating factor. Confirmation of the continuing negativism is the attitude towards the wife of King Abdullah. Queen Rania is a Palestinian who migrated with her parents from Kuwait. The Queen is the mother of 4 children, including Crown Prince Hussein bin Abdullah, who recently joined the Saudi dynasty through his marriage to Rajwa al-Hussein, a woman from the Sudairi clan, an influential Arabian family that has occupied an important position in the kingdom's political system since its creation. The founder of the Saudi dynasty, King Abdul Aziz, several crown princes and the current King Salman were married to women of this family.

Queen Rania is very influential, surrounded by an elite of businessmen of Palestinian origin. She is accused of excessive patronage of Palestinians living in Jordan. The hostility towards her culminated in an ugly scene that occurred during a football match when fans, called "*faisali*" (who represent the indigenous Bedouin tribes of Jordan), addressed the king, who was present in the box of honor, chanting: Talaq laha! Talaq laha! (divorce her!).

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The number of Palestinians in Jordan exceeds 2 million people (exact statistics are unknown), and the majority hold

Jordanian passports and enjoy citizenship rights, but they are prohibited from holding positions in the security service, army or other senior positions in the Jordanian government [Entretien avec Hana'..., 2021]<sup>13</sup>. The most difficult case remains that of Palestinians holding temporary Jordanian passports who have neither a national identification number nor Jordanian citizenship. Some of them also do not have Palestinian documents and are stateless [Hzaine L. ..., 2023].

Layla Hzaineh, a Palestinian researcher, notes that "The difference between Palestinians and Jordanians becomes apparent when you come into contact with government agencies or apply for a job. Sometimes they can guess by last name, and the behavior of officials changes" [Hzaineh L. ..., 2023]. In particular, Palestinians are required to renew their driver's licenses annually, while people with a Jordanian passport do so once every ten years. "Native Jordanians" (Bedouins and Circassians) believe that Palestinians have "no loyalty" to the country.

Following the events in Gaza, starting on September 7, 2023, unprecedented weekly demonstrations began in Jordan, taking place every Friday. Demonstrations take place in the city center every Friday after the main prayer in the capital Amman, in addition to demonstrations in front of the Israeli embassy in the Al Rabiyyeh neighborhood (about 20 minutes' drive from the center). Enterprises of foreign (primarily American) companies operating in Jordan were also subject to a boycott. In addition, since the beginning of the events in Gaza, the premises of Starbucks, McDonald's and other American cafes (which are directly targeted by the boycott) have been empty, and street advertising has featured alternative domestic products instead of targeted products. Lists of all companies and products that need to be boycotted due to the brands' support for Israel or their presence in the occupied territories are published on social media. The media are also calling for a boycott of American and European goods in order to replace them with domestic ones.

Videos have become popular in which children in stores ask about the origin of chocolate or juice before purchasing.

Israel and the United States planned to send peacekeepers to the Gaza Strip, but Jordan rejected its participation, explaining this by “reluctance to become enemies of the Palestinians” [Jordan refused..., 2023].

*To be continued.*

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## Notes

1. S. Hussein stated that during the period from 1980 to 1990. Kuwait, through horizontal drilling, pumped \$2.4 billion worth of oil from the Iraqi oil-bearing region of Rumaila.
2. The \$15 billion that Kuwait gave Iraq as a loan was mentioned. It was assumed that the money would go towards strengthening Iraq's defense capabilities.

3. Nakba - (Arabic: النكبة - "catastrophe") - a concept used in relation to the exodus of about 725 thousand Palestinians after Arab-Israeli War of 1948 - the First Nakba and the Six Day War of 1967 - the Second Nakba.
4. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was created in 1949.
5. "Black September" was an armed conflict between PLO militants and the Jordanian armed forces (September 16-27, 1970), the goal of which was to seize power in the country to continue the confrontation between the PLO and Israel.
6. The agreement made it possible to establish cooperation between Jordan and Israel in matters of economics, health care security, etc. The kingdom also received the right to use the port of Haifa in Israel. In addition, the United States canceled Jordan's debt (\$700 million).
7. We are talking about gas (presumably) obtained from the coastal Leviathan field.
8. The Jordanian media published materials about the elite real estate of the royal family, including 14 residences in the US and Great Britain.
9. The first Prime Minister of the Transjordan Emirate was Rashid Talia (1877-1926), a Lebanese of Druze origin, former Minister of the Interior of Syria.
10. In 2021, the number of Circassians (Adygs) in Jordan was 170 thousand people.
11. Immigrants from the Caucasus (Circassians, Shapsugs, Bzhedugs, Natukhais and Chechens) moved to the Ottoman Empire in the period 1817-1864. Istanbul intended to use them to contain the Bedouins and Arabs. The Circassians themselves cite 1903 as the date of their settlement on the territory of the Jordanian Emirate.
12. Initially, Palestine was a geographical area covering the territory of modern Israel, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and parts of Jordan. This land was inhabited by tribes of Philistines and Phoenicians. Hence the original name "Philistia".
13. H. Jaber states that "Between 1948 and 1970, the Palestinians were integrated into the administration, including the army (contrary to popular belief, since the "Jordanization" of the state is a late process in the history of the kingdom)."

