



## **Rasht Revisited: Five Years after the Conflict**

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The two weeks of violence that attracted international attention to Tajikistan last month, with government forces waging pitched battles with supporters of a former defense ministry official, echoed a conflict from the country's past. Five Septembers ago, militants in mountains east of Dushanbe were similarly engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the regime. In that case, as in the recent events, officials tarred their opponents as "terrorists" and "rebels" and foreign observers largely regurgitated the accusation. But the similarity between the 2010-11 conflict in Rasht and the 2015 conflict in Romit,<sup>1</sup> and between these events and other outbreaks of violence in the past decade, lies in their role as steps in the consolidation of power of President Emomali Rahmon's regime.<sup>2</sup>

Rather than newly emergent threats entirely independent from the state, the government's opponents were primarily individuals with a history of engagement with the state, including some who had even occupied state positions. Competition internal to the state generated these conflicts, which the regime used to legitimize the removal of perceived threats to its power.

The Rasht conflict was rooted in intra-elite struggles dating back to the post-civil war period. The government's linkage of its security operation to the fight against "international terrorism" and "radical Islam" masked other more significant driving factors, namely domestic political score settling and the control of resources, primarily coal. Since the conflict ended, the regime has continued to consolidate

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its power in Rasht, having co-opted local commanders and using the creation of a perceived threat of terrorism to justify a strong security presence. Far from being a hotbed of extremism, however, Rasht has produced just one documented militant fighting in Syria and Iraq, and the vast majority of alleged members of Tajikistan's leading home-grown terrorist organization have been arrested outside Rasht. The extension of state power in Rasht has far more to do with domestic politics and economics than with fighting terrorism and radical Islam.

## Background

After the 1997 accords ending Tajikistan's civil war, intra-elite struggles over wealth and power wracked the fractious post-conflict state. To consolidate its position, Rahmon's regime marginalized and neutralized potential threats. This struggle took two distinct avenues. First, the regime moved against commanders who had refused to accept the peace deal. The campaigns against these anti-accord elements had largely ended by 2001.<sup>3</sup> In this campaign, several former UTO commanders who had joined the government fought for the regime.

The second avenue of struggle, against many of those who *supported* the peace, continues even today. Initially, the regime used a mixture of coercion and co-optation to form fractious alliances with former commanders. Many of them were based in Rasht, a former UTO stronghold where the government held only nominal control. A number of commanders from Rasht held top government positions. Mirzokhuja Nizomov headed the Customs Committee and later held a senior position on the Border Protection Committee. Salamsho Muhhabatshoev from Vanj was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Oil and Gas in 1997. The UTO's former military chief, Mirzo Ziyoev ("Jaga"), became Minister of Emergency Situations in 1998. Democratic Party leader Mahmadrusi Iskandarov headed state energy company Tojilkgaz from 2001. Mirzokhuja Ahmadov ("Belgi") headed the local office of the anti-organized crime directorate (UBOP) of the interior ministry (MVD). Another commander, Nemat Azizov, headed the Tavildara division of the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

When the government decided to privatize the land in Rasht in 2002, much of it was bought by the commanders.<sup>4</sup> As well as holding government posts, the warlords dictated local politics and accumulated wealth. A review of Mahmadrusi Iskandarov's brother Shoh's activities typifies the ways in which power remained decentralized in post-conflict Tajikistan.<sup>5</sup> A mid-level commander from an influential family, Shoh commanded 400 men during the civil war.<sup>6</sup> After the war he became commander of the border guards in Jirgital. He allegedly controlled the drug flow to Kyrgyzstan, managed the Nazar-Ailok coal mine in Hoit, as well as trade in vodka and potatoes.<sup>7</sup>

The first major step in the neutralization of those who had agreed to the peace was in 2003, when Mahmadrusi Iskandarov spoke out against Rahmon's constitutional referendum. Rahmon fired Iskandarov from his post. He returned to his native Tojikobod with fellow commander Sadamsho Muhhabatshoev.<sup>8</sup> In April 2004 Iskandarov published an appeal to parliament urging it not to keep Rahmon in power. The statement ended with the following warning: "We are no longer afraid. If you don't stop, we know where you live. You won't be able to divide us into Kulobis, Gharmis, Leninobodis and Hissoris anymore."<sup>9</sup> In August, armed men attacked government buildings in Tojikobod, and Iskandarov was implicated. Around this time he fled to Russia. In May 2005 he was abducted near Moscow and transferred to Tajikistan; he was subsequently sentenced to 23 years in jail.<sup>10</sup> His ally Muhhabatshoev stepped back from politics and now heads the Wrestling Federation of Tajikistan.

In subsequent years, the other commanders saw their power wane. In 2006, Jaga lost his ministerial post and returned to Tavildara. Nizomov retired in 2006.<sup>11</sup> Two years later, the head of the special purpose police unit (OMON), Colonel Oleg Zakharchenko, attempted to arrest Belgi and was shot and killed by his men.<sup>12</sup> Rahmon visited the region and reportedly

pardoned Belgi, at the same time disbanding his police unit. Belgi accepted land and money in exchange for retreating from politics.<sup>13</sup>

Although Jaga and Belgi retired, they retained much of their influence in the region. In May 2009, the regime used the kidnapping of three soldiers in Darvoz by an armed group led by Jaga associate Nemat Azizov as an opportunity to move against Jaga. The government accused Azizov and Mirzo Jaga of being involved in drug trafficking from Afghanistan to Kyrgyzstan via Tavildara.<sup>14</sup> Under the cover of an anti-narcotics sweep, the government launched a campaign against the Tavildara leaders on May 15. On July 8, an armed group tried to take control of Tavildara itself; the MVD alleged that Azizov and Jaga were involved in the violence.<sup>15</sup> Police repelled the group and shot four of its members dead. On July 11, Jaga was arrested and then killed in mysterious circumstances. According to the official account, released in a joint statement by the MVD and State Committee on National Security (GKNB), Jaga had agreed to reveal the militants' hidden arms caches and to negotiate their surrender, after which Azizov's group accused him of betrayal and shot him.<sup>16</sup> The government declared the operation to be a success on August 4. Eleven militants were dead, including Azizov (killed on July 29), and twenty were detained.

