

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

**INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES**

**RUSSIA  
AND  
THE MOSLEM WORLD  
2022 – 2 (316)**

**SCIENCE-INFORMATION BULLETIN**

**Moscow  
2022**

Federal State Budgetary Institution of Science  
Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences  
of the Russian Academy of Sciences (INION RAN)

Division of Asia and Africa

Editorial Board:

**Velihan Mirzehanov** – Institute of World History, Russian Academy of Sciences, Scientific Consultant, INION, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation  
**Elena Dmitrieva** – Editor-in-Chief, INION, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Olga Bibikova** – First Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Aziz Niyazi** – Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Valentina Schensnovich** – Executive Secretary, INION, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Natalia Ginesina** – Managing Editor, INION, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Alikber Alikberov**, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Vladimir Avatkov**, INION, Russian Academy of Sciences, Diplomatic Academy of the MFA of Russia, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Andrey Belinsky**, INION, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Vasiliy Belozerov**, Moscow State Linguistic University, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Igor Dobaev**, Southern Federal University, Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation

**Thomas Flchy de La Neuville** (Switzerland), Institute for the History of Law (University of Poitiers), Rennes School of Business, France

**Alexander Gordon**, INION, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Shamil Kashaf**, Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Igor Kuznetsov**, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Alexey Malashenko**, IMEMO, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Dina Malysheva**, IMEMO, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Igor Sledzhevsky**, Institute for African Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, Russian Federation

**Russia and the Moslem World : Science Information Bulletin / INION RAN, Division of Asia and Africa.** – Moscow, 2022. – N 2 (316). – 129 p.

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.

ISSN 1072-6403

DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2022.02.00

The journal is registered by the Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Communications. Certificate of Registration № 04-32298 dated 11.04.2022

Journal is indexed in the Russian Science Citation Index  
© FSIBS «Institute of Scientific Information for Social Sciences, 2022

## CONTENT

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

Valentina Schensnovich. Cooperation between Russia and Near and Far Abroad Countries. <i>Analytical review</i> .....	5
Elena Dmitrieva. Islam in the Regions of the Russian North. <i>Condensed abstract</i> .....	18

### PLACE AND ROLE OF ISLAM IN REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

Aslanbek Adiyev, Ayshat Musayeva. Prevention of Terrorism in the North Caucasus .....	25
Aziz Niyazi. Uzbekistan: Problems of Current Modernization of Water Management and Agriculture .....	48
Elena Dmitrieva. The Influence of the Taliban Coming to Power in Afghanistan on the Situation in the Republics of Central Asia. <i>Condensed abstract</i> .....	62

## ISLAM IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

Elena Dmitrieva. Foreign Economic Strategies of Egypt and Prospects for Cooperation with Russia. <i>Condensed abstract.</i> ...	73
Olga Bibikova. On Systemic Racism in the Lebanon Society.....	77
Ksenia Atamali. North Africa: Muslim Migration to Europe and the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. <i>Condensed abstract.</i> .....	92

## THE MOSLEM WORLD: THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

Sergey Melnik. Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for the Dialogue “Orthodoxy-Islam”: History and Basic Principles of Interreligious Cooperation. ....	100
Olga Chikrizova, Yurii Lashkhia. Religious Factor in World Politics and International Relations.....	116

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

VALENTINA SCHENSNOVICH. COOPERATION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND NEAR AND FAR ABROAD COUNTRIES.  
*Analytical review*

*Keywords:* Russia, foreign economic policy, international trade, investments, turbulence, the IMF, sanctions, the EU, China, Japan, Singapore, EAEU, ASEAN, APEC, CIS; protectionism; free trade area (FTA).

**Valentina Schensnovich,**  
Research Associate,  
INION RAN  
e-mail: vl-lyuba9@yandex.ru

*Citation:* Schensnovich V. Cooperation between Russia and near and far abroad countries. Analytical review // Russia and the Moslem World, 2022, № 2 (316), P. 5-17.  
DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2022.02.01

*Abstract.* The review analyzes current trends in international cooperation of modern Russia. Statistics on foreign trade relations of the Russian Federation for 2018-2019. with countries of near and far abroad. The dynamics of Russia's foreign trade, changes in its geographical and commodity pattern are considered. Particular

*attention is paid to the cooperation of the Russian Federation with the EAEU, ASEAN, APEC and CIS countries.*

## **Introduction**

The authors of the articles analyze the evolution of Russia's foreign economic policy during the period of Western sanctions. Recently, international economic ties have been characterized by instability of the emerging trends in their development. A kind of "barometer" of changes taking place in the global economy is the IMF reports for 2018–2020, in which development assessments and forecasts have repeatedly changed. Among the main reasons for the sinusoid trend, first the rise until the mid of 2018, then the slowdown in development by the beginning of 2020, the fund's experts note an increase in uncertainty in terms of the prospects for international economic relations dependent on geopolitics.

Researchers allocate a special place to international cooperation of the Russian Federation with the EAEU, ASEAN and APEC countries, as well as to the modern state of the Russian economy, investments in its development, and state regulation of foreign trade activities.

## **Foreign trade relations of Russia in 2018–2020**

Doctor of Economics, Head of the Center for European Trade of the Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Professor of the Russian Economic University named after G.V. Plekhanova, I.S. Gladkov [2] notes that negative trends in the world economy were due to the instability of trade policy, rate increases, which predetermined a decrease in investment in external trade circulation. In such a geo-economic situation, foreign trade ties were carried out, which continued to be under sanctions from a number of Western countries of Russia. In 2019, it suffered losses in the value of domestic exports. Comparison of statistical data on foreign trade of the Russian Federation for 2019

---

and 2018 shows that the value of its trade circulation decreased by about 3.1 percent. This happened mainly due to a reduction in exports by 6.0 percent, import purchases by value increased by 2.2 percent. However, Russia has achieved positive results in the field of oil exports to non-CIS countries. The geography of domestic commodity export as a whole has retained on changes of its rate.

The most important foreign trade partner of the Russian Federation remained the European Union, consisting of 28 member countries.

The second major counterpart of Russia in 2019 was the Asia-Pacific region, the member countries of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. The forum's share contribution to Russian foreign trade in 2019 increased to 31.8 percent, with a decrease in absolute indicators by 0.5 percent. Domestic commodity exports to APEC in 2019 decreased by 4.3 percent, but Russian imports increased by 4.1 percent. The largest foreign trade partner of Russia in APEC is China, its share in Russian external trade increased from 15.7 percent to 16.6 percent. With a lower cost of trade, the United States is in second place among Russian partners, with an increased share contribution from 3.6 percent to 3.9 percent. The third one is occupied by the Republic of Korea, but in 2019 the growth rate of its trade circulation with Russia was negative, and its cost amounted to 3.7 percent of the total external commodity exchange of the Russian Federation. Japan is in fourth place, its turnover in 2019 from the Russian Federation decreased in value by 4.5 percent with a drop in domestic commodity export by 8.7 percent, but with an increase in the cost of supplying Japanese goods to Russia by 1.6 percent.

The third in terms of contribution in 2019 to the external trade of the Russian Federation was the zone of neighboring countries, it accounts for about 1/8 of the cost of foreign trade operations. This indicator increased in 2019 to 12.1 percent. The cost of foreign trade turnover of the Russian Federation with

the EAEU member countries has also increased – from 8.2 percent to 8.6 percent. At the same time, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine remained the leading counterparties of Russia in this range. Uzbekistan actively developed foreign trade relations with the Russian Federation, which increased its share contribution to the Russian external commodity turnover and achieved an increase in bilateral exchange. The author notes that the Central Asian partners of Russia in 2019 demonstrated an increase in all cost indicators in mutual commodity turnover with the Russian Federation.

Other foreign trade counterparties of the Russian Federation – Turkey, India, Egypt and Brazil – showed a decrease in almost all parameters characterizing their trade relations with the Russian Federation.

When considering the latest trends in foreign trade of the Russian Federation, the structure of export-import relations is of particular importance. The calculated data show the dominance in the domestic export of mineral products (fuel and energy goods – almost 68.0 percent of all supplies to non-CIS countries, over 31.4 percent – to the CIS). At the same time, a decrease in their cost parameters is noted. In second place in the structure of Russian exports are “metals and products made of them” (8.2 percent of the total cost of export to non-CIS countries), on the third – the group “products of the chemical industry, raw rubber” (5.4 percent), on the fourth – “food products and agricultural raw materials” (5.1 percent), on the fifth – “machines, equipment and vehicles” (over 4.6 percent), on the sixth – “precious stones, precious metals and products made of them” (4.0 percent). In total, six product groups accounted for 95.3 percent of the total value of domestic export to non-CIS countries in 2019. The same commodity groups were sent to the CIS, they provided 89.1 percent of the cost of Russian supplies to this zone. In the import of Russia from neighboring countries, the total weight of six product groups is almost 93 percent of its total value.

---

The author states: Russia in 2019, against the background of growing turbulence in the system of the world economy and international commodity exchange, continued sanctions pressure, mainly managed to show good results in the field of foreign trade. Contrary to the sanctions, the Russian Federation has intensified fuel supplies to the United States, taking place among the three largest oil exporters, along with Canada and Mexico. Nevertheless, according to the researcher, the prospects for the development of the economy and external commodity exchange of the Russian Federation are associated with the need to transfer foreign trade activities to a modern level, ensure a technological breakthrough, diversify exports and imports.

### **Cooperation between Russia and the EAEU and ASEAN**

Senior lecturer of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Russian Customs Academy A.A. Vorona [1] unifies the trends and prospects for the development of cooperation between the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Countries (ASEAN). ASEAN member countries are ambitious partners for the EAEU states, since the potential for economic interaction is significant, the population of the two associations is almost 850 million people. The EAEU was created to increase the competitiveness of the economies of the Union countries and international cooperation. The development of ASEAN and EAEU cooperation contributes to strengthening mutually beneficial ties with partners within the framework of integration processes in Eurasia. Due to the fact that ASEAN countries are centers of technological development in the Asia-Pacific region, partnership with ASEAN also represents a resource for solving strategic tasks to modernize the economies of the participating countries. In the context of the development of trade relations, the trade turnover of the EAEU and ASEAN countries in 2018 increased by 11.5 percent to \$22.4 billion dollars. The EAEU exports mineral products, food products and

agricultural raw materials to ASEAN countries, as well as metals and products from them, and imports mainly machinery, equipment and vehicles, food products.

With the view to further development the EAEU and ASEAN declared the need to expand cooperation. The new formats of interaction will double the trade turnover between the EAEU and ASEAN. It is possible to implement it within the framework of the Great Eurasian Economic Partnership. Cooperation in the digital economy and the sphere of high technologies is most promising. Joint projects in agriculture and communications sector are mutually beneficial. In October 2019, a free trade agreement was signed between the EAEU and Singapore. For the EAEU states, it opens up great opportunities for trade and investment cooperation with one of the most economically developed ASEAN countries and Asia as a whole. In turn, Singapore is interested in entering the markets of the EAEU countries and in developing economic cooperation with them, primarily with Russia, which is the economic leader of the Union.

Great attention is paid to investment cooperation in the Free Trade Agreement between the EAEU and Singapore. The establishment of a free trade area (FTA) could benefit both sides. Trade between Singapore and Russia is gradually growing from \$2 billion in 2012 to \$3.6 billion in 2018. Russia mainly supplies oil and oil products to the Singapore market, which is approximately 90 percent of Russian imports. Currently, Russia is actively pursuing a policy towards the development of the Asian-Pacific oil and gas market. At the same time, it has become one of the most promising areas of Russian hydrocarbon exports. Energy consumption in East and Southeast Asian countries (China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore) is constantly growing. They are also geographically close to hydrocarbon production centers in the Russian Far East, primarily on Sakhalin Island. In addition, Russia is preparing to launch the Vostok Oil project, which covers field development in the Arctic zones of the

Russian Federation and export of their products along the Northern Sea Route. The main direction of movement of oil tankers will be Asian-Pacific market. At the same time, Singapore annually invests significant funds in Russian agriculture. Imports of Russian grain and investments in its production are becoming more and more attractive to other countries, including Singapore. The development of trade relations between Singapore and Russia is taking place quite rapidly, while trade with other EAEU countries is not very large, in 2018 it amounted to about \$0.6 billion dollars. The author concludes that ASEAN and EAEU trade and economic cooperation is at the initial stage of development and requires close attention for further integration. Both sides intend to stimulate the potential of this interaction. Singapore makes high-quality electronics, ships, machines, medicines and other goods that are in demand among consumers. Privileged access of Singaporean products to a large market could benefit both sides and allow them to continue to cooperate with each other.

The EAEU countries have quite powerful investment potential, are knowledge and technologies holders, that may be of interest to ASEAN partners. At the same time, the exchange of knowledge becomes important, which is achieved as part of the creation of joint ventures. Thus, the Eurasian Economic Union stimulates the development of new directions for future cooperation between countries. Economic interaction will strengthen regional ties, increase the investment attractiveness of the EAEU. Further cooperation between the EAEU and ASEAN will facilitate the export of goods to the market, ensuring economic development for associations.

### **State regulation of export relations of the Russian Federation**

Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor of the Financial University under the Government of the Russian

Federation E.A. Miroshina and student of the Financial University A.K. Grigorieva [3] note that the accelerated development of economic cooperation requires a change in the functions of state regulation of foreign trade activities.

The main objectives of the regulation of Russia's foreign economic activity are:

- Assistance to domestic producers by providing enterprises with new equipment, machineries, technologies, necessary resources;
- Support and improvement of trade and political ties with foreign competitors, expansion of Russia's participation in integrational and international processes;
- Solving currency and financial and credit problems in relations with creditor countries, as well as international unions;
- Protection of foreign economic interests of the state;
- Aspiration to take a leading position in the world markets for the production of modern goods and services;
- Creation of a competitive sector in manufacturing and services;
- Increasing Russia's role in ensuring energy security and strengthening its position in the hydrocarbon market;
- Integration of Russia into the global transport system. Creation of new pipeline routes ("Northern and Southern Flows", "Power of Siberia"), expansion of the Trans-Siberian Railway, development of the northern sea route from Asia to Europe.

Foreign trade activities are constantly updated and require regulation by international associations. In 1995, the World Trade Organization (WTO) arose, under its control approximately 90 percent of all world trade. Russia's accession to the WTO (2011) is a significant step in the country's integration into international trade. An important role in the volume of Russia's foreign trade turnover is played by the member states of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU). The main participants are: Republic of Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan. The foreign trade turnover of Russia with the EAEU member states in 2018 increased compared to 2016–2017, as a result of which it led

to a trade surplus. Export influenced the increase in Russia's foreign trade turnover with the EAEU member countries. In 2018, it increased by 25.8 percent compared to 2017. Most of the exports are represented by fuel and energy goods. According to customs statistics, the foreign trade turnover in 2018 amounted to 688 billion US dollars (increased by 18 percent compared to 2017). Of these, exports - 450 billion US dollars (increased by 26 percent compared to 2017), and imports amounted to 238 billion US dollars (increased by 5 percent compared to 2017).

Russia, like many other countries, pursues a policy of protectionism. Protectionist regulation methods are divided into two types: tariff and non-tariff. Tariff methods of regulation are based on customs tariffs on imports, and also involve export tariffs and customs unions. Export tariffs on the products of national manufacturers are introduced to limit exports in order to maintain supply in the domestic market. Customs unions are a community of countries that remove all customs barriers within their union while setting up barriers for countries outside their union. The authors consider non-tariff methods of state regulation of foreign trade: the introduction of quotas, economic sanctions or embargoes. Economic sanctions or embargoes involve the introduction of a complete ban on foreign trade activities with some countries by the state. The purpose of the embargo is to exert political pressure. In 2012, the EU imposed economic sanctions on the import of oil from Iran due to the threat that this country could build nuclear weapons. In July 2014, the EU and the United States moved from sanctions against individuals and enterprises to sanctions that had an impact on the Russian economy. In response, Russia has limited food imports for countries that have imposed sanctions against it.

### **Foreign investment in Russia**

In the article of the Candidate of Economic Sciences I. Kvashnina (Institute of Economics of the Russian Academy of

Sciences) [4], there are considered changes in the regulation of foreign investments that have taken place in recent years in the world and in Russia. There is a trend of increased protectionism towards foreign direct investment (FDI). The dynamics of the inflow of foreign direct investment into the Russian Federation only partially reflects fluctuations in the movement of global investment. Alongside objective factors, the factor of world prices for raw materials and energy resources remains determining for Russia; current direct and indirect barriers to external funding; maintaining the threat of introducing new restrictive measures both in relation to companies and individuals and sectors of the economy. If in 2018 in Russia, as well as around the world and in Europe, imports of direct investment dropped to the minimum values, then in 2019, when the world showed a slight increase, imports of FDI to Russia increased by 60 percent, and the country again joined the twenty largest states on this indicator.