*Received: 12.01.2024.*

*Accepted for publication: 26.01.2024.*

## THE MOSLEM WORLD: THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

ALEKSANDR FILONIK, VERA BATURINA. ARAB WOMAN:  
FROM OLD DOGMAS TO NEW REALITIES (Part 1)

*Keywords: Islam; family; marriage;  
society; Strategy 2030; fertility; discrimination;  
role conflicts; nuclear family; women's liberties.*

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*Citation:* Filonik A., Baturina V. Arab Woman: From Old Dogmas to New Realities (Part 1) // Russia and the Moslem World, 2024, № 3 (325), P. 104–119. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2024.03.08

*Abstract.* The article makes an attempt to assess some aspects of the women's issue in Egypt, which historically occupies a leading place in the Arab East, reproduces almost the entire range of problems related to gender issues in this region, and enjoys great authority in the Arab environment, being the largest center of Islamic ideology and source



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*dissemination of Islamic culture and ethics. The opinions of some prominent Egyptian authors on the role of religion in Arab society, the formation of Islamic consciousness and behavioral stereotypes, which today determine the views, approaches and interpretations of the Egyptians of the norms that form the basis of the attitude of the Ummah to such concepts as marriage, family, gender relations, rules of interpersonal communication in everyday life. The state policy implemented in line with the "Women's Empowerment Strategy 2030" is examined. The large-scale tasks that are set for society are assessed, from overcoming the degraded position of women to focusing them on active participation in the development of the country, including through adaptation to the modern way of life in the process of overcoming survivalist models of family structure and life and further strengthening the nuclear family, as the most coinciding with the modernization course of the state.*

Islam, as an ideological and historical phenomenon, became a spiritual force that inspired its followers, endowing them with the desire to spreading of faith, to cultural consolidation, and economic integration. The basis of the Moslem community is a family, and Islam initially encourages and calls Moslems to strengthen this main support so that the environment, saturated with challenges and threats could survive more reliably. To resist these challenges and threats was possible only by the collective efforts of the whole Ummah.

The importance of this circumstances for the spread of the religion itself, the influence of which was growing as the activity of the enlarged Moslem communities, inspired by the power of the religious call and the convincing of the postulates, oriented believers to increase their ranks, as the guarantee of success and prosperity, increased is great.

This approach did not become obsolete to this day, although the material conditions for the existence of the Arab population underwent a serious evolution compared to the past historical period. But in the present, there are a number of

representatives of religious thought, who attach great importance to this topic precisely in connection with the need for the Arab world to accumulate human resources, which are perceived in historical retrospective as a guarantee of state power strengthening. The basis for the promotion of this maximum is the fact that from the early eras of human civilization the strongest were those that had a great human potential, which had a pronounced tendency to growth.<sup>1</sup>

The entrenched idea of unlimited population growth is facilitated by the fact that in the domestic perception of the people, historical precedents are perceived as a given and root so that they become an axiom. On such an unshakable background, overcoming the consequences of the accumulated experience is given. An example is the long-term calls of the Egyptian authorities trying to convince the population of the need to reduce the high rate of birth rate. On this basis, there are serious contradictions between the awareness of the consequences of the influence of demographic complications on the ability of the state to function in the conditions of an endless deficit of food, land and water resources, on the one hand, and the need to take into account the current religious motives that do not meet the requirements of the present day, on the other.

For a long time, the problem of growing birth rate with really decreasing mortality conflicts with economic problems, threatening serious complications in ensuring the viability of the state. Against this background, the question of limiting the birth rate and its regulation has become the subject of special attention in the society.