### **Prison Break and Ambush**

On August 20, 2010, forty-six of those arrested in Tavildara in 2009 were sentenced to between ten years and life in prison on charges of terrorism, illegal arms possession, and murder. Within three days, twenty-five prisoners, most of whom had just been sentenced, escaped from a maximum-security prison in Dushanbe. Among them were Nemat Azizov's brothers, Jaga's sons, and the brother of Ghaffar Mirzoev, the former head of the Presidential Guard, removed from his post in 2004. There were also four Dagestanis, one Russian, two Uzbekistanis, and four Afghans.

Rahmon ordered a nationwide security operation, putting the border guards on high alert and setting up police checkpoints around the country. On September 19, a military convoy came under attack in Kamarob gorge, north of Gharm, with the loss of thirty-five servicemen.<sup>17</sup> The defense ministry blamed Belgi and two other former UTO commanders, Abdullo Rahimov ("Mullo Abdullo") and Alovuddin Davlatov ("Ali Bedaki"), for the attack.<sup>18</sup> With the Zakarchenko murder case reopened earlier in the year, and the new charge, Belgi became fair game, despite his informal pardon in 2008.<sup>19</sup> On September 23, two thousand troops entered Rasht. The previous day, Belgi narrowly escaped when a helicopter gunship destroyed his house, killing five people. On October 14, he accepted a government offer of amnesty and laid down his arms with thirty of his supporters.

The regime framed the conflict as being perpetrated by international terrorists influenced by radical Islam.<sup>20</sup> Violence in Rasht allowed the regime to legitimize a wider crackdown on unofficial Islam and the region's only faith-based political party, the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT). Police arrested Bedaki's brother Husniddin, an IRPT member, on September 10. Days later, police abducted another party deputy in Rasht. On October 22, police raided the IRPT's central office, warning the party to stop holding prayer meetings in the building. A day later, the women's mosque in the headquarters burned down.

The government attempted to monopolize the production of information about the conflict. Mobile phone services in Rasht did not work for over two months, and outsiders were restricted from traveling to the area. The official narrative, however, contained several discrepancies. After bombing Belgi's house, for example, the security services claimed "international terrorists" were killed, but locals allege the victims were ethnic Kyrgyz construction workers from Jirgital.<sup>21</sup> When journalists challenged the official narrative, the regime blocked four websites and prevented three newspapers from being published. Although these kinds of measures would become routine in later years, at the time they were unprecedented in scope.

Eventually, the government managed to enforce relative stability in the region. Ali Bedaki was captured near Gharm on January 4, 2011, and likely extrajudicially executed.<sup>22</sup> A more significant and symbolic victory came three months later when government forces killed Mullo Abdullo in the village of Samsolik in Nurobod district. In November, the final prison escapee, a brother of Mirzo Ziyoev, was recaptured.



*Belgi Neighbor's House Hit by Copter Attack, 2010*

### **Rasht Since 2011**

Judging by its absence from international headlines, Rasht has been quiet since Abdullo's April 2011 death and the wrap-up of the prison escapee hunt. This apparent peace, however, masks the continuation of the government's consolidation of power in the region, complete with recurrences of conflict. The details of the picture are unclear but suggestive of ongoing elite maneuvering.

Dushanbe initially enacted some "soft power" measures in Rasht, but these may have been superficial. In January 2011, while security operations continued, Rahmon directed his ministers to implement an economic development plan for Rasht. The idea of a comprehensive effort seems to have disappeared, as local interlocutors were unaware of the plan.<sup>23</sup> Most of the reported initiatives have consisted of building construction, projects that may entail the corruption rampant in that sector. One of the plan components, better access to state TV and radio (via the installation of several dozen transmitters in March 2011), only expanded the reach of government propaganda. The president's administration also delivered food and clothing at least once.<sup>24</sup> Signs of significant change in Rasht are lacking, however; the region today remains impoverished and its residents dependent on labor migrant remittances.

In contrast, Dushanbe's application of "hard power" was tangible. After the 2010-11 conflict, new military and law enforcement structures sprung up throughout the region, and the security presence has remained heavy. The military established an outpost at the entrance to Kamarob in August 2011, while new police buildings opened in Tojikobod, Navobod, and Hoit.<sup>25</sup> The GKNB headquarters in Gharm received a new facility, across from a new MVD-owned restaurant. The National Guard stationed a special forces unit in Navobod,<sup>26</sup> while OMON special police forces deployed throughout the valley.

In at least one case, residents openly reacted to the increasing security presence. In 2013, nearly two dozen families occupying land belonging to an old Soviet seismology center were ordered to evacuate, as the MVD planned to build there. The families appealed to the interior minister, and later, in a rare show of public protest in Tajikistan, gathered in front of the

administration building to appeal to local authorities, but to no avail. OMON personnel began construction in April 2014.<sup>27</sup>

The government implicitly justified the security presence as a response to an ongoing threat. In May 2013, during the interior minister's visit to Rasht, the MVD website claimed there remained people in the region who wanted to "destabilize the situation," and that detecting and neutralizing them was a ministry priority.<sup>28</sup> That summer, a large number of police reportedly deployed to comb the mountains for pathways formerly used by militants.<sup>29</sup> In September, Rahmon claimed in a speech that "hundreds of young people, including from the Rasht valley, are being educated at terrorist schools in Pakistan's Waziristan Province."<sup>30</sup>

Old foes proved useful in maintaining the perception of threat. Though Mullo Abdullo was dead, for example, his specter was kept alive. During the first half of 2013, according to the interior minister, police detained four members of Abdullo's group.<sup>31</sup> Between late 2014 and early 2015, two men allegedly connected to Abdullo were detained abroad and transferred to Tajikistan.<sup>32</sup> An Abdullo link even appeared among the many allegations against businessman Zayd Saidov, arrested after forming a political party initiative committee in early 2013 and later sentenced to a long prison term.<sup>33</sup>

Amid the strong security presence, both Shoh and Belgi managed to survive, demonstrating—at least in the short term—the durability of their October 2010 bargain. Many of their supporters were given jobs in the MVD's new Rasht-region directorate. Shoh was appointed deputy head.