According to forecasts, in 2021, emerging market countries (EMCs) will face an almost twofold investment bust. The pandemic and fall of energy prices are forcing many companies to revise their investment plans in Russia, although most of the previously launched projects are still being implemented. One of the reasons for the decrease in investment is the reduction in the profit of international companies and its use for refinancing investment projects. Another threat to investment in the country is associated with the peculiarities of the Russian sectoral structure of FDI. Between 70 and 80 percent of incoming investments are in mining and services, and the automotive and related industries have played a major role in manufacturing in the past decade. These industries and sectors that are considered the most affected in the world from the crisis caused by COVID-19 (fuel and energy complex companies and extractive sectors, auto industry, air transport, transport, hotels, entertainment and other services). Under the new conditions, investments in healthcare and the production of medicines and equipment, as well as in dynamically developing information and communications

activities, as well as by virtue of transferring the sale of goods and services from offline to online, will most likely be in demand.

As in most countries, in Russia liberal measures on FDI are combined with the use of certain restrictions. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) monitors the degree of openness of the economy to foreign direct investment. In general, there are more restrictions on foreign capital in Russia than the OECD average, and the dynamics of three years (2016–2018) indicates a tightening of regulatory policy. During the same period, the BRICS states (especially the PRC) have noticeably advanced in the opposite direction and are now in advance of Russia in terms of the degree of openness of economies to foreign investors. The researcher emphasizes that, despite the restrictions, financial activities and insurance remain one of the most attractive areas of the application of foreign capital. Upon joining the WTO (the agreement was signed in 2011), the Russian Federation assumed obligations providing for the simplification of the admission of foreign investors.

In the insurance sector, the quota for foreigners was increased from 25 to 50 percent. Since mid-2017, the limit on the participation of foreign business in the capital of companies engaged in life insurance and compulsory insurance has been canceled; in 2021, branches of international insurance companies were allowed to work in Russia. In the banking sector, after joining the WTO, the ban on opening branch offices remains. Foreign banks can establish only subsidiaries.

The author notes that in the Russian Federation there are no total restrictions for foreign investors, but the current system for regulating the admission of foreigners is unhandy and non-transparent. Stimulating the inflow of FDI into small and medium-sized businesses should be facilitated by the abolition (from 2018) of restrictions on the participation of foreign capital in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), provided that foreign companies themselves are also small and medium-sized businesses. The inclusion of companies with foreign capital in the

register of SMEs gives them the right to tax benefits, admission to participate in state procurement and preferential credits, exempts them from scheduled inspections. In April 2020, the law "On the Protection and Promotion of Investments in the Russian Federation" was adopted. Business is committed to invest from 250 million rubles up to 10 billion rubles and more in projects in exchange for the invariability of tax and non-tax working conditions for a period of 6 to 20 years. Currently, the emphasis is on the competitiveness and manufacturability of the produced products. The scope of execution of special contracts at the expense of energy and agriculture has been expanded, and the maximum term of the contract has been extended from 10 to 15 years, the minimum investment threshold has been canceled. According to the new rules, the contract is concluded on the results of competitive selection, and the initiator of the project can be not only the investor, but also the state.

All companies, including enterprises with foreign investments, were affected by the crisis caused by the pandemic. In recent years, in the regulation of foreign direct investment in Russia, there has been an increase in elements of protectionism, as well under the influence of the economic crisis caused by COVID-19. In modern conditions, finding a balance between the protection of national strategic interests and the use of foreign resources and competencies seems to be an inevitable paradigm, and the creation of a transparent and understandable system of support and restrictions on foreign investment becomes an important element of a favorable investment climate.

## Conclusion

The global economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected the global flows of foreign direct investment. The coronavirus pandemic and the deep recession that followed it can provoke another round of geopolitical rivalry and protectionism, strengthening state control

---

over investment flows. In Russia, in recent years, the situation has come about, on the one hand investment in a significant part of economic activity is limited and inspection mechanisms are strengthened, and on the other hand, steps are being taken to involve foreign companies in the modernization of the economy.

Foreign economic policy is based on the development of technical means, the protection of national interests in the foreign economic sphere. In Russia today, measures are being taken to stimulate new technological developments, changes should be made to the geographical and commodity structure of its foreign trade activities, which often does not meet modern requirements. In addition to the need to improve the export support system, the task is also to change the macroeconomic strategy. According to Russian scientists, the most productive ideology for Russia now is the diversification strategy, which makes it possible to ensure optimal involvement in multidirectional trends in global change.

## References

1. Vorona A.A. Cooperation of the EAEU and ASEAN: problematic aspects and development prospects // Scientific notes of the St. Petersburg named after B.B. Bobkov branch of the Russian Customs Academy. – 2020. – № 1 (73). – P. 51–54.
2. Gladkov I.S. Foreign trade relations of the Russian Federation: new trends in the era of turbulence//Economic and social and humanitarian research. Economics of Innovative Development: Theory and Practice, 2020. – № 1 (25). – P. 19–29.
3. Grigorieva A.K., Miroshina E.A. The role of the Russian Federation in regulating foreign trade // National Association of Scientists, 2020. – № 53 (2). – P. 25–29.
4. Kvashnina I. Peculiarities of regulation of foreign direct investment in Russia // Society and economy, 2020. – № 10. – P. 85–97.

ELENA DMITRIEVA. ISLAM IN THE REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN NORTH. *Condensed abstract*

*Keywords: Russian North, Polar Islam, new Arctic identities, social and labour migration, diasporas, Salafism, threats, terrorism, Central Asia, Caucasus, Urals.*

**Elena Dmitrieva,**  
Senior Research Associate,  
INION RAN  
e-mail: eldmi@list.ru

*Citation:* Dmitrieva E. Islam in the regions of the Russian North. Condensed abstract // Russia and the Moslem World, 2022, № 2 (316), P. 18–24. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2022.02.02

1. Magomedov A.K. Sotsiokulturnye faktory vozniknoveniya i razvitiia muslimanskikh soobshchestv v arkticheskikh regionakh Rossii // *Sotsiokulturnye issledovaniia v sovremenном kulturnom prostranstve. Materialy Vserossiiskoi nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii*. 2021. P. 95–97.
2. Shustov A.V. Ethnic Migrations, Muslim Diasporas and Security Problems in the Northern Regions of the Urals // *Vestnik sotsialno-politicheskikh nauk*. 2021. № 20. P. 122–129.

A.K. Magomedov, PhD(Politics), Moscow State Linguistic University, [1] examines one of the most least-studied issues of Islamic studies in Russia regarding labor migration of Muslim population to the northern regions of Russia. The author highlights the notion of "Polar Islam", which has become an important component of social and cultural processes in the Russian North. Cities in the Far North are becoming more and more international, since hundreds of thousands of people from Central Asia, mainly from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, work there all year round. In addition, Azerbaijanis,

Russian Tatars and Bashkirs have worked here since the Soviet era; there are also rapidly growing communities of internal migrants from the North Caucasus. The author describes Khanty-Mansi Autonomous District and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous District as the third most influential Muslim area in Russia after the North Caucasus and the Ural-Volga region.

The author notes that the key element of this 'new' migration wave has been massive immigration from Central Asia since the latter half of the 2000s; the immigrants took advantage of the industrial boom in the key cities of the Russian North between Khanty-Mansiysk and Novy Urengoy. The entire sectors of the urban economy that needed cheap labour force have emerged: industrial construction, civil engineering, street cleaning, public transportation, public catering and trade.

The arrival and settling of migrants from Central Asia and the Caucasus have altered the urban landscape, e.g. increase in the number of mosques and houses of worship; emergence of ethnic districts featuring specialized shops, restaurants, cafes and bazaars; and new social opportunities for migrant communities who seek to establish social institutions similar to those back at home. New patterns for social self-organization and mutual support are being formed. For instance, migrants from Central Asia tend to come together by nationality or region, while Daghestanis are re-establishing jamaats (religious communities, often Sufi) against the background of increasing number of intermarriages with Russians or indigenous peoples.

The author points out that Muslim social dynamics of labour migration and communications have led to the concept of "Polar Islam", which has become an essential element of social processes and urban design in the Russian North. Today, mosques, Muslim boutiques and halal food shops are an integral part of the architectural landscape of cities in the Far North, many of which are located above the Arctic Circle. Thus, it is obvious that Islam has spread beyond the historical areas of the North Caucasus and the Volga region, becoming not only a

significant factor of Russian urban life, but also reaching the Arctic territories. The author believes that these facts challenge the established division into two traditional Muslim macro-regions in Russia: the North Caucasus and the Ural-Volga region. Nevertheless, the emergence of some kind of 'special' Islam, completely different from other Muslim regions of the country, is not the case. Most of the features of Islam in the Russian Arctic can be easily found in other regions, e.g. growth of multinational Muslim communities, competition for institutional control over Muslim communities, and clash of ideological interpretations of Islam. However, severe climatic conditions, territorial remoteness and industrial nature of the polar cities shape the social landscape for the Muslims of the region.

The author concludes that the role of Muslim communities in the critical regions of the Russian North is increasing. This means that Islam is now an integral part of the future of Russia and it can no longer be viewed as a religion of some local ethnic minorities. Islam should be seen as widespread social trend, which is intertwined with migration processes and changes in the urban social structure. The author believes that cultural adjustment of Muslim communities to their new polar identity may be worth studying. Thorough examination of those processes would help scientists highlight particular features of "Polar Islam".

The article by A.V. Shustov, PhD(Hist.), P.G. Demidov Yaroslavl State University, [2] discusses ethnic migration, formation of Muslim diasporas, security problems in the northern regions of the Urals, as well as the link between immigration and threats to national security in oil and gas producing regions. The author foresees the increase of terrorist threats and aggravation of interethnic relations, in case that uncontrolled immigration from the Asian CIS countries and the southern regions of Russia continues.

The author notes that the migration attractiveness of the oil and gas producing regions in the north of Russia prompted

---

significant changes in ethnic and religious composition of the population during the post-Soviet period. The immigrants from Russia's North Caucasus, the countries of the Caucasus and Central Asia have founded new Muslim diasporas. Diasporas in the North gave rise to radical Islam, which is entirely uncharacteristic for Russia. As a result, in recent years, the northern subjects of Russia have been frequently mentioned in the reports on combating terrorism and extremism presented by law enforcement agencies. Some researchers maintain that the third Muslim region in the country – after the North Caucasus and the Volga region – is being formed on the territory of the northern macroregion, which includes the northern part of European Russia, Siberia and partially the Far East. Despite depopulation caused by the 1990s economic crisis, large mining centers in the north of Russia have continued to develop. The author cites orientalists A. Malashenko and A. Starostin, who state that by the mid-2010s there were more than 400 Muslim places of worship in the Ural Federal District, including 267 mosques, 84 prayer houses and 51 prayer rooms. For comparison, there were only approximately 70 mosques across the territory of modern Russia during the Soviet period. Before the collapse of the USSR, Tatars and Bashkirs constituted the vast majority of Muslims in the Urals, and the political influence of Islam was almost non-existent.

According to the 2010 census, the number of immigrants from Central Asia to the Urals increased by 70 percent, from Azerbaijan by a factor of 2.1, and from the North Caucasus by a factor of 2.4. By then, the total number of Muslims since the post-Soviet period had increased by almost 100 thousand people. Moreover, Muslim population growth was almost solely due to the oil and gas regions: Tyumen Oblast, the Yamalo-Nenets and Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Districts.

The author highlights certain patterns in the settlement of ethnic Muslims in the northern regions of Russia: Azerbaijanis tend to settle in Murmansk Oblast, immigrants from Central Asia

head for Yakutia, and the natives of Russian Muslim regions (Bashkiria, Tatarstan and the North Caucasus) reside in the northern oil-producing regions.

People from the Caucasus and Central Asia brought along a non-traditional, more radical and politicized Islam, previously alien to the local Muslim population. Islamic fundamentalists – Salafists – also came to the Urals; their ideas have gained popularity among local young Tatars and even some Russians. Since cities were the primary destination of the migration flow from Central Asia, migrants from this region made up the majority of the parishioners of local mosques, while Tatars and Bashkirs generally attended mosques in rural areas. As a result, a large number of imams who serve city mosques came from the Asian CIS countries. Unlike the local Muslim clergy, many of the new imams received their religious education in the Middle East, which provided them a higher standing among Muslims. The spread of Salafism was most visible in regions with highest proportion of migrants from the Caucasus and Central Asia, i.e. Tyumen Oblast, the Yamalo-Nenets and Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Districts.

The author points out that the formation of the Salafi underground in the Northern Urals started in the late 1990s. Initially, it was staked by militants who fought federal authorities in the North Caucasus and arrived in the region to recuperate, heal and go legit. By the mid-2010s, the number of adherents of radical Islam was estimated at several thousand people. Hotbeds of its spread were cities that attracted migratory flows: Novy Urengoy, Gubkinsky and Noyabrsk in the Yamalo-Nenets District; Nizhnevartovsk, Raduzhny, Nefteyugansk, Megino and Surgut in the Khanty-Mansiysk District.

The author notes that immigrants from the southern Muslim regions establish their own diaspora network structures in the places of destination, which assist newly arriving migrants; this confirms migration network theory. Through these new structures they find housing, jobs, and forge business and good-

---

neighbourly relations (often at mosques or halal cafes). Growing immigration to the oil and gas producing regions, which has become a major source of new members for Muslim diasporas in northern Russia, has heightened tensions and increased the threat of terrorism. The lack of control by law enforcement agencies due to remoteness of northern regions from the capitals, megacities and the European part of the country has also spurred the spread of radical Islam.

The situation in the Urals has been improved following the growing number of detentions of adherents of radical Islam. On March 23, 2021, Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Nikolai Patrushev held a meeting on security issues throughout the Ural Federal District in Khanty-Mansiysk. Patrushev said that the influx of migrants from abroad could invigorate Islamic radicals, foster the creation of Islamist sleeper cells and trigger inter-ethnic tensions. Since 2017, over 26 terrorist cells have been identified in the district; the number of extremist crimes has increased by 2.5 times.

The author also singles out the growth of nationalist and protest attitudes as an immediate consequence of the massive influx of migrants. The author attributes this to immigration from the southern regions of Russia and the Asian CIS countries; ousting of the local population from a number of areas; and escalation in the burden on education and health care.

The author concludes that the close correlation between uncontrolled immigration, increasing terrorist threats and escalating nationalist and protest moods of the indigenous population calls for a thorough analysis of the source of these problems. By the mid-2010s, the number of supporters of radical Islam in Russia was estimated at 700 thousand people, including 200 thousand supporters of ISIS, an organization banned in Russia. Free entry into Russia from the southern CIS countries, given their young, fast-growing, unemployed and radicalizing population, undoubtedly broadens the social base for radical Islam. The growing threat of terrorism and extremism and

---

further aggravation of interethnic relations in the northern regions of the Urals, where Russia's main oil and gas fields are located, pose not only economic and domestic political pressures, but also geopolitical risks that could potentially endanger the integrity of the country.

---

# PLACE AND ROLE OF ISLAM IN REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, THE CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA

ASLANBEK ADIYEV, AYSHAT MUSAYEVA. PREVENTION OF TERRORISM IN THE NORTH CAUCASUS\*

*Keywords: national security, North Caucasus, prevention of terrorism, countering the ideology of terrorism; National Anti-Terrorist Committee, Anti-Terrorist Commission, Dagestan; Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachayev-Circassia, North Ossetia-Alania, Chechnya.*

**Aslanbek Adiyev,**  
PhD(Politology), Senior Research Associate,  
Regional Center of Ethnopolitical Researches,  
Daghestan Scientific Center, RAS  
e-mail: Khalid\_84@mail.ru

**Ayshat Musayeva,**  
Research Associate,  
Regional Center of Ethnopolitical Researches,  
Daghestan Scientific Center, RAS  
© Adiyev A., Musayeva A. 2022

*Citation:* Adiyev A., Musayeva A. Prevention of terrorism in the North Caucasus // Russia and the Moslem World, 2022, № 2 (316), P. 25-48. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2022.02.03

---

\* The study was carried out with the financial support of the RFBR and EISI within the framework of scientific project No. 21-011-31438.