These two concepts are initially given great importance. The first appears in the form of a restraining principle and is not rejected by Sharia, but is considered as a kind of auxiliary measure, depending only on the desires and intentions of married couples to have one or another number of children. The second concept is interpreted as a sin that contradicts the principles of Islam, for the ban on childbearing is rejected for

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religious reasons<sup>2</sup>. Following religious imperatives obliges to perceive them as the dominant support of Islamic consciousness and the base of behavioral stereotypes. It should be remembered that a unilateral approach to the issue can interfere with the real assessment of the prospects of the current demographic situation in those Arab countries where, in fact, spontaneous population growth can conflict with the economic situation.

This topic is actively discussed both at the state level and in religious circles, in particular, in al-Azhara, the opinion of which is important for the believing part of the population. The Islamic philosopher Muhammad Usman claims that Islam protects the people with its power, protecting them from the consequences of destructive related marriages and ensures the continuity of healthy generations, which can only be carried out in the absence of crimes against women and violation of their rights. He notes that the human potential is not so necessary for the rise of society, and for this reason there is no need to absolutize the role of manpower and direct all aspirations in the Islamic world to the growth of the population, although Sharia sets just such a task. After all, the weak link in the Arab world remains not even so much the population itself as the environment created by people, in which scientific and technological backwardness is maintained, which is why the Arab-Islamic world does not know how to benefit of their capabilities and resources and reverses the role of the human factor in real development.<sup>3</sup>

In turn, Islamic jurist Muhammad Zakzuk claims that the human potential should not be perceived either as good or evil if it has the opportunity for development and is able to ensure the progress of society. However, if there are no basic opportunities in the state to meet the social needs of new generations, then in this case the population growth is undesirable, and Islam does not approve of people who form a lot of inactive people, deprived of forces and will to correct the situation, representing them as “garbage in the stream”.

This is exactly the case when the need to regulate population growth is acute, and this measure cannot be interpreted as sinful or forbidden from the point of view of Sharia, although not all figures share this position. In Islam, it is emphasized that strong faith is more appreciated than a weak spirit, and in general, preference is given to the strong, which simultaneously expresses consent between both body and soul. The mentioned author indicates that Islam does not oppose the regulation of the population, but categorically denies the restriction of families with orders to have one or two children, as required in Egypt, or resort to sterilization, as is done in other countries. Islam is a "median" religion, from the point of view of the fact that it allows a restriction, but only by increasing the intervals between childbirth so that every child completely receives his/her own measure of parental education and care.<sup>4</sup>

Such views are divided by the professor of the Islamic economy Hussein Shikhata, who expands approaches to the topic and also believes that a person becomes socially valuable only if he/she has general and scientific training and carries a conviction of the need to serve himself, family and society<sup>5</sup>.

It is obvious that the human factor does not escape the attention of fuqahas and preachers, and most of them take into account the real aspects of the life of Arab society, which cannot completely abstract from religious institutions. Moslem jurists pay tribute to the trend towards population growth, but warn that it must be in accordance with the interests of society and the state, perhaps even to the detriment of the latter's strategic preferences. Within the framework of this discourse, the moral superiority seems to remain on the side of those who advocate a moderate approach to the topic and against a kind of demographic "extremism."

However, in the absence of a consensus on the issue, the discussion can hardly be considered exhausted, especially since we are talking about an extremely sensitive and delicate matter that concerns the intimate side of a person's life, but at the same

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time attracts wide attention from both religious figures and secular experts due to its special significance for the survival of the state. Thus, the topic of fertility and, accordingly, population growth in the Arab world, recognized in the middle of the last century, will remain acutely relevant for the future, since different judgments and approaches to the issue are not reduced to a single direction, leaving it open. Naturally, it is closely related to the position of women in Arab society, where her role has undergone quite noticeable changes, but in many other essential aspects remains disadvantaged.

This approach has not outlived its usefulness to this day, although the material living conditions of the current Arab population have undergone a serious evolution compared to the bygone historical past. But today a number of representatives of religious thought consider it necessary for the Arab world to accumulate human resources, which in historical retrospect are perceived as a guarantee of strengthening state power. The basis for promoting this maxim is that from the early eras of human civilization, the strongest were those who had great human potential, which had a pronounced tendency to grow<sup>6</sup>.

The entrenched idea of unlimited population growth is projected onto the situation of women, who find themselves dependent on a variety of circumstances. In fact, "the subordination of women is not the result of the original creed of Islam, but rather the result of centuries of stagnation. After all, the "post-Quranic" theological interpretation of religion was more focused on pre-Islamic patriarchal structures. The basic ideas of Islam were quite progressive at the time of its inception, improving the situation of women in many areas"<sup>7</sup>.