In September 2011, Shoh told press he was unafraid of meeting the same fate as other former UTO members, as he had done nothing wrong.<sup>34</sup> In fact, he had reason to be confident, judging by rumors that his actions in 2010 had endeared him to Rahmon. Shoh apparently returned the sentiment: in 2012, the front of his house in Jirgatol sported a picture of the president.<sup>35</sup> And he continued to serve the government well, as he and his men took part in actions against alleged criminal groups in GBAO in July 2012, after which he was made a general.<sup>36</sup> More recently, he has served as police commander in Tursunzoda, west of Dushanbe.

Belgi, the old nemesis of the security apparatus, did not receive a formal government appointment after the October 2010 deal, contrary to initial reports. As the interior minister explained in July 2011, the investigation into his case was ongoing, but if it were dismissed, "he may be accepted for employment with the Interior Ministry forces, and we will find a suitable position for him."<sup>37</sup>

For a while, Belgi dropped out of the spotlight, presumably tending to his potato farm. Between autumn 2012 and the following spring, however, several of his former fighters were arrested on a variety of charges, including illegal arms possession and drug trafficking. Belgi spoke to press about the campaign. His former deputy claimed such "hunts" were taking place weekly, and that the detainees were being "beaten and tortured, and forced to confess." Some of them had helped in the pursuit of Bedaki and Abdullo. The arrests called into question the amnesty the fighters had received.<sup>38</sup>

A few months later an event occurred that remains one of Tajikistan's unsolved mysteries. Near the village of Hoit, unidentified men found coal mine director Nuriddin Temirov asleep in his office, shot him dead, then used a noise grenade to ward off responders. Temirov, a Garmi raised in Khatlon, had reportedly been handpicked by Rahmon's powerful brother-in-law Hasan Asadullozoda in 2008 to serve as a link between Dushanbe and locals. Rumors arose that the murder motive was control of a share in the coal deposit, with one anonymous official noting that a lot of money was at stake, due to the conversion of large enterprises in Tajikistan to coal use.<sup>39</sup> (We address the issue of coal control below.)

The motive may be evident, but the benefactor from Temirov's death is unclear. He was said to be related to Shoh, but one of the first people questioned, the previous mine director, was also considered close to Shoh. Both Shoh himself, as well as Belgi, were reportedly questioned.<sup>40</sup>

The government never publically identified and prosecuted any culprits. The lack of closure suggests the possibility that the murder was sanctioned from above. Adding greater intrigue is the fact that just days after the murder, Belgi received a formal appointment as a defense ministry advisor.<sup>41</sup>

If Belgi was being repaid for some involvement in the incident, it is not clear he had achieved the full grace of the authorities: when Rahmon visited Rasht later that month, he opted to skip tea at Belgi's house, despite the fact that Belgi had reportedly prepared for days and even slaughtered a sheep in the president's honor. Rahmon instead instructed Belgi to provide two tons of potatoes for a new boarding school. Belgi accepted the slight philosophically, describing to press the benefit of living in Rasht at peace with the adage, "You can't earn bread with weapons (*Oruszhie na khleb ne zarabotaesh*)."<sup>42</sup>

Belgi and Shoh, presumably deployed by the government, were spotted in northern Tajikistan following cross-border violence with Kyrgyzstan in January 2014.<sup>43</sup> In early 2015, Belgi endorsed Rahmon's ruling Popular Democratic Party of Tajikistan before the March parliamentary elections.<sup>44</sup> In July, Shoh condemned the IRPT for appealing to internationals for relief from government persecution.<sup>45</sup>

Though not as dramatic as their actions in 2010-11, Belgi and Shoh's statements furthered a major Rahmon objective: the neutralization of the IRPT. Rasht, an IRPT stronghold, has been the locus for many of the anti-IRPT measures in recent years, which picked up nationwide in early 2013, ahead of the presidential election. That September, a state television program told the story of an 8-year-old murdered in Rasht, allegedly by an IRPT member, who confessed to the camera and added that he himself was raped by IRPT members.<sup>46</sup>

Anti-IRPT measures escalated in 2014, as authorities began to tie Islamic political participation to the threat of the Islamic State (IS), and after the 2015 elections the IRPT held no seats in parliament, for the first time since the civil war. Its fortunes then plummeted, with members renouncing the party in droves (under pressure, party leaders claim), including the heads of branches in several Rasht districts.<sup>47</sup> The government's anti-IRPT campaign climaxed in recent months, with the justice ministry calling party activities illegal in late August, the state media's accusation in September that IRPT chairman Muhiddin Kabiri planned a coup d'etat with the renegade general Abduhalim Nazarzoda, and the arrest of high-ranking IRPT officials.

If the IRPT in fact disappears from the political scene, with its members' activities forced underground, what will this mean for Rasht? Given the government's long-promoted narrative of the extremist threat in Rasht and the presence of former UTO commanders who could serve as foci for mobilization, one might expect extremism to be on the rise in Rasht. Such an assumption, however, requires critical scrutiny.

### **Hotbed of Extremism?**

Despite being portrayed by the government as a hotbed of extremism, Rasht has produced relatively few militants in recent years compared to other parts of Tajikistan. The regime blamed home-grown terrorist organization Jamaat Ansarullah (JA) for the events of 2010-11. Its elusive leader Amriddin Tabarov was born near Samsolik in Rasht and fought with the opposition during the civil war.<sup>48</sup> A website ascribed to the group claimed responsibility for the September 3, 2010 suicide bombing in Khujand.<sup>49</sup> And its flag was allegedly found in

Mullo Abdullo's base after he was killed in April 2011. Although the group maintains an online presence and released a video in 2012 calling for attacks in Tajikistan, like other extremist groups it appears to have limited societal support.<sup>50</sup> The regime accused the organization of co-plotting attacks in Dushanbe ahead of the 2013 presidential elections.<sup>51</sup>

More recently, the security services have linked the group to the Islamic State. In November 2014, police arrested 12 alleged JA members and accused them of recruiting residents of Sughd to fight in Syria.<sup>52</sup> Given the opacity, corruption, and politicization of Tajikistan's judicial system, such claims are impossible to verify. Despite its origins in Rasht, the vast majority of accused JA members have been arrested in Sughd.<sup>53</sup> Its links to the region, then, remain limited.