*Abstract. The article reflects the experience of recent years in the field of terrorism prevention in the republics of the North Caucasus, where today there is a significant decline in terrorist activity. Based on the analysis of the research data, it is argued that the success of the state in preventing terrorism is due to an increase in the quality of interdepartmental and inter-level interaction of all subjects of countering terrorism, focusing on targeted work with categories of persons most exposed to the ideology of terrorism and extremism, as well as the involvement of broad public circles in this activity. The article also describes some problems in the approaches and organization of measures to prevent terrorism in a number of republics of the North Caucasus, and suggests for testing those solutions that are successfully practiced in individual municipalities and regions.*

The North Caucasian republics have accumulated solid practical experience in preventing terrorism<sup>1</sup> based on the ideology of radical Islamism.<sup>2</sup> The reports of the National Antiterrorist Committee (NAC) of Russia, interviews with heads of law enforcement agencies and heads of the North Caucasian republics show a decrease in the number of violent terrorist crimes in the region every year. A clear sign of the stabilization of the socio-political situation in the North Caucasus is the growing popularity of Daghestan, Ingushetia and Chechnya for tourism, which 5-10 years ago were perceived by the general public as regions that should not be visited for security reasons. Positive changes in the North Caucasus have largely become possible due to the increased effectiveness of the state in countering terrorism. According to the statements of the representative of the FSB of Russia, in 2010–2020 more than 170 terrorist acts were prevented at the stage of preparation in various regions of the country, their organizers, perpetrators and accomplices were detained, and those who offered armed resistance were destroyed on the spot [8, p. 28]. By now, the main centers of terrorist activity and all the leaders of the gangs who tried to impose their pseudo-religious orders on the North Caucasian regional societies have been

eliminated there.<sup>3</sup> The success of the state in countering terrorism in the North Caucasus is due to a complex combination of forceful methods with non-forceful preventive measures aimed at informational and ideological counteraction to terrorism; reduction of the social base of sympathizers with the terrorist underground; elimination of radicalization factors of local youth and prevention of involvement in terrorist activities of persons most exposed to the ideology of terrorism. All preventive anti-terrorist measures are being implemented in the North Caucasus systematically under the leadership of the NAC as part of the implementation of federal and republican comprehensive plans to counter the ideology of terrorism. The implementation of these plans involves not only representatives of state authorities and local self-government (LSG), but also the scientific community, religious authorities and representatives of the widest civil circles. At the same time, each North Caucasian republic has its own peculiarities in preventive work, due to a variety of internal and external factors. The purpose of the article is to describe the experience gained in recent years in the prevention of terrorism in the republics of the North Caucasus.

*Empirical basis.* The empirical basis of the study consists of: republican and municipal comprehensive plans and programs for countering the ideology of terrorism and extremism; minutes of meetings of anti-terrorist commissions in municipalities of the North Caucasian republics published on their websites; materials of a thematic reviews of regional socio-political print media for 2010–2020; a review of materials posted in the “Publications” section on the official website of the NAC of Russia; recordings of interviews with subjects of terrorism prevention in the North Caucasus, conducted by the authors in July–November 2021.

### **The problem of terrorism in the North Caucasus**

The problem of terrorism in the post-Soviet North Caucasus was actualized shortly after the penetration of the ideology of

radical Islamism into the region, whose adherents are making their efforts to overthrow the constitutional system of the state there and establish a theocratic regime through the direct imposition of Islamic religious law (Sharia). The process of spreading the ideology of radical Islamism in the North Caucasus at the end of the 20 – beginning of the 21-st century is studied in detail in the works of Russian Islamic-Caucasian scholars [See, for example, 1, 3, 5, 11]. The analysis of the literature on this topic reveals terminological pluralism (*"Islamic radicalism"*, *"Islamic extremism"*, *"radical Islam"*, *"radical Islamism"*, *"religious and political extremism"*, *"Salafi jihadism"*, *"Takfiri"*, etc.), when different authors try to identify the ideological platform of extremist and terrorist practices of radical Islamists. In order to preserve the terminological uniformity in the text, when designating the ideological basis of terrorism in the North Caucasus, we will use the term *"radical Islamism"*.

The Moslem clergy of the North Caucasian republics have nicknamed radical Islamists *"Wahhabis"* and this name has firmly stuck with them in public discourse, although they themselves prefer to call themselves *"true Moslems"*, *"brothers"*, *"Salafists"*, but not *"Wahhabis"*. The pioneers of radical Islamism in the region were students and graduates of foreign Islamic educational centers who were exposed to these radical beliefs while studying abroad. In addition to them, this ideology was also spread in the North Caucasus by professional preachers of the so-called *"pure Islam"* from abroad, including through video cassettes with sermons, religious newspapers, pamphlets and other propaganda literature. As noted by a prominent researcher from Daghestan K.M. Khanbabayev, interest in radical Islam was initiated by the religious centers of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, as well as a number of Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, considering Daghestan as a springboard for asserting their spiritual and political influence in the North Caucasus and other Moslem regions of Russia [11, pp. 284–285].

---

Expert on Islam in the Caucasus A.A. Yarlykapov notes that at first most of the North Caucasian Salafists adhered to a peaceful agenda and were limited mainly to proselytizing activities [7, p. 306]. In the 1990s (up to the military events of August-September 1999), Salafists in the republics of the North Caucasus were most active in creating all kinds of social movements, Islamic political parties, mass media, publishing houses and printing houses, charitable foundations, madrassas, educational and cultural centers. And quite quickly the leadership positions among the so-called "true Moslems" of the region proved to be occupied by radical elements, calling for active actions to establish Islamic order through the violent seizure of power. By the mid-1990s, foreign fighters with military and sabotage experience rushed en masse to Chechnya, which was not controlled by the official authorities, and the scale of arms smuggling increased dramatically. For example, the Saudi jihadist Khattab attracted significant financial resources and support to separatist Chechnya in the mid-1990s [14]. As researchers from MGIMO write: *"foreign and local jihadists have organized military and religious training camps in Southern Chechnya with the aim of spreading armed jihad to the entire North Caucasus"* [7, p. 306]. They were joined by preachers of radical Islamism from neighboring republics, who called on the Moslems of the region to armed resistance to the Russian authorities. Urus-Martan, Professor V.H. Akaev notes, *"since the summer of 1998 has turned into a major center of Wahhabism in Chechnya"* [1, p. 160]. The Islamists tried to impose on the world community the perception of their actions in Chechnya as a "jihad", the struggle of North Caucasian Moslems with the occupiers. In some villages of Daghestan, Islamists even managed to establish their own system of government, as, for example, in the Karamakhin villages of the Buinak district of the republic, where the so-called "Wahhabi" enclave existed from the summer of 1998 to the fall of 1999. A number of other rural communities of Karabudakhkent, Kizilyurt, Untsukul, Tsumadinsky and other districts of Daghestan drifted in the same direction.

And in Ingushetia, North Ossetia-Alania, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachayev-Circassia, in the process of re-Islamization, adherents of radical views in Islam began to appear among local youth.

In the summer of 1999, representatives of the radical wing of the Islamists in Daghestan went over to an open armed confrontation with the state. Attempts to forcibly seize power in a number of villages in the Tsumadinsky district of Daghestan, undertaken by the Islamists in July-August 1999, were unsuccessful for them. Then, in order to provide them with support, a large detachment of militants invaded from the territory of Chechnya. After they were defeated by the Russian army on the territory of Daghestan in the fall of 1999, hostilities resumed in Chechnya itself. Large-scale hostilities in this republic ended in the early 2000s with a complete military defeat of the Islamists and separatists. With the end of the active phase of hostilities in Chechnya, many detachments of separatist militants, who had already adopted the ideology of radical Islamism, embarked on the path of a terrorist war with the state, expanding the zone of instability to the scale of the entire North Caucasus.

Since the mid-2000s, there has been an increase in the activity of the terrorist underground not only in Chechnya, but also in Daghestan, Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria. Large groups of gangs attacked Nazran (June 2004), Grozny (August 2004), Beslan (September 2004), Nalchik (October 2005). Subsequently, the Islamist fighters, apparently as a result of the reduction in their capabilities, abandoned direct large-scale clashes with the security forces and increasingly used the tactics of sudden shelling and explosions. Representatives of law enforcement agencies became the main target of the militants.

In November 2007, the leader of the Chechen radical Islamists D. Umarov proclaimed the creation of the so-called "Caucasian Emirate" (banned in the Russian Federation), and this was the last step towards the transformation of the Chechen separatist movement into a North Caucasian radical Islamist

---

project, which is part of the “global jihad” [6, 14]. From that moment on, the main centers of the spread of terrorism in the North Caucasus, according to the observations of researchers, remain Daghestan and Ingushetia. In addition to sudden armed attacks on security officials, cases of double explosions have become more frequent in Daghestan (when representatives of relevant services and departments arrived at the site of the first explosion, terrorists carried out a second, more powerful explosion), as well as the use of suicide bombers.<sup>4</sup> The statistics of terrorist attacks in these years (2008–2012) increased so much that it prompted the sociologist S.Ya. Sushchi to characterize the North Caucasian terrorist underground with the word *self-reproducibility* – the ability to fully restore the incurred personnel, organizational, infrastructural and other losses [9, p. 285]. Indeed, representatives of law enforcement agencies annually reported on the elimination of hundreds of militants in the North Caucasus, the prevention of dozens of terrorist attacks, but the operational situation in the region continued to be extremely difficult.

Only since 2013 has the activity of the terrorist underground in the North Caucasus begun to fade away. Some researchers attribute these changes to the onset of the so-called “Arab spring” and the beginning of the war in Syria in 2011, where radical Islamists from all over the world, including from the regions of Russia, rushed to wage “true jihad” there [7, p. 308]. Islamists from the North Caucasus in 2013–2016 went *en masse* to the Middle East, where they became members of various terrorist groups, mainly the “Islamic State” (banned in the Russian Federation), which in 2014–2016 controlled large areas of Syria and Iraq. The massive outflow of Islamists to the Middle East, of course, affected the general situation in the republics of the North Caucasus. First of all, this accelerated the process of normalizing the operational situation in the region, because due to the emigration of the so-called “jihadists”, perhaps several hundred potential counter-terrorist operations were not carried

out there to neutralize them. But “after that” does not mean “because of this,” and the main reason for the improvement in the overall security situation in the North Caucasus, in our opinion, is that the state has gradually learned to effectively counter terrorism. After all, it was the state policy of total anti-terror that forced the radical Islamists to look for other territories to build their “caliphate”, and not their outflow became the root cause of the stabilization of the situation in the North Caucasus.

The downward trend in the activity of the North Caucasian terrorist underground, observed since 2013, continues to the present. According to the director of the FSB of Russia A. Bortnikov, over the past 10 years, about two hundred terrorist attacks have not been allowed, and the number of violent terrorist crimes committed in Russia, i.e. explosions, hostage-taking, murders, decreased during this time by 260 times (from 779 in 2010 to 3 in 2020).<sup>5</sup> All this is the result of the consistent and systematic work of all bodies and levels of government, as well as non-state actors involved in the prevention of terrorism.

### **Organizational bases of prevention of terrorism in Russia**

The modern system of countering terrorism in Russia, which, in our opinion, is still coping with its main task, began to form up after the bloody terrorist attack in Beslan (September 2004), which killed more than three hundred people, including 186 children. This terrorist attack forced the country's leadership to rethink the entire strategy of countering terrorism. From a narrow-profile task of law enforcement agencies and special services, countering terrorism is now becoming a national matter. With the adoption in 2006 of the relevant legal acts,<sup>6</sup> a qualitatively new system of countering terrorism was created under the auspices of the National Anti-Terrorism Committee. It is based on the idea that all state bodies and all levels of government, as well as society itself, should participate in countering terrorism.

---

The NAC is a collegiate body coordinating and organizing the anti-terrorist (including preventive) activities of public authorities at the federal level, at the level of subjects of the Russian Federation and LSG bodies. After the adoption in 2009 of the "Concept of Combating Terrorism in the Russian Federation", the priority direction in this area of activity is increasingly becoming the prevention (i.e. prophylaxis) of terrorism, to which the NAC constantly draws the attention of participants in the anti-terrorist struggle [2, p. 5]. Since 2014, the decisions of the NAC have been binding on authorities, organizations and citizens, and their failure to comply entails administrative liability.

At the federal level, with the coordinating role of the NAC, civilian departments have also joined in countering terrorism, along with law enforcement agencies and special services. For example, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Culture, Rosmolodezh and other departments participate in the implementation of mass events among young people to counter the ideology of terrorism and extremism; Rosfinmonitoring is engaged in blocking the financing of terrorism; the Ministry of Justice draws up a federal list of extremist materials on the basis of court decisions; Roskomnadzor helps restrict access to extremist content in the media and the Internet.

In the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, anti-terrorist commissions (ATC), headed by the heads of the respective constituent entities of the Russian Federation, coordinate the activities for the prevention of terrorism of the territorial bodies of the federal executive authorities (TB FEPB), executive authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and LSG bodies. By now, the obligatory execution of decisions of regional ATCs has been fixed, and the responsibility of officials for violation of this requirement has also been introduced. ATC apparatuses in the subjects of the Russian Federation coordinate the work on the prevention of terrorism on

the territory of the entire subject, within which municipal ATCs operate at the level of urban districts and rural areas. To date, the powers of LSG bodies to participate in the prevention of terrorism and minimize its consequences have been specified. Thus, the terrorism prevention system in Russia covers all levels of government and all administrative-territorial units within the country. The NAC develops five-year comprehensive action plans in the field of combating the ideology of terrorism. At the current stage, the "Comprehensive plan to counter the ideology of terrorism in the Russian Federation for 2019–2023" (Comprehensive plan) is being implemented, the purpose of which is to protect the population from the propaganda impact of international terrorist organizations (ITO), communities and individuals<sup>7</sup>. Among the priority areas of work provided for in the Comprehensive Plan, the following stand out: 1) preventive work with persons exposed to the ideology of terrorism, as well as those who fell under its influence; 2) measures to form an anti-terrorist consciousness among the population of the country; 3) protection of the information space of the Russian Federation from the ideology of terrorism.

### **Experience in the prevention of terrorism in the North Caucasian republics**

On the basis of the provisions of the Federal Comprehensive Plan and taking into account the specifics of the republics themselves, the subjects of anti-terror develop and implement regional action plans to counter the ideology of terrorism. All TB FEPBs, executive authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and LSG bodies, within the framework of their functions, participate in the implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and regional plans; include measures to counter the ideology of terrorism and extremism in their departmental annual work plans.

---

The republican Comprehensive plans, programs and subprograms to counter the ideology of extremism and terrorism include the following activities: 1) individual preventive work with the population; 2) the creation and distribution of anti-terrorist content (outdoor advertising, videos, etc.); 3) improving the skills of specialists in the field of countering the ideology of extremism and terrorism (courses and seminars); 4) educational activities with the participation of young people (forums, festivals, rallies, courage lessons, sports competitions, summer schools); 5) research activities (opinion polls, conferences, round tables); 6) support for the activities of citizens, public organizations, journalists and the media in the field of countering the ideology of terrorism and extremism (grants, subsidies, competitions).

A review of the lists of specific items prescribed in the republican action plans shows that among them there are original and, of course, useful preventive measures. Professor Dobaev notes among the drawbacks of many regional plans and programs that these measures, as a rule, *"are addressed to ordinary law-abiding citizens who are far from the ideology and practice of terrorism. At the same time, there is a clear shortage of proposals regarding vulnerable categories of young people and bearers of the ideology of religious and political extremism"* [2, p. 6]. Indeed, as the researcher notes, the country has launched large-scale information and propaganda activities: thousands of conferences and round tables are held; collections of materials, books and brochures are published; a lot of thematic articles and videos are being promoted in the media; a lot of outdoor advertising is produced; films and videos on anti-terrorist themes are being shot. However, in various regions of Russia (including the North Caucasus), facts of public justification and incitement to terrorism are still being revealed (mainly through the Internet); financing of various YTOs, as well as the recruitment of new supporters by their participants, both among Russian youth and among migrants (mainly from the countries of Central Asia and the South Caucasus). Thus, it is

clear that the effect of some anti-terrorist outreach activities is not as impressive as the developers of programs and plans describe in the "expected results" section.

At the same time, according to the estimates of the experts we interviewed, in the republics of the North Caucasus in recent years it has been possible to significantly increase the effectiveness of interdepartmental interaction between subjects of terrorism prevention; improve control over the implementation of decisions and recommendations made by the NAC and regional ATCs; to organize the work of ATK in municipalities, to provide for their employees refresher courses; organize targeted preventive work in relation to persons most exposed to the influence of the ideology of terrorism.