But under changed circumstances, the change of historical eras that create new realities and require informed decisions is little taken into account by the mass consciousness, which habitually focuses on inherited patterns.

Against such a background, overcoming the consequences of accumulated experience is not easy. An example is the

decades-long appeals of the Egyptian authorities, trying to convince the population of the need to reduce high birth rates. On this basis, serious contradictions arise between the awareness of the consequences of the influence of demographic complications on the state's ability to feed the population in conditions of endless shortages of food, land and water resources, on the one hand, and the need to take into account existing religious motives, which come into dramatic conflict with the requirements of the present day, on the other.

For more than a decade now, the problem of the growing birth rate with the actually decreasing mortality rate has come into conflict with economic processes, most clearly manifested in Egypt and threatening serious complications to the economy and the viability of the state. Following the religious imperatives that still hold Arab society together to this day naturally obliges us to perceive them as the dominant pillar of Islamic consciousness and the basis of behavioral stereotypes. But in this regard, we must not lose sight of the fact that a one-sided approach to the issue may, one way or another, interfere with a real assessment of the prospects for the current demographic situation in those Arab countries where, in fact, spontaneous population growth may conflict with economic reality.

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Even under the Nasser regime, Egypt realized the need to renew the country and move away from the past, including on the women's issue, constitutionally enshrining women's rights and recognizing the possibility of women's broad participation in society. The modern understanding of the role of women was reflected in 2017 with the adoption of the "National Strategy Programme Women's Empowerment 2030", or "Women's Strategy 2030", which is a separate document, but is consistent with the "National Strategy for Sustainable Development. Egypt 2030". In order to implement such an ambitious plan, the state declares

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that it will seek social justice and integration into society for women, instill in them a sense of citizenship and an understanding of the importance of participation in solving problems related not only to modernizing the economy, but also to bringing women themselves out of social stagnation.

In particular, this can be seen at least in the example of a social concept that aims to create a prosperous society in which the highest level of social inclusion is achieved and civil rights are ensured in the economic, social and political spheres, based on dignity, efficiency, law and social mobility, supporting marginalized groups, protecting women's rights and preventing all forms of discrimination against women<sup>8</sup>.

And this is a key point, since it is already becoming obvious that the historically degraded status of Egyptian women is beginning to enter into noticeable dissonance with modern processes and casts a shadow on Egyptian reality, which is disavowed by gender injustice. The complex phenomena involved should be the subject of a general rethink, and by 2030 "growth indicators" should reach the level of "sustainable development". But at the time of preparation of the Strategy, the initiators themselves expressed doubts about the extent to which their decision corresponded to the task of improving Egypt's image on women's issues, in comparison with other countries. However, it was decided to "redouble efforts" to "enable central and local leadership to translate high-level political will into real women's empowerment"<sup>9</sup>.

Support for women is carried out under the leadership of the National Council for Women's Affairs and under the control of the so-called Egyptian Women's Observatory, which is responsible for assessing changes in the status of women, identifying quantitative indicators of progress and regularly monitoring the effectiveness of programmes and projects implemented to achieve gender equality<sup>10</sup>.

Civil society organizations, which are widespread on the ground and work to advance sustainable development goals, are

key government partners in addressing this issue. Some non-governmental organizations registered in the country are also involved in programmes to improve the quality of life of Egyptians<sup>11</sup>.

The strategy emphasizes the achievability of goals precisely by the specified date, i.e. by 2030, and records those that have already been partially implemented in the right of women to participate in the political activities of the country. Women are free to choose a profession in economics and business, have equal rights to leadership positions in state-owned companies and private businesses, are not limited in public activities, in the information environment, education, healthcare, and are protected in the public sphere and in the family. The government's policy applies to all women, including the backward rural areas of Upper Egypt. Empowering women through work outside the home and a broad advocacy campaign for women's equality form the core of the Egypt 2030 platform. However, in the conditions of concrete reality, not all of the listed possibilities are realizable.

According to some estimates, an increase in women's employment outside households may lead to a decrease in the birth rate and, accordingly, a reduction in the number of children among couples, especially those with extremely low incomes (32 per cent of the total number of families). The list of current tasks in Egypt includes measures to reduce maternal and child mortality, characteristic of this segment<sup>12</sup>.