Although IS enjoys greater support among Tajiks than JA does, very few young men from Rasht have gone to fight in Syria and Iraq. The MVD estimates that 500 citizens have travelled to fight for IS.<sup>54</sup> Only 124 of these cases have been reported in the media. Of these, birthplace information exists for 83 fighters, just one of whom comes from Rasht.<sup>55</sup>

In a January 2015 video, an Iraq-based Islamic State fighter claiming to be from Samsolik and calling himself Abu Umariyon said he had asked for permission from IS leadership to invade Tajikistan and called on militants from JA and Central Asian Islamist group Jundallah to "forget their pride" and join IS.<sup>56</sup> Samsolik, as noted above, was where security forces killed Mullo Abdullo and over a dozen of his fighters in April 2011. All but one of these fighters was from Nurobad district. The previous October, security services had arrested local imam Zaynolobuddin Mannonov and accused him of having received a "religious and terrorist education" in Pakistan and "sowing the seeds of conflict, hostility, distrust, and discord among [Rasht] residents."<sup>57</sup> If Samsolik was indeed a center of militancy, it is an exception rather than a rule; the rest of Rasht has not been a source of militants in recent years.

### **A Matter of Controlling Coal?**

Illustrating the complexity of the Rasht conflict and the hazard of readily adopting a terrorism/extremism narrative is a factor neglected in most descriptions of the conflict: the *economic* issue of control of resources, in this case, coal.

Both Belgi and Shoh were rumored to have stakes in the Nazar-Ailok coal mine, northeast of Gharm, which contains a world-class deposit of anthracite, a high-quality coal useful for steel making and other purposes. For years, the coal was mostly sold locally for heating fuel.<sup>58</sup>



*Coal Mine Road, Kamarob*

Around 2007 new interests began to intrude on Nazar-Ailok. A British firm, Saddleback Corporation Ltd., gained a stake in the western half of the deposit and began building a road through the Kamarob gorge to reach it. Saddleback's chairman, Alastair Ralston-Saul, had a long and tumultuous background in mining in Tajikistan, complete with allegations of corruption, and in mid-2007 the company was reportedly in "discussions" with Hasan Asadullozoda, Rahmon's brother-in-law.<sup>59</sup> One of Tajikistan's wealthiest men, Hasan had a stake in nearly every economic sector and was rumored to manage the Rahmon family's cash flow. It was during this period that Hasan reportedly handpicked Nuriddin Temirov as director of the Nazarailok mine (Temirov would later be murdered, as we have seen). "KiTaKa," a joint Chinese-Tajik-Kazakh company operating at Nazar-Ailok, entered into discussions with the state-owned Tajik Aluminum Company (Talco) regarding the latter using the mine's coal.<sup>60</sup> Hasan has long been rumored to control Talco's profits.<sup>61</sup>

Global coal prices peaked in these years, raising the stakes in the control of Tajikistan's coal deposits.<sup>62</sup> The Tajik government engaged in much discussion of making a concerted effort to increase coal production and convert large enterprises to coal use.<sup>63</sup> Over the next eight years, over 200 enterprises would switch to coal.<sup>64</sup> After the brutal 2007-08 winter that saw widespread electricity blackouts and a humanitarian crisis, the government and international community paid even more attention to energy security, in which coal would play a role.<sup>65</sup>

Violent incidents in Rasht can be plausibly linked to coal. After the attempted arrest of Belgi in February 2008, the MVD alleged that men under his command had participated in an attack the previous August on vehicles and personnel belonging to the coal company KiTaKa, perhaps provoked by the intrusion of outsiders into the coal trade. According to one theory, the regime relegated a share of the mine to Belgi to "keep Rasht quiet," an arrangement that broke down in 2010 due to a "misunderstanding."<sup>66</sup> The events of that fall, in which the government initially pressured both Belgi and Shoh, and during which militants in the Kamarob gorge reportedly occupied Saddleback's operating camp,<sup>67</sup> may have influenced the arrangement of actors on the ground. That November, just two months after discussing plans to build a second access road, Ralston-Saul left his position to become an independent mining consultant,<sup>68</sup> and in March, even as the security operation was ongoing, Chinese company Kaisun Group bought out Saddleback's stake in Nazar-Ailok and two other mines.<sup>69</sup>

In subsequent years, Tajikistan's commitment to coal grew, with Rahmon calling for doubling production, and more enterprises transferring to coal use, often with Chinese assistance,<sup>70</sup> for which at least one company reportedly received access to coal resources.<sup>71</sup> In 2013, another Chinese firm, Up Energy, moved to purchase the mine stakes from Kaisun.<sup>72</sup> Soon afterward, a Tajik government resolution labeled Nazar-Ailok "of strategic importance," one of two among the country's 14 mines.<sup>73</sup> Later that year, as we have seen, mine director Temirov was murdered. Around the same time, a government expert specifically mentioned Nazar-Ailok while saying that coal could help Talco's faltering aluminum production,<sup>74</sup> a trend likely of particular concern to the ruling family. The picture is sketchy, but these events suggest the ongoing salience of coal resource control in the dynamics shaping Rasht's relationship to the center and outside interests.

### **A Continuity of Conflict**

Evidence for the hypothesis that coal has partially driven the conflicts in Rasht indicates that the terrorism/extremism narrative, promoted by the government and widely adopted by international actors, is weaker than an alternative, more nuanced view that the episodes of Rasht violence in the past decade and a half have primarily concerned local politics and economics, i.e., a continuation of the civil war by other means. The 1997 peace, which relied on formal and informal divisions of political and economic spoils among the Kulobi and Gharmi/Pamiri elites, only inaugurated a new period of conflict, in which Rahmon's actions against Mahmadrusi Iskandarov in 2003 were the first major attempt to neutralize the

Rasht-affiliated powerbrokers who supported the peace but whom the regime viewed as threats. One by one over the ensuing years, all of the major Rasht-affiliated figures would be killed, imprisoned, retired, or co-opted.



*New GKNB building in Gharm, 2011*

Seen in this context, the 2010-11 violence is part of a continuity of conflict with the overall trajectory of a strengthening regime, an episode in intra-elite struggle characterized by shifting alliances whose details are invisible to all but the actors involved. Seen *outside* of this context, the events appeared to foreigners as an introduction of international terrorism into a country whose stability was thus in question and required propping up through outside interventions, such as economic or security assistance, or counter-radicalization programs. Viewed as part of a continuity, however, the conflict lends itself to no such obvious conclusions.