The main subjects of countering the ideology of terrorism and extremism at the regional level are the executive authorities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation authorized in the following areas: education; information and press; national policy, interaction with NCOs and the implementation of state-confessional relations; youth policy; culture; sports; labor and social protection. All of them participate in the implementation of federal and republican Comprehensive plans to counter the ideology of terrorism. Along with them, representatives of various public organizations, the scientific community, the media and the clergy are directly involved in the preventive activities of an anti-terrorist nature.

At the municipal level, taking into account the recommendations of the NAC of Russia, the ATC apparatuses in the regions, as well as the characteristics of the territories themselves, municipal programs are adopted to prevent terrorist and extremist manifestations. In those municipalities where a stable operational situation has been maintained for many years and there are almost no categories of persons who are objects of preventive impact, the corresponding programs, as a rule, are aimed at maintaining the anti-terrorist protection of objects with a mass stay of citizens and general propaganda among the

---

population of interethnic and interfaith tolerance, rejection of extremist ideologies. In other municipalities, in addition to the above, thematic programs include the entire set of preventive (including targeted) measures.

Federal legislation obliges municipal authorities to take part in the prevention of terrorism and extremism. According to an expert from North Ossetia-Alania, LSG bodies and educational institutions today are the main subjects of countering the ideology of terrorism, since they are closest to the people, interact with authorities, as well as with public and religious associations, and therefore have a serious potential to counter terrorist and extremist activity [12, p. 70]. Accordingly, in all municipalities in the North Caucasian republics, ATCs have been created and thematic municipal programs have been adopted.

To describe the practice of preventing terrorism at the municipal level, it is interesting, in particular, the experience of the ATC of the city of Khasavyurt (Dagestan). The city commission works in accordance with the Action Plan for the implementation of the "Comprehensive plan to counter the ideology of terrorism in the Russian Federation for 2019–2023", the republican Comprehensive plan and the corresponding municipal program, approved at the beginning of each year. An interdepartmental lecturer working group of reputable specialists has been created at the city ATC, which regularly holds meetings with young people in secular educational institutions and madrassahs. In the form of a discussion, lecturers discuss with young people acute socio-political, religious and moral problems. At these classes, representatives of the Khasavyurt youth, who do not have serious life experience, receive detailed answers to their complex worldview questions. This, according to the workers of the ATC of Khasavyurt, contributes to the formation of social immunity among young people to aggressive extremist propaganda.<sup>8</sup> An interdepartmental working group also works under the ATC of Khasavyurt, which checks the state of anti-terrorist protection of social facilities located within the city.

At the initiative of the ATC, the city is conditionally divided into 20 micro districts, where public councils have been created from among the deputies of the city Assembly, imams of mosques, district police officers, deputy directors of schools and other authoritative representatives of the authorities and the local community. These councils are called upon to participate in solving socially significant issues and ensuring law and order in the assigned territories.

Since religion plays a significant role in the lives of citizens, at one of the meetings of the municipal ATC a course was developed to unite all Islamic religious associations in the prevention of extremism and terrorism, which was supported by the imams of all 44 mosques in the city. As a result, a dialogue between representatives of different movements of Islam became possible here. In addition, in Khasavyurt, on the recommendation of the ATC apparatus in Daghestan, a Council of religious figures who graduated from Islamic educational institutions abroad was established. Currently, several hundred such graduates live in Khasavyurt. The main task of the Council is to assist in the social, cultural and professional adaptation of the mentioned category of citizens to life in their small homeland. With the participation of representatives of this Council, seminars are regularly held in the city for people who have received a religious education outside the Russian Federation and who intend to engage in religious activities on the territory of the republic in order to explain to them the norms of the country's legislation. These events are being implemented with the participation of specialists from municipal institutions, law enforcement officers, as well as representatives of the Muftiate of Daghestan.

In Khasavyurt and the border rural areas of Daghestan, there were many facts of involving local youth in the terrorist underground, not only out of conviction, but due to difficult life circumstances or out of frivolity. To help them return to a normal life, the Commission to assist in the return and adaptation to civilian life of persons who have decided to stop terrorist and

---

extremist activities was set up in Khasavyurt on the recommendation of the ATC in Daghestan. Professionals of various profiles working in this Commission on a voluntary basis (lawyers, psychologists, theologians) help young men and women who have given up extremist activities, as well as their relatives, to go through the process of social adaptation to the life new for them. [10, p. 54]. In general, it should be noted that the activities of the ATK in Khasavyurt have been repeatedly recognized as one of the best in Daghestan, so the experience of preventing terrorism accumulated in this municipality deserves serious consideration.

The subjects of the prevention of terrorism and extremism in the field (ATC in the MR) with a certain frequency send to the offices of the regional ATC reports on the progress of the implementation of the measures of the Comprehensive Plan, reflecting in them the following data: a general description of the situation in the field of countering the ideology of terrorism; organizational measures taken during the reporting period; information on the implementation of preventive measures and the results achieved; problems identified during the implementation of these activities and measures taken to overcome them; proposals to improve the efficiency of measures (by the points of the Comprehensive Plan); statistical information about the elements of the operational environment; additional materials that may be relevant for the evaluation of activities in the reporting period. Subsequently, the summary information is sent by the regional ATCs to the apparatus of the NAC of Russia, where the reporting materials are carefully analyzed, the best regional and municipal practices are identified, and on the basis of this, methodological recommendations are developed to further improve the effectiveness of preventive work on the ground.

Advisory and consultant bodies play an important role in raising the effectiveness of preventive anti-terrorist activities in the North Caucasian republics. Thus, Expert Councils for the development of information policy in the field of prevention of terrorism and extremism work under the ATC apparatuses in the

republics of the North Caucasus Federal District of the Russian Federation. The members of these councils (scientists in the humanities, theologians, psychologists, teachers, lawyers, etc.) preliminarily discuss and evaluate all materials (educational, methodological, informational, advertising, etc.) prepared by the subjects of anti-terror for replication. Sometimes the prepared materials, for example, thematic videos or banners, are rejected by Council members as ineffective, incorrect or completely useless.

In addition, Expert commissions/councils operate in the republics to evaluate literature, video, audio and other materials of religious content for the presence of elements of propaganda of extremism and / or terrorism in them. Members of such a council under the government of Ingushetia, with a certain frequency, audit the products of bookstores in the republic, and also conduct explanatory conversations with sellers and owners of these stores about the need for a thorough check of the products sold. Information is brought to the attention of merchants about the availability of a search page on the website of the Ministry of Justice of Russia, which contains a complete federal list of prohibited extremist materials. And in Daghestan, a similar commission, which includes representatives of the Muftiate of the republic, periodically checks religious literature in stores, libraries, including the libraries of correctional institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia located in Daghestan, for the presence of publications included in the federal list of extremist materials.

In the context of a significant decrease in terrorist activity in the North Caucasus, the primary task is targeted preventive work with the categories of people most susceptible to the influence of the ideology of extremism and terrorism. As the experts interviewed in the North Caucasus explained, these are, first of all: persons who have already been convicted (serving their sentences) for crimes of a terrorist nature; former (pardoned) members of the terrorist underground; family members of persons who have traveled to the Middle East to participate in the activities of the WTO; persons who have been trained in

---

foreign Islamic educational institutions; immediate relatives (widows, children) of neutralized, active or convicted members of illegal armed groups (IAG) and their accomplices; migrants from countries with increased terrorist activity.

Upon receipt of information about the residence in the territory of a particular municipality of persons from the listed categories, the subjects of prevention of terrorism on the ground develop schedules of preventive measures with these persons and members of their families; the forms and methods of the forthcoming work are determined and responsible executors are appointed. As experts from Kabardino-Balkaria note, *“each prevented person is a kind of independent project that requires continuous support from inducing a person to abandon illegal activities to his full adaptation to civilian life”* [4, p. 26]. At the same time, the main directions of this work are: social adaptation of these categories of persons; preventing the resumption of criminal activity; involvement of sincerely repentant former members of the terrorist underground and their accomplices in preventive work to counter the ideology of terrorism.

Particular attention is paid to the organization of targeted work with persons from among those previously convicted, who have served and are serving sentences for committing terrorist crimes, since this category of persons poses the greatest danger in terms of the possibility of resuming criminal activity. Thus, representatives of the ATC in Ingushetia, in the course of a research interview, spoke about cooperation with the institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia, where people from the republic convicted of extremist and terrorist crimes are serving their sentences. According to the cooperation agreement, representatives of the institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia notify the apparatus of the ATC in Ingushetia about immigrants from the region who are serving sentences under the relevant articles of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation a year before the expiration of their terms of imprisonment. During the remaining time, representatives of the

ATC come to these institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia; an individual preventive conversation is held with each of the convicts registered in Ingushetia, during which the issues of their adaptation to civilian life after release are discussed, and the responsibility for participating in extremist and terrorist activities is explained.

Similarly, according to the Comprehensive Plan, cooperation with the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia by has been established subjects of terrorism prevention in all other republics of the North Caucasus. At the preparatory stage, those serving sentences are provided with information about the measures taken in the republics for social adaptation and the provision of assistance in solving various issues to sincerely repentant ones: employment, additional professional education, financial assistance, medical examination and treatment, consultations of lawyers, psychologists, Moslem theologians, etc. It is assumed that as a result of all these activities, convicts should form motives for refusing to resume criminal activity.

Practice shows that cases of recidivism, as well as involvement in terrorist communities of persons convicted under other articles of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, pose a serious danger. For example, on August 30, 2021, the TASS news agency reported that the Southern District Military Court sentenced to 5.5 years in a special regime colony a native of Daghestan who took part in the activities of a terrorist organization operating in a correctional institution. Earlier it was reported that the security forces uncovered a terrorist organization consisting of those serving sentences in one of the institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia on the territory of Kalmykia. During a search in the premises of the colony, extremist literature and symbols of the ITO "Islamic State" (banned in the Russian Federation) were found and seized. A criminal case was initiated against 22 persons under Parts 1 and 2 of Art. 205.4 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation ("Creation of a terrorist community and participation in it").<sup>9</sup>

---

In order to prevent the spread of the ideology of terrorism in the institutions of the penitentiary system, the subjects of the prevention of terrorism develop plans for educational activities jointly with the administrations of the institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia; information arrays (libraries, collections of video films and audio programs) of an anti-terrorist orientation are created and they are brought to the attention of "prophylactic" persons; work is carried out to identify persons spreading terrorist ideology, and their illegal activities are suppressed.

After the release of the objects of prevention from the institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia, contacts with them are not lost. In the future, ATC employees in the regions study their social and domestic problems, issues of employment and life support, as well as plans for the future. In the process of resocialization of persons convicted and served sentences for crimes of a terrorist nature, much attention is paid to their involvement in mass cultural, sports, patriotic and other public events.

Similarly, in the North Caucasian republics, work is being carried out with persons who voluntarily refused to participate in the activities of terrorist and extremist organizations and aid illegal armed formations. Persons of this category, their relatives, as well as relatives of active, convicted or killed members of illegal armed formations are involved in the creation of information materials (video clips, interviews with a story of personal tragic experience) in the field of countering the ideology of terrorism. In order to protect the population (primarily young people) from the ideological influence of terrorists, cooperation between the apparatuses of regional and municipal ATCs and the local Moslem clergy is practiced in the North Caucasian republics. The Muftiates of the North Caucasian republics are doing a great job in countering the ideology of terrorism; explain to young people the basics of religion, its incompatibility with the ideology and practice of terrorism. As a specialist from North Ossetia-Alania notes, the clergy play an important role in

countering the ideology of terrorism, and the Moslem communities of the republic implement more and more significant and socially oriented actions every year, take an active part in holding educational meetings with believing youth [13, p. 20]. This is carried out most systematically in Daghestan, where the Muftiate of the Republic has a specialized unit (education department), whose employees are directly involved in activities in the field of countering the ideology of terrorism; run a YouTube channel and the Muftiate's social media accounts. The imams of rural and urban mosques, affiliated with the clergy of the republic, not only participate in thematic events held by the executive authorities of the republic and ATCs in municipalities, but also independently work in this direction with the coordinating role of the education department of the Muftiate of Daghestan.

Recently, the Muftiate of Daghestan, whose leadership is represented mainly by the Sufi orders (tarikats) of Nakshbandiya, Kadiri and Shazili, has significantly expanded the geography of its influence within the republic, and by now there are representatives of this centralized religious organization in all municipal districts of Daghestan. At the same time, Islam in Daghestan (as in other republics of the North Caucasus) is very mosaic and is not limited only to Sufism, and the black-and-white approach to building state-confessional relations, based on the division of Moslems into "traditionalists" and "non-traditionalists", does not quite correspond to the spirit of the times. As the Islamic scholar I.P. Dobaev notes: *"The growth of religious and political extremism in the North Caucasus is facilitated not only by the deep crisis of all secular ideologies of the current period, but also by the ideological foundations of Islam, traditional in the region, in need of radical modernization"* [2, p. 8]. In the 1990s, the country's leadership, the author notes, placed great hopes on the authority of representatives of traditional, official Islam, but the social alienation and political passivity of "official Islam", with its theoretical weakness, actually increased the chances of the Islamists in the ideological battle for Moslem youth. In general,

I.P. Dobaev believes, the preaching of “official Islam” turned out to be ineffective in confronting the misanthropic ideology of radical Islamists. However, only representatives of the official clergy are still involved in the activities of the authorities to counter the ideology of extremism and terrorism in Daghestan (with the rare exception of individual municipalities). Accordingly, the resource of imams and other Islamic religious authorities who are not Sufis is almost never used in Daghestan to protect the Moslem population from terrorist propaganda. At the same time, for example, in Ingushetia, as a representative of the republican ATC said during the conversation, imams of all mosques registered in the republic, regardless of their belonging to one or another religious movement in Islam, participate in preventive measures to counter the ideology of terrorism. In general, in the North Caucasus, even taking into account the above problems, the Moslem clergy carry out a huge daily work aimed at protecting local youth from the propaganda impact of terrorists, which the administrations of educational institutions, the apparatuses of republican and municipal ATCs cannot perform.

## **Conclusion**

The practices of prevention of terrorism studied by us in the republics of the North Caucasus make it possible, on the whole, to positively assess the whole range of work being carried out today by the subjects of prevention of terrorism. To date, there has been a significant decrease in terrorist activity, a nationwide system of countering terrorism has been formed, anti-terrorist regulations and documents of conceptual content adequate to the existing threats and challenges have been adopted. The successes of the recent years in the prevention of terrorism are obviously associated with an increase in the effectiveness of interdepartmental interaction between federal executive bodies under the auspices of the NAC of Russia; the coherence of the work of all subjects of anti-terror at the level of the regions of the

Russian Federation, where the relevant work in the municipalities is analyzed in the ATC apparatuses in the republics, errors are promptly identified and eliminated, and best practices are studied. This is also the result of more active participation in the prevention of terrorism by representatives of the scientific community, public and religious organizations. The targeted preventive measures implemented within the framework of the Comprehensive Plan, aimed at certain categories of people most exposed to the ideology of terrorism, obviously help prevent their resumption of criminal activity and, to a certain extent, prevent the involvement of new supporters in the ranks of terrorist organizations. Of course, the threats of terrorism, although significantly reduced, have not disappeared completely. Attempts to recruit Russians and migrants into terrorist activities are still observed, terrorist propaganda is actively carried out on social networks and instant messengers. Therefore, it is very important, depending on the emergence of new threats or the loss of relevance of old ones, to adequately adjust preventive antiterrorist work.

## References

1. *Akaev V.Kh.* Sufi culture in the North Caucasus: theoretical and practical aspects. – Grozny: State Unitary Enterprise “Book Publishing House”, 2011. – P. 208
2. *Dobaev I.P.* The main directions of strengthening counteraction to terrorism in the youth environment of Russia in the ideological sphere // Russia and the Moslem world. 2018. No. 3 (309). P. 5-14.
3. *Dobaev I.P.* North Caucasus: the process of “spreading jihad” // Russia and the Moslem world. 2009. No. 9. P. 50-61.
4. *Kashirokov Z.K., Unachev A.Kh.* The experience of the anti-terrorist commission in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic in organizing targeted preventive work with the category of persons most susceptible to the ideology of terrorism // Bulletin of the National Anti-Terrorist Committee. 2018. No. 2 (19). P. 25-29.
5. *Kurbanov Kh.T.* Religious and political extremism in the Northeast Caucasus: ideology and practice (based on the materials of the Republic of Daghestan) / Ed. I.P. Dobaev. – Rostov-on-Don: NCSC HS, 2006. – P. 156.
6. *Pashchenko I.V.* Export of jihadism to the North Caucasus: the history of the issue // New past. 2017. No. 4. P. 190-202.

