



*Uzbek men, Tajikistan.*  
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# Central Asia: Conflict or Stability and Development?

## CONTENTS

- 3 Preface
- 4 Introduction
- 5 Historical background
- 8 Independence: readjustment and loss of security
- 11 Potential causes of conflict
- 15 Minorities and minority rights
- 19 An ethnic survey: state by state
  - 19 – Kazakstan
  - 23 – Kyrgyzstan
  - 28 – Tajikistan
  - 30 – Turkmenistan
  - 32 – Uzbekistan
- 38 Western involvement: a stabilizing factor?
- 40 Outlook
- 43 Recommendations
- 45 Notes
- 51 Bibliography

# CENTRAL ASIA: CONFLICT OR STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT?

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## THE AUTHOR

DR SHIRIN AKINER is a recognized authority on Central Asia and minority issues. She is the author of numerous articles and books on the region. Dr Akiner is Director of the Central Asia Research Forum of the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, where she also lectures on Central and Inner Asia.

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## MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP

Minority Rights Group works to secure rights and justice for ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities. It is dedicated to the cause of cooperation and understanding between communities.

Founded in the 1960s, MRG is a small international non-governmental organization that informs and warns governments, the international community, non-governmental organizations and the wider public about the situation of minorities around the world. This work is based on the publication of well-researched reports, books and papers; direct advocacy on behalf of minority rights in international fora; the development of a global network of like-minded organizations and minority communities to collaborate on these issues; and the challenging of prejudice and promotion of public understanding through information and education projects.

MRG believes that the best hope for a peaceful world lies in identifying and monitoring conflict between communities, advocating preventive measures to avoid the escalation of conflict and encouraging positive action to build trusts between majority and minority communities.

MRG has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and has a worldwide network of partners. Its international headquarters are in London. Legally it is registered both as a charity and as a limited company under the United Kingdom Law with an International Governing Council.

## THE PROCESS

As part of its methodology, MRG conducts regional research, identifies issues and commissions reports based on its findings. Each author is carefully chosen and all scripts are read by no less than eight independent experts who are knowledgeable about the subject matter. These experts are drawn from the minorities about whom the reports are written, and from journalists, academics researchers and other human rights agencies. Authors are asked to incorporate comments made by these parties. In this way, MRG aims to publish accurate, authoritative, well-balanced reports.

**Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities** (UN General Assembly: Resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992).

**Article 1**

1. States shall protect the existence and the national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity of minorities within their respective territories, and shall encourage conditions for the promotion of that identity.
2. States shall adopt appropriate legislative and other measures to achieve those ends.

**Article 2**

1. Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities (hereinafter referred to as persons belonging to minorities) have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.
2. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in cultural, religious, social, economic and public life.
3. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to participate effectively in decisions on the national and, where appropriate, regional level concerning the minority to which they belong or the regions in which they live, in a manner not incompatible with national legislation.
4. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain their own associations.
5. Persons belonging to minorities have the right to establish and maintain, without any discrimination, free and peaceful contacts with other members of their group, with persons belonging to other minorities, as well as contacts across frontiers with citizens of other States to whom they are related by national or ethnic, religious or linguistic ties.

**Article 3**

1. Persons belonging to minorities may exercise their rights including those as set forth in this Declaration individually as well as in community with other members of their group, without any discrimination.
2. No disadvantage shall result for any person belonging to a minority as the consequence of the exercise or non-exercise of the rights as set forth in this Declaration.

**Article 4**

1. States shall take measures where required to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all their human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law.
2. States shall take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national law and contrary to international standards.
3. States should take appropriate measures so that, wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.
4. States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole.
5. States should consider appropriate measures so that persons belonging to minorities may participate fully in the economic progress and development in their country.

**Article 5**

1. National policies and programmes shall be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.
2. Programmes of co-operation and assistance among States should be planned and implemented with due regard for the legitimate interests of persons belonging to minorities.

**Article 6**

States should cooperate on questions relating to persons belonging to minorities, *inter alia* exchanging of information and experiences, in order to promote mutual understanding and confidence.

**Article 7**

States should cooperate in order to promote respect for the rights as set forth in the present Declaration.

**Article 8**

1. Nothing in this Declaration shall prevent the fulfilment of international obligations of States in relation to persons belonging to minorities. In particular, States shall fulfil in good faith the obligations and commitments they have assumed under international treaties and agreements to which they are parties.
2. The exercise of the rights as set forth in the present Declaration shall not prejudice the enjoyment by all persons of universally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms.
3. Measures taken by States in order to ensure the effective enjoyment of the rights as set forth in the present Declaration shall not *prima facie* be considered contrary to the principle of equality contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
4. Nothing in the present Declaration may be construed as permitting any activity contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations, including sovereign equality, territorial integrity and political independence of States.

**Article 9**

The specialised agencies and other organisations of the United Nations system shall contribute to the full realisation of the rights and principles as set forth in the present Declaration, within their respective fields of competence.

**Universal Declaration on Human Rights (10 December 1948)**

**Article 20**

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)**

**Article 27**

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.

**Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)**

**Article 1.4**

Special measures taken for the sole purpose of securing adequate advancement of certain racial or ethnic groups or individuals requiring such protection as may be necessary in order to ensure such groups or individuals equal enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms shall not be deemed racial discrimination, provided, however, that such measures do not, as a consequence, lead to the maintenance of separate rights for different racial groups and that they shall not be continued after the objectives for which they were taken have been achieved.

**Article 6**

States Parties shall assure to everyone within their jurisdiction effective protection and remedies, through the competent national tribunals and other State institutions, against any acts of racial discrimination which violate his human rights and fundamental freedoms contrary to this Convention, as well as the right to seek from such tribunals just and adequate reparation or satisfaction for any damage suffered as a result of such discrimination.

# Conflict or Stability and Development?

The states of Central Asia – Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan – contain a variety of ethnic groups. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, these states suddenly received independence and all were faced with a painful process of readjustment to the new realities. The situation of many minority groups remains in the balance.

**Central Asia: Conflict or Stability and Development?** examines the features common to all the Central Asian republics, while discussing their individual characteristics. The Report goes on to look at the critically balanced social, economic and environmental conditions and identifies potential causes of regional conflict and stability.

The author, Shirin Akiner, provides a broad history of the region, an ethnic survey of the main minority groups in the five states and a consideration of the role of Western aid in the region's development. Finally, the Report highlights the outlook for minorities in the newly-independent Central Asia in a time of great transition.

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**An indispensable resource, which will prove of great value to academics, lawyers, journalists, development agencies, governments, minorities and all those interested in minority rights.**

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## Minority Rights Group

Minority Rights Group, an international human rights organization and registered educational charity, investigates the plight of minority (and majority) groups suffering discrimination and prejudice – and works to educate and alert public opinion.

We produce readable and accurate reports on the problems of oppressed groups around the world. We publish six new and revised reports a year. To date we have produced over 90 reports, a World Directory of Minorities, several books and education packs.

MRG works through the UN and elsewhere to increase the awareness of human rights issues and – with your help – is supporting minorities in the international arena.

*For full details contact:*  
Minority Rights Group  
379 Brixton Road  
London SW9 7DE  
UK

Telephone: +44 (0) 171-978 9498  
Fax: +44 (0) 171-738 6265  
E mail:  
[minority\\_rights@mrq.sprint.com](mailto:minority_rights@mrq.sprint.com)