Emphasis on the “international terrorist threat” angle has enabled outside observers to pay less attention to a more mundane aspect of the conflict, and that is the largely untold story of human rights violations that security forces are alleged to have committed, against not only armed foes (e.g., the possible extrajudicial killings of Jaga and Bedaki) but also civilians, via occupation of homes, arrests and interrogations of relatives of fighters, collateral residential building damage,<sup>75</sup> closed-access trials with procedural violations, the imposition of a massive security presence, and blockage of information and communications. While the elites have contended over power, many citizens have suffered.

As evident this past month from the regime’s operation against “renegade general” Abduhalim Nazarzoda, the process of power consolidation and score settling in Tajikistan is not yet over. The post-conflict Tajik state continues to generate conflict from within, which the regime uses to remove perceived threats to its power. Ironically, Nazarzoda is supposed to have played a role in earlier years in the neutralization or co-optation of Rasht figures: in the downfall of Mahmadrusi Iskandarov and the deal with Shoh. That he nevertheless became the latest victim of Rahmon’s anti-opposition campaign should cause renewed concern for Shoh, Belgi, and other former UTO figures who have reached *modi vivendi* with the government. If history is any guide, they are unlikely to enjoy long, peaceful retirements.

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<sup>1</sup> The conflict with Nazarzoda crested in Romit, though it began in Dushanbe and Vakhdat. We use “Rasht” to refer to Rasht, Nurobod, Tojikobod, Jirgatal, and Tavildara districts, an area including both

the Rasht and Vakhyo (Tavildara) valleys. The region was historically known as Karotegin and as the Gharm *oblast* (region) between 1921 and 1955. We use “Gharm” to denote the central administrative town of Rasht district.

<sup>2</sup> We use the surname “Rahmon” throughout, though it was “Rahmonov” until 2007.

<sup>3</sup> The regime accused former interior minister Yakub Salimov of plotting a coup in 1997. He fled to Russia, was detained in 2003, then extradited to Tajikistan and imprisoned in 2005. The army repelled former Popular Front commander Mahmud Khudoyberdiev’s invasion of Sughd in 1998. In 2001 the security services killed warlord Rahmon “Hitler” Sanginov, who had terrorized Dushanbe’s outskirts for several years.

<sup>4</sup> Laurence Markowitz, *State Erosion: Unlootable Resources and Unruly Elites in Central Asia*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013): 94.

<sup>5</sup> For another example, see Wiegmann’s description of Nemat Azizov’s control of the Childara jamoat in Tavildara; Gunda Wiegmann, “Socio-political change in Tajikistan,” (PhD diss., Hamburg University, 2009): 144.

<sup>6</sup> Stina Torjesen, Christina Wille, and S. Neil MacFarlane, “Tajikistan’s Road to Stability: Reduction in Small Arms Proliferation and Remaining Challenges,” *Small Arms Survey*, (2005): 78.

<sup>7</sup> Wiegmann, “Socio-political change.” 182.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*: 135.

<sup>9</sup> Kirill Nourzhanov, “Saviours of the nation or robber barons? Warlord politics in Tajikistan,” *Central Asian Survey*, 24:2 (2005): 126.

<sup>10</sup> For more information on this case, see: European Court of Human Rights, “Case of Iskandarov vs Russia,” February 21, 2011, [http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-100485#{\"itemid\":\[\"001-100485\"\]}](http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-100485#{\).

<sup>11</sup> Roche notes that Nizomov lost influence due to his close relationship with the regime following the civil war, see: Sophie Roche, *Domesticating Youth: Youth Bulges and their Socio-political Implications in Tajikistan*, (Oxford: Berghahn, 2014): 86. During the 2010 conflict in Rasht, Nizomov fled to Russia. Roche speculates that he was acting as a government informant.

<sup>12</sup> For a more detailed description of this incident and the reaction of Tajik security services, see: International Crisis Group (ICG), “Tajikistan: The Changing Insurgent Threats” *Asia Report*, 205, (2011).

<sup>13</sup> “M. Ahmadov: ‘We Will Get Them, Even in the Government’ [М.Ахмадов (экс-курбаши таджбасмачей): «Мы достанем их и в правительстве»],” *Asia-Plus*, January 12, 2011, <http://news.tj/ru/newspaper/article/m-ahmadov-my-dostanem-ikh-i-v-pravitelstve>

<sup>14</sup> On August 5, Safina TV, a channel owned by Rahmon’s daughter, aired police footage of the interrogation of two of Azizov’s brothers, arrested on August 3. They both cited Mirzo Jaga as their group’s leader.

<sup>15</sup> Saodat Muhbatsho, “Tajikistan: Mysterious Death Raises Concerns About Militant Returns,” *EurasiaNet*, July 13, 2009, <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav071409.shtml>.

<sup>16</sup> Analysts have noted numerous inconsistencies in the government’s account of events. Sodiqov notes that whereas the Tajik authorities reported that Ziyoev was killed on July 11, [www.centrasia.ru](http://www.centrasia.ru) broke the news of his death on July 10. See: Alexander Sodiqov, “High Profile Death Raises Questions in Tajikistan,” *CACI-Analyst*, August 19, 2009, <http://old.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5164>.

<sup>17</sup> The government suffered another setback on October 6 when an Mi-8 helicopter carrying the GKNB’s elite Alpha division crash-landed, killing twenty-eight soldiers. Although the defense ministry claimed the helicopter “crashed due to technical reasons,” locals reported seeing RPG fire ICG, “Changing Insurgent Threats.”

<sup>18</sup> Abdullo refused to accept the 1997 peace deal and fled to Afghanistan in 2000. After fighting for the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, he returned to Tajikistan in 2009. Press dubbed him “the Tajik Bin Laden.” Bedaki was a minor commander who served in Belgi’s UBOP unit.

<sup>19</sup> Both Bedaki and one of the escapees, “Kamol” Ibragimov, were also suspects in the murder case. See: “MVD RT Issued Official Statement Regarding ‘Gharm Incident’ [МВД РТ распространило официальное заявление по поводу «Гармского инцидента»],” *Asia-Plus*, February 5, 2008, <http://asiaplus.tj/ru/news/mvd-rt-rasprostranilo-ofitsialnoe-zayavlenie-po-povodu-garmskogo-intsidenta>.

<sup>20</sup> Edward Lemon, “Mediating the Conflict in the Rasht Valley: The Hegemonic Narrative and Anti-hegemonic Articulations,” *Central Asian Affairs*, 1:2 (2013): 247-72.