7. *Sagramoso D., Yarlykapov A.A. Jihadist violence in the North Caucasus. Political, social and economic factors // Caucasian collection. - M.: "Aspect Press", 2021. P. 305–326.*
8. *Sedov A.S. FSB of Russia in the fight against terrorism in 2006–2020 // Bulletin of the National Anti-Terrorist Committee. 2021. No. 1 (25). P. 27–29.*
9. *Sushchy S.Ya. North Caucasus: realities, problems, prospects of the first third of the 21st century. - M.: LENAND, 2013. - P. 432.*
10. *Umarov Kh.G. The experience of the anti-terrorist commission in the municipality "city of Khasayyurt" on the de-radicalization of the younger generation // Terrorism as a threat to international peace and harmony. - Materials of the All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference (Makhachkala, December 24, 2015). - M.: Parnas, 2015. - P. 50–54.*
11. *Khanbabayev K.M. Religious and political extremism in Russia: state and problems. - Makhachkala: Publishing House "Lotos", 2010. - P. 720*
12. *Tsallagov A.A. National security: forms of countering extremism and terrorism in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania // Prevention of extremism and terrorism on national and religious grounds. - Collection of scientific reports based on the materials of the scientific-practical conference. October 30, 2019 – Vladikavkaz, 2019. P. 51–75.*
13. *Tsallagov A.A. Experience in countering the spread of the ideology of terrorism in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania // Bulletin of the National Anti-Terrorist Committee. 2019. No. 2 (22). P. 19–25.*
14. *The North Caucasus: The Challenges of Integration (II), Islam, the Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency. = Crisis Group Europe Report N°221, 19 October 2012. - P. 37.*

## Notes

1. There is no generally accepted definition of terrorism. In the context of the subject of our study, "terrorism" is a method of achieving political, ideological and pseudo-religious goals by violent means.
2. Islamism is a political ideology that calls for the establishment of an Islamic system of government through the direct imposition of Islamic religious law (Sharia).
3. Fifteen years against terror // "Rossiyskaya Gazeta" dated March 10, 2021 / [Electronic resource]. - Access mode: <https://rg.ru/2021/03/10/direktor-fsb-za-10-let-v-rossii-udalos-predotvratit-okolo-200-teraktov.html> (checked: 20.10.2021).
4. Mustafaev T. Belted with death // "Chernovik" No. 12 of 04/02/2010 / [Electronic resource]. - Access mode: <https://chernovik.net/content/respublika/opoyasannye-smertyu-0> (checked: 10.10.2021).

5. Fifteen years against terror // "Rossiyskaya Gazeta" from 10.03.2021 / [Electronic resource]. - Access mode: <https://rg.ru/2021/03/10/direktor-fsb-za-10-let-v-rossii-udalos-predotvratit-okolo-200-teraktov.html> (checked: 25.11.2021).
6. See: Federal Law No. 35-FZ dated 06.03.2006 "On Combating Terrorism"; Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of February 15, 2006. No. 116 "On measures to counter terrorism. // Reference legal system "ConsultantPlus" - [Electronic resource] - Access mode: <http://www.consultant.ru/> (checked: 24.11.2021).
7. Comprehensive plan to counter the ideology of terrorism in the Russian Federation in 2019-2023 (approved by the President of the Russian Federation on December 28, 2018, No Пп-2665) / [Electronic resource]. Access mode: <http://nac.gov.ru/terrorizmu-net/kompleksnyy-plan-protivodeystviya-ideologii-terrorizma-v.html> (checked: 24.11.2021).
8. A meeting of the lecture group with schoolchildren was held in Khasavyurt // Official website of the municipal formation "City of Khasavyurt" [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://xacavurt.ru/news/5645-v-hasavjurte-proshlavstrecha-lektorskoy-gruppy-so-shkolnikami.html> (checked: 24.11.2021).
9. A member of a terrorist organization in a correctional colony in Kalmykia was sentenced to 5.5 years in prison // TASS News Agency. Published: 30.08.2021. [Electronic resource]. - Access mode: <https://tass.ru/proisshestviya/12254393> (checked: 09.02.2021).

## AZIZ NIYAZI. UZBEKISTAN: PROBLEMS OF CURRENT MODERNIZATION OF WATER MANAGEMENT AND AGRICULTURE

*Keywords: Central Asia; Uzbekistan; Water management; agriculture; water and land resources; climate change; social and environmental crisis; conflicts.*

**Aziz Niyazi,**

PhD(History), Senior Research Associate,

Center for Central Asian, Caucasian and Volga-Urals Studies,  
Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS

e-mail: [aziz.niyazi@mail.ru](mailto:aziz.niyazi@mail.ru)

© Niyazi A. 2022

*Citation: Niyazi A. Uzbekistan: problems of current modernization of water management and agriculture // Russia*

---

and the Moslem World, 2022, № 2 (316), P. 48–62.  
DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2022.02.04

*Abstract. The situation with a shortage of water and land resources in Uzbekistan cannot be called critical, but it is close to it. Given the growing shortage of water and fertile land in the republic, quite effective measures are being implemented and planned to save them. They are commensurate with the capabilities of the state. The safety margin from the inevitable impact of negative natural phenomena related to climate change is built in. Nevertheless, it remains unclear how the growth of water and farmland shortages can be stopped on its own together with increasing consumption and turnout against the background of high fertility rates and unresolved water and land problems with neighbors. However, such a puzzle faces all the states of Central Asia.*

Uzbekistan was the first in the CA region which seriously undertook the implementation of technologies to adapt to climate change impacts, accumulating its own funds for this and attracting international financial and technical assistance. It managed to consolidate leadership among CA states in the planning and implementation of projects on the rational use of water and land resources, which will help in the future in adapting to future climate changes. However, this is only a tactic of an individual country in the absence of a common regional strategy. Given the uncertainties associated with regional integration and climate variability in the long term, it is now difficult to provide an answer how Uzbekistan will be able to solve the problem of water and food security in the future. Without the development of a common water and energy policy, Central African countries can face challenges, up to severe social upheavals, internal and interstate conflicts.

Recently, the water and land problem in Uzbekistan has noticeably worsened. Since the Soviet period, it has been of complex nature. The growing scarcity of water and land

resources is caused primarily by enormous extension costs in the irrigation system, the preservation of environmentally harmful technologies in agriculture, and growing industrial and demographic pressures on the environment. With the transition to capitalist development, starting in the 90s, the influence of these factors only increased. At the same time, the increase of serious problems in the water management and agriculture of the republic was boosted by the accelerating climatic changes that have been taking place recently throughout Central Asia.

For decades, about 90 percent of the water consumed in Uzbekistan has accrued to irrigated agriculture. According to the Ministry of Water Management of the Republic in 2020, irrigated agriculture, as before, took 90 percent of the total amount of water consumed by all sectors of the economy [1]. At the same time, extremely wasteful irrigation technologies lead not only to huge unproductive water losses, but also to soil degradation - their salinification and erosion. Land degrades due to excessive watering and flooding of fields or the long-term absence of their reclamation. Due to the deterioration of land-reclamation and irrigation networks, the lack of proper accounting for water consumption, the shortage of water in irrigated areas increases from year after year.

It is officially recognized that the service life of most water infrastructure facilities exceeds 50–60 years, and their technical condition is constantly deteriorating. In particular, 66 percent of the channels of the irrigation system have a land canal, the loss of water in them due to filtration remains high. 77 percent of the irrigation system channels require repair and restoration, 20 percent - reconstruction. Most of the existing tray networks have been serving for more than 30 years, due to the failure of carrying out repairs at proper time and the expiration of their service life, 70 percent of them require replacement or reconstruction. In most cases, water withdrawal points are not equipped with water control and accounting device. The efficiency of the irrigation system and irrigation networks is on

---

average 0.63 (with a standard of 0.7), in some regions - lower than this indicator [2].

Return water from irrigation is an important component of water resources, since more than half of their volume again enters rivers. According to estimates by Uzbek experts, the total volume of return water is about 35 km<sup>3</sup> per year, of which 65 percent is in the Syr Darya river basin and 35 percent in Amu Darya, due to large filtration losses from canals and irrigation fields. In addition, the quality of return waters poses a serious threat to water resources and terrestrial ecosystems. In general, 35–40 percent of the water produced from the main water sources is lost in irrigation networks.

Destruction of collector and drainage networks, non-standardized irrigation lead to raising of underground water and salinification of land. Along with this, soil degradation is often associated with the lack of the necessary crop rotation and optimal fall plowing. Non-compliance with crop requirements and uncontrolled use of fertilizers lead to non-compliance of soil and environmental conditions.

Erosion processes are widespread in most of Uzbekistan. They continue to develop, which is one of the characteristics of ecosystem susceptibility to desertification. Thus, out of 27 million hectares of land, 25 million hectares (92.6 percent) are subject to erosion to varying degrees, 2.7 million hectares out of 3.8 million hectares are subject to erosion in the irrigation zone. Water erosion is developed on an area of more than 1 million hectares of croplands, more than 50 percent of irrigated land is subject to secondary salinization, their meliorative state is deteriorating. 45.3 percent of the irrigated lands of the republic have different degrees of salinization, of which: 2 percent are highly salinized, 12.2 percent are medium salinized, 31.1 percent are slightly salinized. The area of irrigated land, groundwater level of which is up to 0 to 2 meters below the surface, is about 30 percent. Although the State programmes recently have improved the land meliorative state of some 1.7 million hectares, the level of water

supply remains low for 560 thousand hectares and 298.5 thousand hectares were cycled out. The area of irrigated land in the country is approximately 4.3 million hectares [3], and the question of its conservation along with the rational use of water resources is becoming very urgent. Some progress has been made in this regard. According to the Ministry of Water Industry of Uzbekistan, the amount of water consumed per 1 hectare in 1991 was 18 thousand cubic meters, and in 2019 it was used much less – 10.2 thousand cubic meters per 1 hectare. During 2008–2017 there was improved water supply to more than 1.7 million hectares of irrigated areas, and land ameliorative state of 2.5 million hectares [4]. Advanced irrigation technologies are being introduced progressively, for example, dribble irrigation from 2013 to 2019 was introduced on 77440 hectares [5]. In 2020, water-saving technologies were introduced on an additional area of 133 thousand hectares [6]. According to the forecast for 2021, they should be placed on an area of 430,000 hectares, of which dribble irrigation for 210,739 hectares [7]. Nevertheless, such positive dynamics is difficult to call pivotal, in general the situation remains alarming.

It is true that Uzbekistan has made serious efforts in the present period to preserve and manage water and land resources. In the last 2 years, some cardinal measures have begun to be implemented in the republic to modernize water and agriculture simultaneously. In fact, reforms are being carried out to shift these sectors of the economy to market rails gradually.

The system of water and agriculture management established in the country in the post-Soviet period is not effective. Its functions are dispersed across many departments, coordination between them is weak, often they duplicate each other's work. The material and technical base of organizations responsible for the conservation of water and land resources is still financed mainly from the state budget and remains low. The widespread adoption of water-saving technologies is held by an inefficient system for meeting the expenses of water supply in agriculture. The

---

management of water supply in the agricultural sector, as well as in all agriculture as a whole, is still dominated by non-market methods.

In order to reduce losses in water and agriculture, the country has taken a course towards a gradual transition from the use of administrative methods of government regulation in these areas to the expansion of market mechanisms. Public-private partnership is developing in agro-production and water economy. The reform of water resources management provides for the expansion of the share of non-state financing of the sector through a phased transition to payment for water delivery services, the transfer of economic functions for the management of inter-farm infrastructure to outsourcing to non-state entities. The increase in financing in this sector is due to the attraction of private investment, including foreign, as well as loans and grants from international financial institutions and foreign countries.

In this regard, the number of associations of water consumers (WCA) operating at the grassroots level is likely to decrease. They were created to assist State organizations in implementing water resources management activities. They fulfill this function poorly. In addition, they have not become stable structures of self-government of water consumers. First of all, the reason for this situation lies in the low level of fees associated with their poor-quality services. Between farmers and peasants, on the one hand, and associations, on the other, conflicts often arise due to improper accounting of water consumption at the border of water users.

It is considered that the functions of proper maintenance of irrigation systems and the introduction of advanced water-saving technologies can be more effectively carried out by the recent active agricultural clusters [8]. Clusters of different directions are formed in Uzbekistan: grain, meat and dairy, fruit and vegetable, horticultural, seed-growing, but the largest of them are cotton and textile ones. They have extensive investment opportunities to introduce advanced technologies, including in water use [9].

There are about 120 cotton-textile clusters in the republic [10]. Despite the fact that in their fields there is yield enhancement, it remains unclear how carefully they use water and land resources. So far, such data have not been released. It is clear that in order to increase profits, large private companies can violate water and land use standards. In addition, there are fears that they will supplant and absorb farm enterprises.

Since 2020, a state order for cotton purchases has been canceled in Uzbekistan. Its procurements are made at a market price. The forced system for cotton crop was also canceled. Since 2021, the state order for wheat cultivation has been canceled. The agricultural financing system is renegotiated. The task of non-interference of the state in pricing in this sector of the economy is set.

It is planned to increase significantly government spending on the modernization and construction of water facilities, scientific research, development, introduction of advanced water-saving technologies and training of highly qualified specialists. There is an ambitious goal to create an integrated management of water resources with full coverage of their use, consumption and distribution between the water supply of the population, sectors of the economy and the natural environment [11]. Domestic capacity to modernize water and agriculture is supported by serious investment not only by the state, but also by private capital.

Expensive, resource-intensive and technologically difficult modernization projects in water and agriculture cannot be realized without attracting foreign assistance. For their implementation, close cooperation of national research institutes with foreign and international research organizations is established. Leading foreign companies are preparing national personnel. Highly qualified foreign scientists and engineering specialists are invited to ministries and departments. The aim is to accelerate the attraction of grant funds, loans and technical assistance from international financial institutions and foreign countries. Uzbekistan has already been noticeably successful in this direction. In general, more than \$3.5 billion in investments,

---

loans and grants were attracted to agriculture together with water management projects [12].

An analysis of the measures taken and planned until 2030 to save water and modernize agriculture shows that the country can achieve the goals on time. Nevertheless, own efforts of the republic will not solve the problem of its water and, accordingly, food security. There remains a risk of severe water shortages in the future. Serious risks are associated with misregulating of transboundary water use amid climate change [13]. Downstream countries use water primarily for land irrigation and need maximum water flow during summer, while headwater countries are interested in maximum water discharge during the energy-deficient winter in order to increase electricity production. In this situation, water shortage for irrigation has increased, especially in the systematically frequent low-water years and periods of drought. In winter, excessive discharge of water from the upper reservoirs began to lead to flooding of territories in the lower reaches.

Nodal difficulties in meeting the demand from competing CA countries for water supply remain. In order to overcome them stepwise, the Uzbek side has put forward a number of measures aimed at implementing inter-State cooperation in the use of transboundary water resources. So far, it's not a case of creating a single supranational body for managing the water and energy resources of CA, but about developing and applying principles and mechanisms for the integrated management of transboundary rivers, finding compromise solutions for upstream and downstream water users. Uzbekistan's activity in this direction has recently increased significantly and its position is likely to have an increasingly great impact on the division of transboundary waters and their rational use.

The issue of unified integrated water resources management in the region remains open. Its relevance increases as the impact of climate change increases. Meanwhile, Uzbekistan is becoming a regional leader in solving problems of water use taking into account the climate factor. It demonstrates a serious

desire to adapt agriculture and water management to the upcoming abnormal natural and climatic stresses. Strategic government documents related to environmental protection and water and land management now obligingly include sections on changing climate impacts. In Central Asia, by all appearances, it's beginning to take on menacing proportions. The average annual temperature here has grown by about one degree over the past 30 years. For comparison - about the same -  $1.1^{\circ}\text{C}$  the average annual warming rate throughout the Earth [14] increased from the pre-industrial period to the present day. If over the past decade (2010–2019) the average ground temperature of our planet grew at a rate of  $0.2^{\circ}\text{C}$ , then in Uzbekistan its average growth rate for this period amounted to  $0.29^{\circ}\text{C}$ , which significantly exceeded the global average. Intense warming is observed throughout the country. This trend is expected to continue both in Central Asia and in the world as a whole, due to record high levels of heat retention in the greenhouse gas atmosphere [15].

