

4.8.5. Tajiks

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The term Tajik in Afghanistan has been historically ambiguous and vaguely defined,[1819] and can be described as signifying 'non-Hazara Farsi speakers',[1820] as many speak a variant of Dari close to the national language of Iran[1821] – although some are Pashto-speaking.[1822] Nevertheless, Tajiks form the second largest ethnic group in Afghanistan.[1823] The Tajik community lacks a tribal structure. A majority of Tajiks are Sunni Muslims, but there are also those adhering to the Shia branch of Islam. Tajiks live in various areas of the country, but are mainly concentrated in northern, northeastern and western Afghanistan,[1824] Panjsher, and according to older sources, also in Kabul (both the province and the city), Balkh, Ghor, Takhar, and Herat (especially Herat City).[1825]

Since 2021, several sources reported on the targeting of Tajik communities in the northeast provinces of the country, due to their perceived affiliation to armed resistance groups.[1826] The Afghan analyst noted in 2023 that Tajiks were among the communities more prone to violations in the aftermath of the takeover.[1827] More information is available in section 4.3.1. Suspected affiliates of resistance groups.

The de facto government cabinet reportedly include at least three ethnic Tajiks.[1828] According to Foschini, the de facto authorities have avoided to appoint local de facto officials originating from the district or province in question. In Badakhshan Province, however, the local population is predominantly Tajik, appointments to the local de facto governance did instead rely on high-ranking Badakhshi Taliban members, as of September 2024. Foschini suggested that this was due to the fact that the province had never been under Taliban control before, and therefore lacked support in the province.[1829] Since 2023, though, external de facto officials were appointed,[1830] an act viewed as a process of marginalising non-Pashtun northern Taliban leaders and commanders within the hierarchy.[1831] By the end of 2023, nearly all Tajik and Uzbek Taliban in Badakhshan had been removed from any position of authority in their home areas, after being dismissed or assigned to minor positions in other provinces.[1832] There were cases of local de facto officials rebelling after they or their forces were dismissed under the ongoing purges of the de facto security forces.[1833] In 2025, de facto authorities have continued to appoint external Pashtun de facto officials to Badakhshan and other mainly Tajik-populated provinces.[1834]

As mentioned, members of ethnic and religious minorities face discrimination in hiring and dismissals procedures for de facto government positions,[1835] including collective dismissals.[1836] According to Rawadari, in the first half of 2025, in Ghazni Province the employees of some

de facto government departments from some ethnic groups, including Tajiks, were removed from their positions.1837 Rawadari also reported that Tajiks were excluded from equal access to government services, development projects, and humanitarian aid by the de facto authorities in Ghazni and Ghor provinces.1838

Since the Taliban takeover, mainly during 2022, there have been reports of forced evictions and displacement carried out by the Taliban, affecting Tajik communities in several provinces, including in northeastern provinces, Jowzjan, Faryab, Ghor, Mazar-e Sharif, Kabul, Sar-e Pul and Takhar.[1839] These evictions occurred in cases of land seizure by groups perceived as supported by the de facto authorities,1840 including Kuchis.1841

Since mid-2024, many farmers in Badakhshan (many from Tajik populated districts) have been protesting the destruction of poppy fields.1842 Some of protests have been met with violence by the de facto authorities, resulting in people killed or injured.1843 Such protests flared up anew in June and July 2025,1844 and according to the UN Secretary-General's report 10 people died and 40 were injured by the de facto authorities response, while many others were arbitrarily detained and allegedly ill-treated in the districts of Argo, Jurm and Khash.1845 In April 2025, SpecialEurasia, a consulting and media agency specialising in geopolitical intelligence, reported on arrests of some ethnic Tajik Taliban commanders in northern Afghanistan who sided with the protesters.1846 This information could not be corroborated with other sources.

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