<sup>21</sup> John Heathershaw and Sophie Roche, “The Conflict in Tajikistan—Not Really About Radical Islam,” *OpenDemocracy*, October 19, 2010, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/john-heathershaw-sophie-roche/conflict-in-tajikistan-%E2%80%93-not-really-about-radical-islam>.

<sup>22</sup> Officials originally said Bedaki was killed in a gun battle. A month later, footage emerged online showing Bedaki being interrogated. See: Alexander Sodiqov and Payam Foroughi, “An Extrajudicial Execution in Tajikistan,” *CACI-Analyst*, January 11, 2011, <http://old.cacianalyst.org/?q=node/5696>.

<sup>23</sup> Author conversations, 2011. Rahmon’s appointment, also in January 2011, of a southerner as Rasht district chairman may have hurt the effort. The chairman gained a reputation for being difficult and uninterested in local well-being.

<sup>24</sup> Avaz Yuldashev, “E. Rahmon Provided Charitable Aid to Rasht Residents [Э. Рахмон оказал благотворительную помощь жителям Рашта],” *Asia-Plus*, June 26, 2013, <http://news.tj/ru/node/154746>.

<sup>25</sup> Avaz Yuldashev, “Emomali Rahmon opened Tajikabad’s Central Stadium [Эмомали Рахмон открыл Центральный стадион Таджикибада],” *Asia-Plus*, September 26, 2013, <http://news.tj/ru/node/172062>; Avaz Yuldashev, “Emomali Rahmon left for Rasht Valley [Эмомали Рахмон отбыл в Раштскую долину],” *Asia-Plus*, September 25, 2013, <http://news.tj/ru/node/171973>; Avaz Yuldashev, “Head of Tajikistan’s MVD called on Rasht police to identify and neutralize extremists and terrorists [Глава МВД Таджикистана призвал раштских милиционеров выявить и обезвредить экстремистов и террористов],” *Asia-Plus*, May 7, 2013, <http://www.asiaplus.tj/ru/news/glava-mvd-tadzhikistana-prizval-rashtskikh-militsionerov-vyyavit-i-obezvredit-ekstremistov-i-te>.

<sup>26</sup> “Emomali Rahmon ‘Visits’ Mirzokhuja Ahmadov [Эмомали Рахмон «в гостях» у Мирзохуджи Ахмадова],” *Radio Ozodi*, September 25, 2013, <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/25116854.html>.

<sup>27</sup> “Seismology Center in Rasht Transferred to Tajikistan’s MVD. Where Will Residents Go? [Центр сейсмологии в Раште передан МВД Таджикистана. Куда деваться жителям?],” *Radio Ozodi*, March 13, 2014, <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/25295121.html>; “Where Will Residents of the Weather Station in Rasht Go? [Куда деваться жителям метеостанции в Раште?],” *Radio Ozodi*, April 12, 2014, <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/25330645.html>; “Where Will Seismology Center Residents Be Moved? [Куда податься жителям сейсмологического центра?],” June 28, 2014, <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/25438570.html>.

<sup>28</sup> Yuldashev, “Head of Tajikistan’s MVD.”

<sup>29</sup> Author communication with local interlocutor, July 2013.

<sup>30</sup> Tajik television, September 27, 2013.

<sup>31</sup> Avaz Yuldashev, “MVD: Since Year’s Start Four Members of Mullo Abdullo’s Gang Detained [МВД: С начала года задержаны 4 члена бандформирования Мулло Абдулло],” *Asia-Plus*, July 19, 2013, <http://asiaplus.tj/ru/news/mvd-s-nachala-goda-zaderzhany-4-chlena-bandformirovaniya-mullo-abdullo>.

<sup>32</sup> “Citizen of Tajikistan Detained in Bishkek [В Бишкеке задержан гражданин Таджикистана - член «Группы 24»],” *Asia-Plus*, November 21, 2014, <http://news.tj/ru/news/v-bishkeke-zaderzhan-grazhdanin-tadzhikistana-chlen-gruppy-24>; Mavzuna Abdulloeva, “Kulob Resident Promoted ‘Jamoat Tabligh’ Ideas in Mosques [Житель Куляба пропагандировал идеи «Джамоати таблиг» в мечетях],” *Asia-Plus*, March 17, 2015, <http://news.tj/ru/news/zhitel-kulyaba-propagandiroval-idei-dzhamoati-tablig-v-mechetyakh>; Russian Interior Ministry Press Service (Sverdlovsk), “In Yekaterinburg, Interpol Officers Detained a Suspect in Serious Crime on the Territory of Tajikistan [В Екатеринбурге сотрудники Интерпола задержали подозреваемого в совершении тяжкого преступления на территории Таджикистана],” March 19, 2015, <https://66.mvd.ru/news/item/3225471/>.

<sup>33</sup> Abdumalik Kadirov, “Emerging Force in Tajik Politics Arrested,” *IWPR: Global Voices Central Asia*, May 20, 2013, <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/emerging-force-tajik-politics-arrested>. Incidentally, Saidov also hailed from Rasht.

<sup>34</sup> Olga Tutubalina, “Shoh Iskandarov: ‘I Am Not a Traitor’ [Шох Искандаров: «Я не предатель»],” *Asia-Plus*, September 23, 2011, <http://news.tj/ru/news/shokh-iskandarov-ya-ne-predatel>.

<sup>35</sup> Author communication with local interlocutor, September 2012.