The Central Asian region belongs to a group of territories with a high vulnerability to climate changes impacts. Warming here is accompanied by the accelerated melting of mountain glaciers and snow patches, which feed most rivers and reservoirs [16]. The number and intensity of abnormal weather events and natural disasters, including droughts, heat waves, floods and mudslides, and incessant showers, are increasing. In 2021, Central Asia experienced a significant increase in temperature. In some areas of Uzbekistan, starting in June, the air warmed to  $44^{\circ}\text{C}$ , in neighboring Tajikistan to  $48^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Many regions of Central Asia were affected by drought, which led to large-scale crop failures, cattle loss, low water supply of rivers, and drying up of reservoirs. Experts relate the lack of water to insufficient snowiness in winter and increased evaporation of water in summer. Certainly, the remaining huge water losses during irrigation are taken into account.

According to World Bank experts, abnormal weather events in Central Asia are becoming the norm and will increase from

---

year to year. In the coming decades, average temperatures in the Central Asian region may rise by 3-5°C, which will lead to the disappearance of more than a third of mountain glaciers by 2050. In turn, this will cause flash floods, avalanches and mudflows. Rising temperatures will adversely affect agriculture, and reducing river water content will affect hydropower. According to a critical version of forecasts based on different climate change models, the two main water arteries of CA - the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers - can shallow by 10-15 percent by 2030. In the long term (2050-2100) the flow of Amu Darya can be reduced from 21 to 40 percent, and Syr Darya - from 15 percent to 30 percent, which can in the future lead to an environmental and humanitarian disaster [17]. Now, Central Asia is facing a very significant reduction in water resources. Over the past decades, the per capita volume of water resources has decreased fourfold - from 8.4 thousand cubic meters in 1960 to 2.1 thousand cubic meters to date. By 2040, this figure may reach a critical line - 1 thousand cubic meters per capita [18].

In Uzbekistan, the per capita water supply has decreased from 3,048 cubic meters to 1,589 cubic meters over the past 15 years. In the period until 2015, the total water deficit in the republic amounted to more than 3 billion cubic meters. According to the calculations of Uzbek specialists, by 2030 it can amount to 7 billion cubic meters, and by 2050 - 15 billion cubic meters [19].

The situation with a lack of water resources in Uzbekistan cannot be called critical, but it is close to it. In the ranking of countries experiencing water stress conducted by the Institute of World Resources (WRI, Washington), the Republic of Uzbekistan is located in a group of states with a high level of basic water load. It means that, on average, more than 40 per cent of available water is spent annually on agriculture, domestic consumption and industry. Various districts of the country experience extremely high water stress. In Bukhara, Samarkand, Ferghana, Navoi, Jizzak and Kashkadarya regions, more than 80 percent of water is taken from all available reserves [20]. This tense balance

between the availability of water resources and their consumption poses a risk of acute water shortages in the future.

At the same time, the land problem is aggravating. In the republic, the demographic and economic burden on agricultural land is gradually increasing. Over the past 15 years, the area of farmland has decreased by more than 5 percent, and per capita - by 22 percent. Population growth is far ahead of the increase in irrigated land. Over the past 30 years, the area of irrigated land per capita has decreased by about 25 percent, from 0.23 hectares to 0.16 hectares. According to estimates of the Asian Development Bank, while maintaining existing trends, the area of irrigated land in Uzbekistan will decrease by 20-25 percent over the next 30 years [21].

Given the growing shortage of water and land resources, Uzbekistan is taking and planning to implement quite effective measures to save them. They are commensurate with its capabilities. The safety margin from the imminent impact of negative natural phenomena is laid. Nevertheless, it remains unclear how it is possible to stop the growth of water scarcity and fertile soil on its own, while increasing consumption and flow of output against the background of high fertility rates and unresolved water and land problems with neighbors. However, such a puzzle faces all the states of Central Asia.

The shortage of vital natural resources is growing steadily throughout Central Asia. Their increasing scarcity leads to the accumulation of dangerous socio-environmental shifts, creating new points of tension both within countries and among states. At the same time, old unresolved problems of boundaries division, lands and water sources remain. Unlike its neighbors, Uzbekistan was the first in the CA region to take up seriously the introduction of technologies for adapting to climate change impacts, accumulates its own funds for this and succeeds in attracting international financial, technical and scientific assistance. Recently, it has managed to consolidate leadership among CA states in the planning and implementation of projects on the rational use of water and land resources. With the rational

use of its own and foreign funds, the republic is able to fulfill the tasks set for water conservation and land reclamation in the target date (until 2030). Advanced technologies in irrigated agriculture will undoubtedly help in adapting Uzbekistan to future climate changes. But this is only a tactic of an individual country in the absence of a common regional strategy. Given the uncertainties associated with regional integration and climate variability in the long term, it is now difficult to answer to what extent Uzbekistan will be able to solve the problem of water supply and food security in the future. Without the development of a common water and energy policy, the Central Asian states are waiting for great trials, possibly up to severe social upheavals, serious internal and interstate conflicts.

## References

1. Of the total amount of water used in 2019, utilities accounted for 4.2 percent, energy - 2.3 percent, industry - 1.3 percent, fish farming - 1.2 percent, other industries - 1 percent. Ministry of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan [Electronic resource] URL: <https://water.gov.uz/ru> (date of access: 04.07.2021).
2. Henceforth, if there are no references to current statistics and calculations for the future, this means that the data are based on state documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan: Concept of the development of water management of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030. (The national database of the legislation at the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 11.07.2020, No. 06/20/6024/1063). [Electronic Resource] URL: <https://lex.uz/docs/4892946> (date of access: 01.07.2021); Strategy for the Development of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030. [Electronic Resource] URL: (date of access: 07.04.2021); Concept of environmental protection of the Republic of Uzbekistan for the period up to 2030. [Electronic Resource] URL: <https://regulation.gov.uz/oz/document/3920> (date of access: 12.12.2020).
3. Information on the implementation of measures to improve the meliorative state of irrigated land for the period 2019-2020. Ministry of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan. [Electronic Resource] URL: <https://water.gov.uz/ru/doc/1561351501/1563283611> (date of access: 04.07.2021).

4. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures for the effective use of land and water resources in agriculture." Date of registration: 2019-06-17 | Number: UP-5742. <https://lex.uz/ru/docs/4378524> (date of access: 04.10.2021).
5. Ministry of Water Management of the Republic of Uzbekistan [Electronic resource] URL: <https://water.gov.uz/ru> (date of access: 09.08.2021).
6. Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on measures to accelerate the further organization of the introduction of water-saving technologies in agriculture. December 11, 2020, No. PP-4919. Tashkent. P 1.
7. Projection data for the introduction of water-saving technologies in 2021. Annex No. 1 to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated December 11, 2020 No. ПП-4919. (National database of legislation, 12.12.2020, No. 07/20/4919/1616). P. 1.
8. These agro-industrial associations represent a single technological chain of the complex of enterprises, covering all production cycles from the cultivation of raw materials and its processing to the manufacture of the final product and its sale.
9. In recent years, the Uzbek textile business has significantly increased the production capacity of the processing of cotton raw materials into finished production, and began to have solid capital. Textile enterprises began to participate directly in the cultivation of cotton. Cotton-textile clusters rent land from the state for growing cotton, and also conclude contracts for its supply with farms.
10. [Electronic resource] URL: <https://review.uz/post/vstuplenie-prezidenta-shavkata-mirziyoyeva-na-ceremonii-posvyashennoy-30-letiyu-nezavisimosti-uzbekistana> (date of access: 27.09.2021).
11. Such a system provides for the phased implementation of water objects monitoring using digital technologies and creation of a single information base for all water resources. Integrated planning for their development will take into account environmental balance and climate change factors.
12. Transformation of Agriculture 2030. Strategy for the Development of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030. Tashkent. Page 33. Examples of the development of foreign funds for projects are given in the Information on the development in 2017 of foreign loans under the guarantee of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 31.01.2018. [https://agro.uz/ru/information/about\\_agriculture/429/](https://agro.uz/ru/information/about_agriculture/429/) (date of access: 14.10.2021).
13. In Uzbekistan, transboundary rivers account for approximately 80 percent of total water consumption. Irrigation agriculture of the republic is extremely dependent on water lumps from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. In Soviet times, the upper republics supplied water in the necessary periods for the lower agrarians and in return received hydrocarbon energy. The construction of

reservoirs and the generation of electricity were then planned along with the development of the agricultural sector throughout the region - the operation of hydroelectric power plants and reservoirs was commensurate with the irrigation regime. The unified water-energy system guaranteed the balanced economic development of all five Central Asian republics. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, it disappeared. Having gained independence, the Central Asian states began to solve their own economic problems in their discretion, based on the availability of resources. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which have scarce gas and oil deposits, relied on increasing hydropower capacity, which over time led to a change in the water balance at the regional level. The agreed regimes and values of water launches for countries located downstream of the watercourse - Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan - were violated.

14. For convenience, the average temperature is taken for the period from 1850 to 1900, which is characterized as "pre-industrial".
15. The Global Climate in 2015-2019. WMO No. 1249, World Meteorological Organization, 2020. P. 6-7; According to Uzhydromet, average air temperatures over the past decade (2010-2019) and the last five-year period (2015-2019) were the highest compared to the previous 10-year and 5-year periods for the entire series of meteorological observations. In 2019, the average annual temperature for most of the republic was 1.6-2.3°C higher, in the Aral Sea region and in the desert zone in places 2.9-3.1°C above the norm. One indicator of climate warming is the steady tendency of increasing the number of days with an air temperature of 40°C and higher in many regions of Uzbekistan. Trends in climate change in Uzbekistan: the rate of temperature increase is higher than the average rate on a global scale. Center for Hydrometeorological Service of the Republic of Uzbekistan. [Electronic resource] URL: <http://meteo.uz/#/ru/news/2020-04-14-tendencii-izmeneniy-klimata-v-uzbekistane-tempy-povysheniya-temperatury-vyshe-srednih-tempov-v-globalnom-masshtabe> (date of access: 14.10.2020).
16. Due to the accelerated melting of glaciers for Uzbekistan and other lower states of the Aral basin, there is a threat of acute water scarcity. In the basins of the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers, there is widespread degradation of glaciers: large ones decay, and small ones disappear completely. According to international studies, from 2000 to 2010, ice reserves decreased compared to the period from 1961-1980 in the basin of the river. Syr Darya by 21 percent, in the Amu Darya basin by 17 percent. As a result of global climate change, all glaciers in Central Asia as a whole have declined by about 30 percent over the past 50 to 60 years.
17. Forecasting for Resilience: Central Asia Strengthens Climate and Weather Services. World Bank. March 23, 2018. [Electronic resource] URL:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/03/23/forecasting-for-resilience-central-asia-strengthens-climate-and-weather-services> (reference date 05.10.2021); This year there is a risk of increase in deficiency of water up to critical indicators of 2008 the Ministry of water management of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 21.02.2021 [Electronic resource] URL: <https://kun.uz/ru/news/2021/02/21/v-etom-godu-yest-risk-uvelicheniya-defitsita-vody-do-kriticheskix-pokazateley-2008-goda-ministerstvo-vodnogo-xozyaystva>; Water scarcity in Central Asia: how Uzbekistan and its neighbors escape from drought.15.07.2021. [https://uz.sputniknews.ru/20210715/defitsit-vody-v-tsentralkazakh-uzbekistanu-i-ego-sosediyam-spastis-ot-zasuxi-19700909.html?utm\\_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fzen.yandex.com&utm\\_campaign=dbr](https://uz.sputniknews.ru/20210715/defitsit-vody-v-tsentralkazakh-uzbekistanu-i-ego-sosediyam-spastis-ot-zasuxi-19700909.html?utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fzen.yandex.com&utm_campaign=dbr)

18. International Climate Conference: Central Asian countries will present a single regional pavilion. 30.07.2021. <https://livingasia.online/2021/07/30/mezhdunarodnaya-konferenciya/> (date of access: 03.11.2021).

19. The concept of development of the water economy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030. (The national database of the legislation at the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 11.07.2020, No. 06/20/6024/1063). [Electronic Resource] URL: <https://lex.uz/docs/4892946> (date of access: 11.09.2020).

20. Online resource of the World Resources Institute: URL: <https://www.wri.org/applications/aqueduct/country-rankings/?indicator=bws> (date of access: 07.12.2020).

21. Abdurakhmanov M.A., Rakhimov Y.T. State of land resources in the Republic of Uzbekistan // Territory of science. 2017, № 4. P. 75-76.

ELENA DMITRIEVA THE INFLUENCE OF THE TALIBAN COMING TO POWER IN AFGHANISTAN ON THE SITUATION IN THE REPUBLICS OF CENTRAL ASIA.  
*Condensed abstract.*

*Keywords:* Afghanistan, Taliban movement, Central Asian republics, international community, Russia, geopolitics, ethnopolitical situation, international terrorist organizations.

**Elena Dmitrieva,**  
Senior Research Associate,  
INION RAN  
e-mail: [eldmi@list.ru](mailto:eldmi@list.ru)

---

*Citation:* Dmitrieva E.L. The influence of the Taliban coming to power in Afghanistan on the situation in the republics of Central Asia. Condensed abstract // Russia and the Moslem World, 2022, № 2 (316), P. 62–72. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2022.02.05

1. Taher M.T., Ershad A.S. Geopolitical consequences of the transformation of Afghan State after the Taliban came to power for the countries of Central Asia (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan) // *Voprosy Politologii*, 2022. Vol. 12 Issue 2 (78) P. 550–562.
2. Zarudnyi B.G. Obstanovka v Afganistane i riski terroristicheskoi aktivnosti v regione // *Mezhdunarodnaya zhizn'*. 2022. No. 1, P. 28–33.

The article by Taher M.T, DSc(Law), Wallachian State University, Afghanistan and Ershad A.S, PG student, Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Tatarstan [1] is dedicated to the analysis of the geopolitical situation in the Central Asian region as a result of the Taliban coming to power in Afghanistan. The authors consider various scenarios and believe that the “Afghan issue” has become a key factor determining the geopolitical stability of the entire Central Asian region. The twenty-year confrontation on Afghan land between the united West, led by the United States, and the Taliban movement\* ended in August 2021 when, after the withdrawal of the American military, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani fled the country after resigning his powers. The Taliban came to power.

The entire Central Asian region respond readily to the events taking place in Afghanistan. But the situation in Afghanistan also poses a real danger to Russia's national security: the influx of Islamic extremists and terrorists into Russia is a long-standing problem. The issues of the transformation of the Afghan statehood after the Taliban came to power and its

---

\* An organization banned in Russia.

geopolitical consequences for the countries of Central Asia cannot be called resolved. "Democratic" Afghanistan could not resist the blows of a spontaneously organized Islamist organization and quickly capitulated, and the Taliban who came to power, who seized the capital of the country without a fight, announced their intention to turn Afghanistan into an Islamic emirate. As a result, the Western coalition in Afghanistan has not been able to understand and accept the fact that it is not dealing with a purely military machine called the Taliban, but with a powerful insurgent movement that relies on some popular support and has a simple and understandable ideology.

The "Afghan tangle" has become a test of strength in the field of international relations for many states. The interests of different countries collided on the territory of Afghanistan. Pakistan has been playing the Taliban and the "fight against extremism" card for a long time, trying to obtain as generous financial assistance from the United States as possible in order to receive regular support in the foreign policy confrontation with India. If necessary, Pakistan planned to rely on the Taliban in this confrontation. Peace in Afghanistan largely depends on the relations between the two nuclear powers - Pakistan and India.

Russia, China and Iran, in turn, also joined the "big game" after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. This explains the holding of a series of high-level meetings with the Taliban delegations in Moscow, Beijing and Tehran. The anti-American alliance "Moscow-Beijing-Tehran" contributed to the fall of Kabul, thanks to the demonstration of indirect support for the Taliban. For the same reason, the embassies of all the three countries listed above are now fully functioning in the capital of Afghanistan, while many states have hurried to evacuate their personnel.

Speaking about the current state of affairs, the authors note that the new Afghan paradigm is changing the entire Central Asian political landscape, and, apparently, for a long time. The states directly bordering Afghanistan found themselves in a

difficult situation. The specifics of the situation in each of these countries are based on fundamental differences in the positions and priorities of foreign and domestic policy in relation to Afghanistan, as well as the goals pursued by each of these States. Tajikistan, which has the longest common border with Afghanistan (more than 1,000 km), is historically related by blood to the second (after the Pashtuns) largest ethnic group in Afghanistan - the Afghan Tajiks. Uzbekistan, with its small section of the common border with Afghanistan, has historically acted as a corridor through which close contacts have been maintained for many years with the leader of the Afghan Uzbeks, R. Dostum, who has always sought to pursue an independent policy in the territories under his control (in the so-called "Dostumistan"). Turkmenistan is a country very ethnically close to the Afghan population. This state is largely isolated and its foreign policy is characterized by little activity. Turkmenistan declares the principle of neutrality in the international arena, but at the same time established diplomatic relations with the Taliban regime back in the period of their first coming to power in the 1990s.