The proclamation of new approaches touches on topics that are sensitive to public opinion, since they are associated with the need to invade the stereotypes of perception of women that have developed within the nation and introduce a different culture of communication with the weaker sex. The documents speak of educating the nation in the understanding that women's rights should be protected, and collective responsibility for this is entrusted to men, becoming their civic duty.



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An important aspect of the “pro-women” policy lies in not only adjusting existing laws on personal status in accordance with the circumstances, but resuming religious discourse about the place of women in public life in order to use this authoritative channel of influence on the mass consciousness of citizens. The state is interested in popularizing the opinions of authoritative Moslem jurists and spiritual mentors in an effort to soften approaches to women’s issues, which have led to the fact that society has been deprived of the benefits of using women in the workforce and their ability to make creative decisions<sup>13</sup>.

The Women 2030 project raises a wide range of serious and conventional issues that require urgent solutions. A short time is allotted for transformation, and during this period it is necessary to make political decisions, develop mechanisms for their implementation and find investments to support the process in the economic vector and in the socio-cultural and humanitarian directions. In previous periods, Egypt managed to stop bottlenecks, but the concentration of tasks does not become less as the final date approaches. Meanwhile, the inertia of public consciousness on the women’s issue is great and can hardly be overcome in a short time, as can be seen from the history of the development of the feminist movement in Egypt. Obviously, the program will have to be implemented at a later time, since it is difficult to assume that all gender issues can be resolved in the remaining time until 2030.

A certain paradox is that the modern Egyptian woman is fully aware of her rights, which are constitutionally enshrined and at the professional level equate her with men. However, in family life, “external” rights do not guarantee her the opportunity to speak out against domestic exploitation, since a woman is dependent on the men in the family and, according to tradition, must serve them.

In the vast majority of cases, a woman is free to work outside the home only if there is a lack of money in the family. But even then she is not freed from routine housework, which,

according to feminist apologists, develops into exploitation. On the other hand, a non-working woman is not free in her expenses and is completely dependent on a man, realizing that working in the house is her duty. In such circumstances, apparently, it is not so much Islam that prevents women from becoming more independent, but rather the economic situation in which it is difficult for them to survive outside the family union, within which they must run the household under any circumstances. Given the powerless position of women, any conflicts can be overcome only if systemic patriarchal relations in the family are seriously changed. However, most men are impressed by the traditional image of a woman as a housewife, so the latter evaluate themselves through the eyes of a man and strive to correspond to the male vision of an ideal woman, without even trying to evaluate their merits on a higher scale. For this reason, it is difficult to expect from them an impulse towards liberation if they are constantly preoccupied with pleasing their spouses, on which fact the stereotypical image of an obedient Egyptian woman is based, whose only interest is seen in being attractive to her man" (including in the role of a housekeeper), and she can only submit to the situation and suppress her own desires<sup>14</sup>.

This behavior only confirms the correctness of the thesis about being and consciousness, especially for the case when 60 per cent of Egyptians live in rural areas as part of extended families, where women's freedoms are not welcomed, and get along quite well within the framework of the traditional model of gender relations.

Probably, one should not suspect all women of such apathy, but one cannot deny this phenomenon in Arab society. In any case, here equality in relationships, as it is understood in Western countries, is blurred, for it was not formed by upbringing from childhood. And this alone forces a woman to yield to the pressure of the male part of society, which dictates rules and regulations that tighten gender relations so much that

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in the common people even ordinary friendly relations between a man and a woman cannot arise due to the absence of such a concept<sup>15</sup>.

Nevertheless, nuclear families in Egypt now account for more than half of households, which fact, one way or another, indicates the scale of the transition to a new gender quality (this indicator is also typical in the Arab world for Iraq, Jordan and Palestine)<sup>16</sup>.

But this clearly does not mean that these countries, and especially Egypt, have transformed into a completely new quality. Egypt, by definition, remains a largely collectivist society, in which kinship relationships play a large part in Egyptians' ideas about how connections are structured in their society. This knowledge often encourages a nuclear family to become closer to other relatives within similar nuclear families, which often turns the resulting community into, in essence, an extended family united by shared life<sup>17</sup>. Such a network group can organizationally, under a combination of different circumstances, acquire signs of a tribal structure and connections, even if partial ones. But such a mutation may be fraught with the revival of allegedly already outdated morals, and it is not a fact that a woman in such a system will be free, like her counterpart in a Western nuclear family.