- <sup>36</sup> “Shoh Iskandarov Left the House of a Local Resident in Khorugh [Шох Искандаров покинул дом местной жительницы в Хороре],” *Radio Ozodi*, August 7, 2012, <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24669161.html>; “Shoh Iskandarov Became a General [Шох Искандаров стал генералом],” *Radio Ozodi*, September 14, 2012, <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24708105.html>.
- <sup>37</sup> Avaz Yuldashev, “Mirzokhuja Ahmadov Could Return to the Ranks of the Tajik Police [Мирзохуджа Ахмадов может вернуться в ряды таджикской милиции],” *Asia-Plus*, July 20, 2011, <http://asiaplus.tj/ru/news/mirzokhudzha-akhmadov-mozhet-vernutsya-v-ryady-tadzhikskoi-militsii>.
- <sup>38</sup> “MVD Comments on Detention of Mirzokhuja Ahmadov Supporters [МВД комментирует задержание сторонников Мирзохуджи Ахмадова],” *Radio Ozodi*, May 4, 2013, <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24976404.html>.
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- <sup>40</sup> “Parliamentarian Tursunbai Bakir Uulu Offers Posthumous Award to Deceased Tajikistan Citizen Nuriddin Temirov [Депутат Турсунбай Бакир уулу предлагает посмертно наградить погибшего гражданина Таджикистана Нуриддина Темирова],” *Ozodagon*, September 6, 2013, <http://catoday.org/centrasia/kgru/10210-deputat-tursunbay-bakir-uulu-predlagaet-posmertno-nagradit-pogibshogo-grazhdanina-tadzhikistana-nuriddina-temirova.html>; “Investigators Questioned Former Director of ‘Nazarailok’ Field [Следствие допросило экс-директора месторождения «Назарайлок»],” *Radio Ozodi*, September 24, 2013, <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/nazarayloq-witnesses-transferred-dushanbe-/25115770.html>; “Emomali Rahmon ‘Visits’ Mirzokhuja Ahmadov.”
- <sup>41</sup> “Mirzokhuja Ahmadov ‘Received a Chair’ [Мирзохуджа Ахмадов «получил кресло»],” *Ozodagon*, September 4, 2013, <http://catoday.org/centrasia/tjru/10174-mirzokhudzha-ahmadov-poluchil-kreslo.html>.
- <sup>42</sup> “Emomali Rahmon ‘Visits’ Mirzokhuja Ahmadov;” “Mirzokhuja Ahmadov—Farmer in the Valley of Doubt [Мирзохуджа Ахмадов – дехканин в долине сомнений],” *Radio Ozodi*, September 27, 2013, <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/mirzokhuja-ahmadov-former-warlord-became-a-farmer/25119578.html>.
- <sup>43</sup> “Kyrgyz Authorities’ Note Regarding Shoh Iskandarov [Нота киргизских властей по поводу Шоха Искандарова],” *Radio Ozodi*, January 30, 2014, <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/kyrgyzs-protests-shoh-iskandarov/25247538.html>. Shoh refused to confirm his presence to press. Later in the year Belgi claimed to have retired in December 2013; Mavzuna Abdulloeva, “Mirzokhuja Ahmadov: I’ve Been Retired Almost a Year [Мирзохуджа Ахмадов: Я нахожусь на пенсии уже почти год],” *Asia-Plus*, September 29, 2014, <http://www2.asiaplus.tj/ru/news/mirzokhudzha-akhmadov-ya-nakhozhus-na-pensii-uzhe-pochti-god>.
- <sup>44</sup> Mirzo Salimpour, “Rasht Clergy: ‘Vote for His Excellency’s Party! [Духовенство Рашта: «Голосуйте за партию Его Превосходительства!»],” *Radio Ozodi*, February 27, 2015, <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/26872806.html>.
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- <sup>47</sup> Avaz Yuldashev, “Leaders of IRPT Regional Cells Leave Party Ranks [Лидеры региональных ячеек ПИВТ покидают ряды партии],” *Asia-Plus*, June 22, 2015, <http://news.tj/ru/node/210335>.

- <sup>48</sup> Limited information on the emergence of JA exists. See: Mark Vinson, “A Look at Tajikistan’s Jamaat Ansarullah Leader Amriddin Tabarov,” *Militant Leadership Monitor*, August 7, 2013, [http://mlm.jamestown.org/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=41236#.VgAtA99Viko](http://mlm.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=41236#.VgAtA99Viko).
- <sup>49</sup> “Terrorist Act in Khujand May Have Been Carried Out by Fighters of Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan [Теракт в Худжанде могли совершить боевики Исламского движения Узбекистана],” *Vesti*, September 3, 2010, <http://www.vesti.ru/doc.html?id=390105>.
- <sup>50</sup> Until 2013 the group posted stories about global Islamist causes on its website, Irshod.com. Now it is most active on social media sites Odnoklassniki and VKontakte.
- <sup>51</sup> Avaz Yuldashev, “Terrorists Wanted to Blow Up Dushanbe on Eve of Presidential Election,” [Террористы хотели взорвать Душанбе в канун президентских выборов], *Asia-Plus*, September 25, 2013, <http://news.tj/ru/news/terroristy-khoteli-vzorvat-dushanbe-v-kanun-prezidentskikh-vyborov>.
- <sup>52</sup> Mavlouda Rafieva, “Twelve Alleged Members of Jamaat Ansarullah Detained in Sughd,” *Asia-Plus*, November 12, 2014, <http://news.tj/en/news/twelve-alleged-members-jamaat-ansarullah-detained-sughd>.
- <sup>53</sup> Author’s compilation of arrest reports published in *Asia-Plus* and *Radio Ozodi* between January 2012 and August 2015.
- <sup>54</sup> “At Least 500 Tajiks Fighting Alongside IS – Interior Ministry,” *Interfax*, July 25, 2015, <http://www.interfax-religion.com/?act=news&div=12194>.
- <sup>55</sup> Compare this with Kulob, which has a smaller population but twenty-three recorded fighters.
- <sup>56</sup> Samsolik is a *jamoat* (the smallest local government division) with a population of just over 6,000. “Islamic State Militants Threaten Tajikistan with Jihad [Боевики «Исламского государства» угрожают Таджикистану «джихадом»],” *Radio Ozodi*, January 4, 2015, <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/26775997.html>.
- <sup>57</sup> Tajik Television First Channel, Dushanbe, in Tajik, 1300, October 23, 2010. The cleric’s son, Manouchehr Mannonov, was among those killed with Mullo Abdullo.
- <sup>58</sup> John Heathershaw and Sophie Roche, “Islam and Political Violence in Tajikistan: An Ethnographic Perspective on the Causes and Consequences of the 2010 Armed Conflict in the Kamarob Gorge,” *Ethnopolitics Papers*, March 2011, No. 8, p. 11.
- <sup>59</sup> Aram Roston, “All That Glitters: Alastair Ralston-Saul Is Looking to Strike It Rich in the Republic of Tajikistan,” Maclean’s Archive, February 18, 2002, [http://www.gulf-intl.com/articles/article\\_maclean.pdf](http://www.gulf-intl.com/articles/article_maclean.pdf); “Strange Goings-On at Gulf International Minerals Culminate in Resignation of Founder and CEO,” *Minesite*, February 25, 2004; Gulf International Minerals, Ltd. release, June 30, 2004; John Helmer, “Jacko Saddles Up for Tajik Gold,” *Mineweb*, September 12, 2007, <http://www.mineweb.com/archive/jacko-saddles-up-for-tajik-gold/>.
- <sup>60</sup> “Talco Moves to Local Coal by Investing in Nazarailok [Talco перейдет на местный уголь, вложив средства в Назарайлок],” *Avesta*, May 18, 2007, <http://www.avesta.tj/business/516-d.html>.
- <sup>61</sup> David Trilling, “Tajikistan’s Cash Cow: Enough Milk to Go Around?” *Eurasianet*, June 10, 2014, <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/68491>.
- <sup>62</sup> “Historical Coal Prices and Price Chart,” *InfoMine*, <http://www.infomine.com/investment/metal-prices/coal/all/>. In a series of articles, Ralston-Saul described the enormous potential value in Nazarailok; see Alastair Ralston-Saul and Jan Ketelaar, “Energy Resources in Central Asia,” *CoalTrans*, November/December 2009, <http://content.yudu.com/Library/A1lbf/CoaltransInternational/resources/26.htm>; Alastair Ralston-Saul and Jan Ketelaar, “Kaftar Hona Anthracite,” *International Mining*, September 2009, pp. 64-66, <http://www.infomine.com/publications/docs/InternationalMining/Saul2009.pdf>; Alastair Ralston-Saul and Jan Ketelaar, “Anthracite Deposits of Tajikistan,” *Steel Times International*, January/February 2010, [http://www.saddlebackcorp.co.uk/pdfs/SteelTimes\\_Jan2010.PDF](http://www.saddlebackcorp.co.uk/pdfs/SteelTimes_Jan2010.PDF).
- <sup>63</sup> Wikileaks, “In Tajikistan, a Lump of Coal Is Not Such a Bad Thing,” May 30, 2007, [https://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07DUSHANBE778\\_a.html](https://www.wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07DUSHANBE778_a.html).
- <sup>64</sup> Pairav Chorshanbiev, “Over 400 Thousand Tons of Coal Produced in Tajikistan Since Year’s Start [В Таджикистане с начала года добыто более 400 тыс. тонн угля],” *Asia-Plus*, August 6, 2015, <http://news.tj/ru/news/v-tadzhikistane-s-nachala-goda-dobyto-bolee-400-tys-tonn-uglya>.