The three states listed above - Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan - differ markedly in their positions in relation to modern Afghanistan, but at the same time they all pursue quite specific goals within the framework of dialogue with the new Afghan government. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan not only do not have a common border with Afghanistan, but the ethnic connection with the Afghan people for them is either minimal (Kyrgyzstan) or completely absent (Kazakhstan). So for these two countries in the region, Afghanistan is an unpromising territory in terms of building long-term partnerships, the issue of which is raised on the agenda only in the context of international anti-terrorist and humanitarian operations.

The complexity of interstate contacts for the territories neighboring Afghanistan lies in the fact that they are dominated by the history of relations with the Afghan authorities and the

status of the Taliban movement. So far, the ruling elites of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have taken a wait-and-see attitude: most border checkpoints have been closed and the influx of Afghan refugees is strictly regulated. But if the Taliban regime is strengthened, recognition of the new Afghanistan will only be a matter of time and diplomatic comfort.

The authors note that the Taliban is not just an organization recognized as a terrorist organization in the world and in the CIS. At least five international terrorist organizations are integrated into the structure of this movement - Al-Qaeda, the Islamic Party of East Turkestan, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Khatib Imam al-Bukhari and Jamaat Ansarulloh, which are active on the ideological and terrorist front against the states of Central Asia and Russia. Today, this destructive force has moved close to the borders of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan and actually controls them. The appearance of such a serious enemy on the borders of the CIS is a reality. The CSTO grouping is able to ensure full control over the Tajik-Afghan border, but the mechanisms of interaction of the CSTO with Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan still leave much to be desired. The intelligence potential of Uzbekistan is low, therefore, when assessing the situation on the Afghan territory adjacent to the border, the Uzbek side has to rely on the results of visual observation of border posts and crossings, which is absolutely ineffective, because if the enemy resorts even to a simple disguise and quickly overcomes the border line of defense, then fighting can flare up already on peaceful territory.

In relation to Turkmenistan, the situation is much more complicated, firstly, because of the greater length of the border (about 800 km), and secondly, because of the politically neutral status of the republic. If, in the case of Uzbekistan, a potential enemy may be deterred by the fact that there are military agreements between Moscow and Tashkent and the prospect of joining the conflict, then neutral Turkmenistan may well be perceived by militants as a defenseless victim. That is why,

---

according to the authors, an equal and interested conversation with the Afghan side can be conducted only after resolving the issue of security guarantees in the region.

Unlike the West, regional actors are more likely to eventually make an outreach towards their southern neighbor, primarily because of their geographical location. At the moment, a kind of reconnaissance is taking place – Central Asian countries are trying to see signs of stabilization of the situation in the fog of civil confrontation in Afghanistan, but they are not observing anything life-affirming yet – the time for an “outreach”, in their opinion, has not yet come.

Afghanistan, as an incubator of terrorism, can become an unsolvable problem for many countries in the region who are seriously concerned about the prospects of the appearance of ISIS-K here – the “Islamic State in Khorasan province” (the so-called branch of ISIS\* in Afghanistan). Among the states adjacent to Afghanistan, only Tajikistan has taken a decidedly anti-Taliban position (mainly for domestic political reasons). Tajikistan readily hosts the leaders of the Afghan resistance and is unlikely to recognize the Taliban government regardless of potential advantages for such a step. The same can be said about India, which takes into account the close relations of the Taliban movement with Pakistan.

In conclusion, the authors of the article come to the conclusion that the current situation is extremely complex and the threat of its destabilization is very real, but it is possible and necessary to resist destructive tendencies, and this should be done with a united front. With the establishment of Taliban power, the idea of jihad received a powerful impetus, filled with new meanings and became quite tangible for the whole of Central Asia. The countries neighboring the Afghan territories today are forced to maintain contact with the Taliban in one form or another in the interests of ensuring their own national security, as well as to curb

---

\* An organization banned in Russia.

the Taliban's activity by available political means. However, the geopolitical threats that the Taliban movement actualizes for Central Asia should not be underestimated (however, exaggerated either). Time will tell whether the Taliban movement will be able to achieve a change in its image in the international arena and prove to the world community that it is interested in a safe and stable future for the entire Central Asian region.

The head of the Department of the Anti-Terrorist Center of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS ATC) Zarudnyi B.G, Head of the Department of the Anti-Terrorist Center of the CIS member States, [2] notes that this structure pays the most serious attention to the situation in Afghanistan, because it was in this country that the main source of threats to destabilize the situation for the Central Asian states has been for a long time. The coming to power of an organization recognized by the UN Security Council as a terrorist one naturally caused the "admiration" of the entire radical world and the current Taliban government is considered by Islamists as a successful attempt to create a fundamentalist state. The country's leadership consists almost entirely of Pashtun Taliban. The leaders of the Taliban movement (banned in Russia) made a number of assurances, guaranteeing peaceful coexistence with neighboring states. They promise to deter terrorists in their attempts to operate from Afghanistan against other countries, but there are a number of reasons to doubt that the Taliban will be able to do this. In this regard, there are the following main risks: the ideology of the movement does not change, there is an increasing persecution of various groups of the population on political, religious, gender and other issues, public executions have been returned, vaccination against Covid-19, which allegedly defiles Moslems, has been stopped. All these restrictions and cruel punishments will contribute to the growth of protest sentiments and the emergence of local actions of armed resistance, which will negatively affect the security of the states bordering Afghanistan.

---

Afghanistan, as before, remains the territory of concentration of terrorist organizations. A resurgence of Al-Qaeda is taking place. The number of groups that have joined the Taliban movement reaches 4–5 thousand people, including citizens of foreign countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, China (Uighurs), Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan. These foreign fighters have dissolved among the Taliban fighters, having sworn allegiance to them, and now together with them they form a single whole. After the seizure of power, the Taliban released from the prisons of large cities almost all (and this is about 5–6 thousand) detainees on suspicion of terrorism, who are members of other terrorist groups, professional hired guns. The militants of almost all terrorist organizations in Afghanistan actively cooperate with the Taliban movement. The detachments of most of them are concentrated in the northern provinces that border the CIS states. Ethnic Kazakhs, Kirghizs, Tajiks, Uzbeks, people from the Caucasus and Moslem regions of Russia predominate in the groups.

These ethnic groups pose the greatest threat to Central Asia, since they have certain independence. They have their own programs and goals that they plan to achieve outside of Afghanistan, and they have their own understanding of where, how and when to build an Islamic state. It is possible that at first the Taliban will try to restrain the activity of jihadists on their territory, because during the formation period it is extremely important for them to gain recognition from the world community and achieve the exclusion of the Taliban from the lists of banned terrorist organizations, which will entail the lifting of political and economic sanctions. However, this circumstance will not prevent the radicals from turning the country into a platform for global terrorism, from where their influence will be able to actively spread throughout the region in the future.

After the Taliban came to power, there has been an increase in remote Internet propaganda of extremist ideology. Information and ideological influence is being carried out on the population

---

of neighboring countries in order to form "sleeping" terrorist cells and involve new recruits in the unsystematic activities of lone terrorists. Analysis of social networks and other electronic resources shows that the largest number of "letters" and "congratulations" to the Taliban after the seizure of power came from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Bashkirie, the Volga region, and the North Caucasus. In these "letters" it is noted that the Taliban "expelled America", "forced Russia to reckon with itself", and now "it is time to establish Sharia in the space from the Caspian Sea and the Volga region to Siberia."

The Taliban's propaganda in Russian and Tajik has noticeably intensified. Moreover, the quality of propaganda in some positions exceeded the quality of propaganda of ISIS (an organization banned in Russia). These are professional-quality video sequences, short biting videos, bright colors, use of various psychological techniques in audio recordings of a recruiting nature. It can be argued that the Taliban is forming a media project of "successful jihad". If the ISIS called for moving "to the lands of the Caliphate," then the Taliban are calling for jihad on the spot. The main financial and resource base for the Taliban is still drug trafficking. Deliveries of Afghan heroin are carried out along routes formed over the years with honed logistics. One of the busiest directions is drug trafficking through Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Russia, followed by transfer to foreign countries. Despite the Taliban's statements about the need to combat drug production, in the country there are still more than 30 thousand hectares of poppy fields of opium, which is the source of 90 percent of the world's heroin production and the majority of the agricultural population of Afghanistan is involved in the cultivation of opium poppy. This product gives a quick and high financial return, much greater than that which can be obtained from the production of traditional crops. Without serious and real humanitarian and economic support from the international community, the current rulers of Afghanistan will not be able to reverse the situation.

---

With the change of power in the country, there was a sharp drop in the already low incomes and living standards of the population. Now an ordinary Afghan lives on one or two dollars a day. In the conditions of the most severe economic crisis, this income is considered by many to be good. Infrastructure in many parts of the country has been destroyed, including medical facilities, electricity and water supply systems. If the Taliban is unable to stabilize the situation, there is a high probability of a relatively rapid displacement of the population into extreme poverty. The risks of social riots are increasing and, as a result, the emergence of an uncontrolled flow of refugees, including terrorist fighters who have gained combat experience in Afghanistan and Syria and may leak into the territory of neighboring Central Asian states.

The author notes that it is necessary to take into account that ethnic Kyrgyz, Tajiks, Uzbeks are fighting in the Taliban and other terrorist groups, and many of them are doing it for ideological reasons - as opposition to the authorities of their country. So the Taliban handed over six northern provinces of Afghanistan, including the Afghan-Tajik border, under the operational control of the terrorist organization "Jamaat Ansorullah" - a combat unit of the "Party of Islamic Revival of Tajikistan", banned by Dushanbe. In this context, the prospect of militants crossing the Panj River into neighboring Tajikistan becomes a reality.

The activities of the ISIS fighters continue to pose a danger to neighboring countries. Since 2018, after causing significant damage to the "Islamic State", in the Middle East there has been an ongoing transfer of militants to Afghanistan. These are mostly citizens of Central Asian states. The territory of Afghanistan is considered as a reserve site for creation of strong points for further expansion into Central and South Asia.

The revival of Al-Qaeda\* in Afghanistan is also quite real. Its activation is facilitated by the emergence of disagreements between the Taliban field commanders, some of whom share the principles and methods of action of Al-Qaeda. The center of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan was and remains the eastern province of Nuristan.

Summing up, the author comes to the conclusion that the current situation in Afghanistan is extremely dangerous for the countries of Central Asia, although at the moment there is no direct threat to the region from the Taliban, because its leaders are absorbed in forming a new government, building a state management system and solving economic issues, primarily the problem of population survival. There is no doubt that separate terrorist detachments operating on the territory of the country pose a danger. It is impossible to predict their actions, which, against the background of the victory of the Taliban, will most likely transform into an irreconcilable "jihad".

---

\* An organization banned in Russia.

---

## ISLAM IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

ELENA DMITRIEVA. FOREIGN ECONOMIC STRATEGIES OF EGYPT AND PROSPECTS FOR COOPERATION WITH RUSSIA.  
*Condensed abstract.*

*Keywords: Egypt, Russia, foreign economic activity, international trade, cooperation, Russian industrial zone, trade agreements.*

**Elena Dmitrieva,**  
Senior Research Associate,  
INION RAN  
e-mail: eldmidlist.ru

*Citation:* Dmitrieva E. Foreign economic strategies of Egypt and prospects for cooperation with Russia. Condensed abstract // Russia and the Moslem World, 2022, № 2 (316), P. 73–77.  
DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2022.02.06

1. Vobolevich A.A. The Current Foreign Economic Strategies of Egypt // *Svobodnaia mysl*, 2021, № 3 (1678). P. 161–174.

2. Nemkevich S.Yu., Shafiev R.M. Investitsionnaia privlekatelnost Egipta dlia Rossii // *E-Scio*, 2021, № 7 (58). P. 277–283.

A.A. Vobolevich [1], a senior lecturer at the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, analyzes Egypt's foreign economic activity. Egypt, which is one of the most developed countries in Africa, has economic ties with many countries of the world, including Russia. In recent decades, Egypt has

significantly liberalized foreign trade, although strategies toward trading partners differ. Egypt largely exports low-cost goods instead of those that are in global demand. Export of commodities with higher value is limited by outdated industrial and agricultural production technologies, poor storage and transportation infrastructure, and lack of land and water resources. Egypt exploits tariffs to protect the primary sector, but by doing so puts the whole economic system in a protectionist trap.

The author believes that understanding of foreign trade strategies of Egypt should allow partner countries, including Russia, to determine prospects for development of foreign trade with Egypt. The structure, dynamics and regulation of foreign trade of Egypt reflect its foreign economic strategy. The author maintains that a country's exposure to external economic shocks increases as trade openness increases. Product and geographical diversification helps to prevent extreme fluctuations in export revenues. Product diversification into more complex and higher value-added products could increase productivity and ensure long-term economic growth. Scaling up production and improving quality of existing products would boost export growth.

According to the author, Egypt is making progress in diversifying its exports both in directions and assortment. However, the bulk of exports remain concentrated and highly dependent on a few markets. Over the last decade, the EU and the US have been the most crucial trading partners, but the importance of the US has been steadily declining in favour of Arab countries. The EU, the US and Arab countries account for about 70 percent of Egypt's exports. Trade links with neighbouring African countries leave much to be desired.

The author points out that Egypt imports far more than it exports. Such trade imbalances are due to several factors that could determine foreign trade policy strategies implemented by Egypt. The author suggests the following typology of Egypt's foreign economic activities:

1. Egypt is actively cooperating with its strategic partners, such as the US, the EU, China and Russia. Egypt is working to increase the volume of exports and imports of goods.

2. Egypt is not largely engaged in trade with the countries of the African region, although it does enter in trade agreements, albeit superficial ones. In this case, Egypt means to formally establish links.

3. As for neighbouring countries, the Gulf countries impose restrictions on imports from Egypt, leaving the country to adapt to the current situation.

The study conducted by the author shows that the volume trade with many countries is not enough as compared with Egypt's economic potentials. The fact that major trading partners of Egypt are not neighbouring countries with the lowest trade costs, but the US, the EU, China and Russia, suggests that foreign economic strategy of Egypt is strongly influenced by political factors.

Shafiev R.M., PhD(Econ.), Russian Customs Academy (RCA), and S.Yu. Nemkevich, a master student at RCA [2] discuss partnership between Russia and Egypt and prospects for bilateral cooperation on the construction of the Russian Industrial Zone (RIZ) in Egypt. The study also analyzes the risks related to investments during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The authors note that Russia and Egypt have a history of business relationship and are partners today, e.g. Egypt is currently the largest importer of Russian wheat. The authors name the conditions for the optimal investment cooperation between Russia and Egypt that should create the platform for Russian companies to build on in the Middle East. Egypt is a promising country, which is advancing cooperation with Russia.

According to the UN official GDP figures for Egypt, it ranked 8th most developed country in Africa in 2021; its population exceeds 101 million people; it has high GDP per capita of \$3.058; in 2020, the minimum wage was \$127.41; and

gold and foreign exchange reserves were estimated to be \$42 billion by the end of 2021.

The authors point out that investment attractiveness of Egypt resulted in a considerable increase in foreign direct investment in the country over the recent years, especially in gas and oil extraction. At the same time, the government is carrying out monetary reform, working to stabilize the exchange rate and adjusting the management structure, which is designed to reduce and subsequently eliminate bureaucracy. In February 2021, Egypt started to supply gas to the EU after the launch of a liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal. The Zohr gas field, discovered in 2015, changed the foreign trade situation by making Egypt a gas exporter again. Natural gas production began in 2017 to supply the domestic Egyptian market. The Zohr field is operated by the Italian energy company Eni, while Rosneft owns 30 percent of its portfolio. Russia could have been engaged in hydrocarbon production abroad to a greater extent, if not for the 2014 sanctions by the US that can impose restrictions on foreign projects with the share of any Russian companies exceeding 30 percent of the authorized capital. Relations between Russian companies and foreign partners have consequently deteriorated since foreign partners fear US sanctions. The author concludes that cooperation between Russian and Egyptian companies in the energy sector are unlikely.