Egyptian society, like its family units, is still changing under the influence of social, economic and civilizational factors that are universal in nature and transform the material and spiritual world of the Egyptian and views on marriage. Today, extended families, according to some evidence, tend to shrink and are gradually giving way to nuclear families, which make up to 84 per cent of households<sup>18</sup>. But certain doubts remain as to whether they are all located within the city limits, and then we can assume that some of them may belong to the transitional type and are mixed.

Moreover, in nuclear families, despite the emergence of modern features in the role behavior of spouses, traditional

behavioral models remain stable. That is, women show less independence and are more inclined to yield to men in matters of family life. It is considered good manners for urban women to be homely and thrifty, going so far as, according to surveys, that they even often “pay for the household expenses of their families, since they often go to work not for the sake of their own prestige,” but because of the desire to give gifts to loved ones<sup>19</sup>. But, rather, still, to feel their independence and self-sufficiency, without undermining the foundations of family life. It is no secret either that housewives in any home have the opportunity to legally achieve their goals. And this moment partly destroys the impression of the absolutely hopeless humiliation of women even in home “reservations”, where power is held by supporters of tough behavior towards women.

Against the backdrop of tenacious segments of the old family structure, one can no longer deny the influence of new forms of family relationships that are more adapted to the modern way of life. It is not only generated by technologically highly efficient means of production, but also itself forms a new psychology that penetrates the sphere of interpersonal communication. This environment, in turn, initiates new standards of perception of the surrounding space, creates new contexts of relationships, resorting to modern information and communication technologies that open access to the outside world. With their instigation, in Egypt, as well as, it must be said, in other countries with emerging markets, news exchange is strongly stimulated and public opinion is powerfully ideologized. In this way, old morals and orders are compromised, conservative thinking is gradually pushed to the periphery of social consciousness, “pupating” in traditional family structures, but can also linger in the world of nuclear families, already living with new meanings, but subject to reflexive “retardation.”

At the moment, Egypt is becoming an arena for a clash of polar interests, which can undermine the process of harmonization of society and sow additional contradictions in it. Nevertheless, the

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movement in a productive direction is progressive, but in many cases does not have clear boundaries, given the different levels of start in different strata of society and the speed of degeneration of family structures that lingered at the intermediate stages of reformatting, which does not make the purity of mutations particularly convincing. As the target date of 2030 approaches, the ranks of opponents of gender equality may thicken and resistance may grow, even on the initiative of women, since not all of them want to break out from the tutelage of men.

In the conditions of Egypt, it is hardly possible to sharply accelerate the process without violating the integrity of the family space as it has developed to date, and without causing unwanted unrest in society in this area as well. In attempts to increase the well-being of the nation by diversifying the economy and transferring it to a market economy, the state is trying to control the situation not only with economic levers, but also with its "soft power" in the form of ideological indoctrination of the population. As noted, it additionally mobilizes the capabilities of civil organizations, although the degree of their influence is not so great, but creates an appropriate background, and also attracts non-governmental organizations with a foreign component, which are better equipped to carry out their work among women.

Even if attempts to rebuild the family structure according to the modern pattern demonstrate success, the result will not be final. After all, a nuclear family, usually with a small number of children, is not particularly attractive to the 60 per cent of Egyptians who were brought up in old traditions and view high birth rates as a guarantee of support in old age. The inertia of the people's consciousness in this case is great, especially in matters of maintaining the viability of households, regardless of their location. And this is a very good reason for people to adhere to a tradition that will be difficult to eradicate.

*To be continued.*

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*Received:* 15.01.2024.

*Accepted for publication:* 26.01.2024.

**РОССИЯ  
И  
МУСУЛЬМАНСКИЙ МИР  
3 (325) – 2024**

Научно-информационный журнал

Содержит материалы по текущим политическим,  
социальным и религиозным вопросам

Компьютерная верстка К.Л. Синякова

Подписано к печати 24/Х – 2024 г.

Формат 60x84/16

Усл. печ. л. 7,6 Уч.-изд. л. 6,5

Тираж 300 экз. (1–100 экз. – 1-й завод) Заказ №

**Институт научной информации  
по общественным наукам Российской академии наук**  
Нахимовский проспект, д. 51/21, Москва, 117418

**Отдел печати и распространения изданий**

Тел.: +7 (925) 517-36-91

e-mail: inion-print@mail.ru

Отпечатано в типографии  
АО «Т8 Издательские Технологии»,  
109316, г. Москва, Волгоградский проспект,  
д. 42, корп. 5, к. 6