<sup>65</sup> U.S. Trade and Development Agency, “USTDA Grant Supports Coal Mining and Power Plant Project in Tajikistan,” August 25, 2008,

[http://www.ustda.gov/news/pressreleases/2008/EuropeEurasia/Tajikistan/TajikistanCoal\\_082508.asp](http://www.ustda.gov/news/pressreleases/2008/EuropeEurasia/Tajikistan/TajikistanCoal_082508.asp); European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, “Strategy for Tajikistan,” January 26, 2009, <http://www.ebrd.com/downloads/about/policies/tajikistan-2009.pdf>.

<sup>61</sup> “MVD RT Issued Official Statement Regarding ‘Gharm Incident.’”

<sup>66</sup> Tutubalina, “Shoh Iskandarov: ‘I Am Not a Traitor.’” Shoh claimed the state had sole control of the mine.

<sup>67</sup> Author communication with local interlocutor, September 2011.

<sup>68</sup> The new road, extending from “less-hazardous roads,” presumably would need to depart from Hoit, i.e., Shoh’s area of control. See: Alex Hawkes, “Mountainous Mining: The Saddleback Story,” *mining-technology.com*, September 23, 2013, <http://www.mining-technology.com/features/feature96427>; Alastair Ralston-Saul, LinkedIn profile, <https://www.linkedin.com/pub/alastair-ralston-saul/33/717/2b9>.

<sup>69</sup> “Kaisun Energy Acquires Saddleback Mining Limited,” *ACNNewswire*, March 16, 2011, <http://en.acnnewswire.com/press-release/english/6177/kaisun-energy-acquires-saddleback-mining-limited>.

<sup>70</sup> Chorshanbiev, “Over 400 Thousand Tons;” Pairav Chorshanbiev, “Coal Production in Tajikistan Increased by Almost Two Times [Добыча угля в Таджикистане увеличилась почти в два раза],” *Asia-Plus*, July 22, 2014, <http://asiaplus.tj/ru/news/dobycha-uglya-v-tadzhikistane-uvelichilas-pochti-v-dva-raza>.

<sup>71</sup> Said Yakhoyev, “Energy Policy Options for the Rasht Valley,” *Central Asia Fellowship Papers*, August 2014, p. 5, fn. 8, <http://centralasiaprogram.org/blog/2014/08/05/energy-policy-options-for-the-rasht-valley-2/>.

<sup>72</sup> “Up Energy Development Group Limited Aims to Be the Substantial Scale of Integrated Energy Conglomerate with Circulative Economy Model,” *ACNNewswire*, January 17, 2013, <http://en.acnnewswire.com/press-release/english/12028/up-energy-development-group-limited-aims-to-be-the-substantial-scale-of-integrated-energy-conglomerate-with-circulative-economy-model>.

<sup>73</sup> Pairav Chorshanbiev, “Salomzoda: We Will Make Miners Work in Compliance with Safety Rules [Саломзода: Мы заставим горняков работать с учетом соблюдения правил безопасности],” *Asia-Plus*, July 11, 2014, <http://news.tj/ru/news/salomzoda-my-zastavim-gornyakov-rabotat-s-uchetom-soblyudeniya-pravil-bezopasnosti>.

<sup>74</sup> “Expert: Energy Security of ‘Talco’ Is in Coking Coal [Эксперт: Энергетическая безопасность «Талко» - в коксующемся угле],” *Asia-Plus*, August 14, 2013, <http://asiaplus.tj/ru/news/ekspert-energeticheskaya-bezopasnost-talko-v-koksuyushchemsya-ugle>.

<sup>75</sup> Several homes near Belgi’s were damaged in the attack. This and other details in the sentence (other than facts regarding the security presence and communications blockage, referenced earlier in the paper) are from author communication with interlocutors in Tajikistan, 2011-2013.