In March 2018, the governments of Russia and Egypt signed an agreement on the establishment and operation of the Russian Industrial Zone in Egypt. The project is designed to promote Russian companies in the Middle East. The project will take approximately 13 years to complete. Russia expects that resident companies will be able to start production as early as 2022. Investment cooperation between Russia and Egypt in the transport field also appears promising, i.e. construction and modernization of railways; establishing a railway transportation control center; supply and assembly of wagons; shipbuilding and modernization of shops of shipbuilding factories; and building

oil tankers and floating workshops. The industrial zone in Egypt is a pilot project for Russia on the African continent that may set an example for similar industrial zones in other countries. There are already a large number of free economic zones in Egypt, giving rise to high competition between them. Initially, 90 percent of jobs created by the project are meant for the Egyptians, but over time the quota may be revised in favour of the Russians. The location of the RIZ can be deemed beneficial due to its proximity to the Suez Canal, which significantly reduces the production costs. The authors also note that the profit from the industrial zone will be directed to the Russian budget, and not to private companies.

## OLGA BIBIKOVA. ON SYSTEMIC RACISM IN THE LEBANON SOCIETY

*Keywords: kafala; tile / employer; domestic servants; deportation; responsibility; racism.*

**Olga Bibikova,**  
PhD(History), Senior Research Associate,  
Institute of Oriental Studies, RAS  
e-mail: [olbibikova@mail.ru](mailto:olbibikova@mail.ru)  
© Bibikova O. 2022

*Citation:* Bibikova O. On systemic racism in the Lebanon society // Russia and the Moslem World, 2022, № 2 (316), P. 77–92.  
DOI: [10.31249/rmw/2022.02.07](https://doi.org/10.31249/rmw/2022.02.07)

*Abstract. On the example of Lebanon, the features of the functioning of the system of hiring foreign workers (kafala) in the Arab countries are considered. In Lebanon, this system applies to domestic workers, especially women. However, employers often do not fulfill their obligations under the contract. In addition, the economic crisis that broke out in the country made its own adjustments.*

The “kafala” (sponsorship) system involves the hiring of domestic servants in the countries of South and Southeast Asia (Sri Lanka, Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Nepal, Vietnam...) and Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Togo, Mali, Madagascar, Uganda...). The very name of kafala was present even in adat, customary law of the Arabs. It involves a form of adoption without the transfer of property to protect minor children - orphans. In a modern reading, the term kafala means that the employer takes responsibility for the hired foreign worker. This system (under other names) is used in many countries, including Europe. In this article, we will consider the situation that has developed in Lebanon. It also exists in other Arab countries, but the United Arab Emirates officially abolished professional kafala in 2008, and Qatar in 2016. But it continues to exist outside the law in almost all countries of the Middle East, which makes employees even more disempowered.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (as well as Jordan and Lebanon) actively use this system, which provides temporary labor in times of economic prosperity and makes it easy to abandon it in less prosperous periods.

Migration of domestic servants to Lebanon has been widely used since the early 1980s. Prior to this, domestic servants were mainly Lebanese girls who came from villages to cities, or Syrian and Palestinian women. The civil war made its own adjustments to the relations between the Lebanese citizens of different faiths themselves, as well as the Palestinians. Now, preference began to be given to women from non-Arab countries, such as the Philippines, Sri Lanka and later Ethiopia.<sup>1</sup> These are countries with a predominantly Christian population, as well as other countries in Africa and Southeast Asia. Women are usually hired as domestic servants (maid and cook all rolled into one) to do household chores (cleaning, washing, cooking, caring for small children, etc.). Until 2019, their number was estimated at about

---

400,000, of which between 100,000 and 150,000 worked illegally. These women arrive in Lebanon through private agencies. Some researchers evaluate this activity as *trafficking in human beings*.<sup>2</sup>

It is more expensive than others to hire a Filipina, who, according to Lebanese employers, is "whiter in face" (which indicates that some degree of racism is not alien to Lebanese) and more educated, they know English. French-speaking Malagasy women are also in demand. Ethiopians make up the largest group of employees, as this is the cheapest category of workers.

Officially, it costs about \$2,000 to bring servants (for example, from Africa) through an agency. This amount includes the cost of a visa, insurance, ticket and legal formalities. Under the kafala system, the kafil / sponsor within the country, i.e. employer, is responsible for the visa and legal status of a migrant worker. But often they abuse their rights, delaying payment, or not fulfilling the conditions contained in the contract.

An entire economy has developed around the migration of domestic servants. Candidates from around the world apply to recruitment agencies in their countries. As soon as an employer is found, the agency requests the necessary documents for an exit permit, and then a visa.

To choose a servant, the employer is offered legal and illegal catalogs that contain a photo and a brief description of the employee, a list of her skills. After that, the kafil (guarantor) pays the transportation costs for the prospective worker and pays a certain tax. Thus, he becomes a kind of guardian. Under the terms of the contract, he must provide his servant with a visa, housing, medical insurance, basic necessities and technical equipment related to her work. The position of the employer-guardian, guaranteed by the kafala, contributes to the formation of a paternalistic system, where the employer becomes the only authority over his employee. However, often the employer does not fulfill its obligations. For example, it is known that, despite the fact that the agreement stipulates the existence of a separate

---

room for a servant, kafil can invite her to sleep in the kitchen, in the hallway and even on the balcony in the summer. In addition, he must provide a weekly day off, etc.

It is characteristic that the system of payment for the services of domestic servants can be different: sometimes money for work is sent directly to the family, which deprives the servants even of pocket money. The domestic servants are forced to find a way out of this situation in periodic prostitution. Within the domestic service community, a system has already been established to provide accommodation for those who are forced to resort to prostitution.

The contract is concluded for a fixed period. Usually the contract is drawn up in Arabic, which the hired worker does not know. Moreover, she may be generally illiterate, but interpretation into her native language is usually not done. If there is no telephone or the owners do not allow the use of the telephone or the Internet, then the worker finds herself in complete isolation. The author of these lines, while visiting a Lebanese family, observed the relationship between a Lebanese family and their housemaid from Ethiopia. The woman had a small room adjoining the kitchen. One day, the mistress of the house said that at night they were finally able to make a telephone call to the relatives of the housemaid. The employer should periodically provide such a call to her employee. Later, the Ethiopian, probably bored and depressed due to loneliness, lack of knowledge of the language, etc., left the house on her own. On the way, she was met by a friend of her host family who took her back. After that, the kafil, that is, the mistress of the house, turned to the agency, which found the housemaid to resolve the problem. The case ended with the Ethiopian finding another home.

According to the contract, the servants must have eight hours of work, eight hours of free time and eight hours of rest per day, as well as one day off per week. The rest belongs to the

---

competence of the employer, who, in addition, bears civil liability for it.

But various circumstances can intervene in the situation, as a result of which the servant becomes unnecessary. The servant can leave the family of the employer only after the stipulated period for repayment of the cost of expenses for her arrival in the country has passed. However, cases of escape from the host family are not uncommon. Now a clause has been introduced into the contract, according to which you can file a complaint against your master within 48 hours after escaping from your masters. Otherwise, the former housemaid remains homeless, without documents, since the documents are transferred to the employer immediately after arrival. Naturally, for an illiterate girl, such a situation ends negatively. In addition, the owners often accuse their maids of stealing, which entails irreversible consequences. In Lebanese newspapers, one can often find advertisements about the disappearance of a hired worker, which are characterized in court as "concern" for a former housekeeper. It is almost impossible to prove that no jewelry was stolen.

Often, workers face not only violation of labor rights, but also sexual harassment, which goes unpunished for the rapist. Since it takes place at home, many in Lebanon view it as a "private matter" beyond the intervention of the state and social structures.<sup>3</sup>

According to kafala researchers, despite the fact that the system has been condemned by human rights organizations, a migrant worker cannot terminate their employment contract without the consent of their employer. This system gives employers almost complete control over the lives of workers and leaves them vulnerable to all forms of exploitation and abuse. If they leave their employer without his consent, their stay in the country will become illegal.

The *economic crisis* in Lebanon, exacerbated by the pandemic, has led to an increase in unemployment. In Lebanon in particular, especially after the explosion in the port (Aug. 4,

---

2020), the economic situation has noticeably worsened. It is complicated by one of the highest debt-to-gross domestic product ratios in the world: the public debt is more than 80 billion euros, or 172 percent of GDP.<sup>4</sup> The situation is aggravated by political uncertainty, internal divisions and the presence of more than 1.5 million Syrian refugees. According to some estimates, the number of domestic workers in the country in 2019 is 250,000, of which about 50,000 are in an illegal position. As we have already noted, the detachment of the latter is formed as a result of the voluntary departure or refusal of the owners to keep servants. Some give up their work as servants in the hope of more successful compatriots who have already found work in shops, hotels, etc., others are forced to turn to prostitution in order to survive... They cannot count on any protection of their interests. Accordingly, they are not legally *entitled to form trade unions*.

In the end, "word of mouth" conveys to the fugitives the information that there is a Center for Migrant Communities in Lebanon, which provides assistance to those who find themselves in a similar situation. So, for example, on Sundays at the evangelical Sodeko cemetery in Beirut, food is distributed, primarily rice, to women who are left without work and documents. As for the employers, they withdraw their guarantee and are no longer responsible for the person they hired.

Over time, human rights activists have ensured that justice provided for the reasons why foreign employees can terminate the contract: 1) the maid is subjected to sexual or physical violence. 2) she is not paid for more than three consecutive months. 3) she is forced to work in a place other than the one specified in the contract. Naturally, violations of the articles of the contract must be proven. But in such cases, it is clear that the police have more confidence in the Lebanese nationals than in the foreign worker. If a woman complains, she will in any case be detained, and her documents may be declared false. A hired worker can be deported before migrants who could confirm her words find out about this case.

---

In the words of an Ethiopian worker, "Employment agencies and employers treat us like a commodity... Sometimes I was beaten and denied food, but because of my contract, I cannot choose whether to work somewhere else or return home. My employer said, "I bought you. Pay me \$2,000 and then you can go wherever you want."<sup>5</sup>

Foreign workers who leave their sponsors without having worked out the period specified in the contract may "stand for many years" because they do not have the means to purchase a return ticket and do not have documents.

Embassies in such cases, as a rule, avoid participation in the fate of their compatriots. The most they can do is to provide assistance in case of forced or desired repatriation or to involve lawyers. Some embassies, for example, the Ethiopian embassy, in view of the mass nature of such conflict situations, organized shelters for their citizens who found themselves in a difficult situation.

A completely catastrophic situation arises for a foreign worker if she becomes pregnant and gives birth to a child. The mother has no rights to Lebanese citizenship for the child. In matters of obtaining citizenship by birth, there are two positions in the world: the right of blood and the right of land *Jus soli*. According to the first law, the citizenship of a child depends on the status of the parents (in Lebanon, on the status of the father), their nationality and citizenship, and does not depend on the place of the child's immediate birth. *Jus soli* - the right of the land means that the country where the baby is born automatically grants him its citizenship. However, there is no such right in Lebanon.

In 2015, the government of Côte d'Ivoire, in an effort to protect its citizens, banned them from obtaining visas for domestic servants in Lebanon. Similar bans or restrictions have been adopted in Ethiopia, Madagascar, Nepal and the Philippines. However, there is no prohibition on the part of

Lebanon to accept foreign workers. Therefore, kafala job seekers are still trying to find work in Lebanon.

Women from Nigeria are also looking for work abroad. A catastrophic situation has developed here: as a result of a bloody civil war (1967-1970), between 700,000 and 3,000,000 people in Nigeria died. In the state of Imo<sup>6</sup> where almost 4 million people live, 3 million of them are women and 900,000 are men. In such conditions, women are forced to rely only on themselves. Many people think that working as a servant abroad is the best option.

In everyday life, it is community centers run by NGOs or various associations that allow domestic workers to find each other and organize themselves, creating networks of solidarity. As a rule, the church becomes a place of communication, where workers come on Sundays. Thus, churches become a place of communication and information, a kind of safety zone to which foreign workers have access.

The Immigrant Housekeepers Alliance in Lebanon, founded in 2016 by a small group of migrants, is one of those organizations that operates almost illegally. It is curious to note that in order to draw attention to their activities, the Alliance tried to organize a performance dedicated to the problem of foreign workers in Lebanese society. It was to take place in Beirut at the Zukaka Theater on the occasion of Labor Day (1 May). At the last moment, the General Security Service requested a list of people participating in the performance "Unfair Deportation", as well as copies of visas, which led to a hasty cancellation of the performance. Three days later, a demonstration was held by domestic workers in Beirut, who also wanted to draw public attention to their problems.

Christian employees usually have a day off (or half a day) on Sunday, which allows them to meet in churches. Since the problems of foreign workers became public knowledge, embassies have been forced to monitor the situation. Thus, for example, the Philippine embassy sends an employee on Sundays to the gathering place of its fellow citizens in some church

---

traditionally attended by them. Malagasy women, native to Madagascar, are known to gather in the parish of the French Protestant church in the Kraitem district, where they created a choir.

Natives of “black Africa” prefer to rent an apartment in which they pray in front of an impromptu altar and communicate with each other. They note that visiting Lebanese churches is humiliating for them due to undisguised curiosity and sometimes impudence they are treated with.

Characteristically, the “black” servants who accompany children to pools or beaches never bathe with them. The Lebanese themselves, analyzing this situation, say that this is the result of the attitude of the host society towards them, which thus manifests a kind of “passive racism”, although no one admits this. The conditions for such socially and collectively recognized racism are largely due to the lack of legal protection for immigrant workers, making racial discrimination a feature of Lebanese society.

Today the church is the only organization that gives them real help. In December 2019, a Protestant congregation in Beirut wanted to set up a social grocery store, but the funds needed to set it up were not enough. Now, in addition to distributing medicines and food, the church takes over the collection of donations in their favor.<sup>7</sup>

Contracts signed by immigrant domestic workers upon their arrival in Lebanon were never of any real value, and their terms were always subject to change at the will of the employers or agencies that recruited them. In September 2020, Labor Minister Lamia Yammin Duaihi put forward proposals to change the situation of foreign women workers, proposing a new “unified (standard) contract” providing a safer basis for protecting the rights of women working in the kafala system, which she envisioned would eliminate inequality inherent in this system.<sup>8</sup>

Although this draft contract was not accompanied by any oversight mechanism that could enforce its principles, the Lebanese Recruitment Owners Union filed an appeal with the Shura Council, Lebanon's highest administrative court, which rejected the proposal for new legislation.

The first organization, the Union of Domestic Workers, was established in 2015. Despite the fact that the organization was supported by the International Labor Organization, the International Federation of Trade Unions and the National Federation of Trade Unions of Workers and Employees of Lebanon, Labor Minister Sejan Azzi refused to recognize it without any arguments, calling it "illegal".

Lebanon has signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), as well as the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1998). Thus, the denial of the status guaranteed by the Labor Code to foreign domestic workers, as well as the outlawing of the associations of this group of the population established to protect them, is a violation by Lebanon of its obligations. Similarly, Convention No. 189 of the International Labor Organization guarantees the rights and protection of domestic workers. Lebanon has also signed this convention, but has not ratified it.<sup>9</sup>

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the situation of domestic workers has deteriorated markedly. The explosion in the port of Beirut, which devastated the city on August 4, 2020, further exacerbated the plight of foreign workers. Foreign workers were also among the victims<sup>10</sup>. The explosion severely damaged the wealthy Christian district of Ashrafiyya, whose residents actively used the services of foreign workers. Under these conditions, some Lebanese families decided to abandon the servants, left their apartments and went to the mountains or to relatives. Many workers, dismissed by the employer, ended up on the street. There were cases when the owners brought their workers, along with their belongings, to the embassy buildings and left them there.

---

After the explosion in the port of Beirut, Lebanese employers prefer to hire Syrian women or their compatriots as domestic servants, their wages are lower, because there is no need to pay for a visa, work permit, etc. In addition, these servants do not need housing, which also reduces costs.

Indeed, the situation after the explosion in the port changed the life of the country. 300 thousand residents of Beirut lost their homes. With the economic downturn, the devaluation of the Lebanese pound and the Covid-19 crisis, the prices of basic products have exploded. Famine has begun among foreigners living in Lebanon illegally. Although the international community has mobilized to help the Lebanese since the tragedy of August 4, foreigners remain the anonymous victims of this tragedy. In particular, "*Lebanese only*" signs<sup>11</sup> began to appear on the walls of some clinics in Bourj Hammoud, where free food distribution is organized.

As a rule, the wages of female domestic workers are about \$150-500 (127-423 euros) per month, part of which is transferred to their families back home. But after the devaluation of the Lebanese pound, the payment dropped sharply. Before the crisis, 1 dollar was worth 1,500 Lebanese pounds. Today – about 8,000, and salaries are paid in pounds, which, due to the reduction in the circulation of currency in the country, makes it difficult to transfer money abroad.

On August 10, 2021, the Kenyan community demonstrated in front of their consulate in the Badaro area, south of Beirut. It demanded immediate repatriation and protested against consular officials who advised them to become prostitutes in order to pay for their return ticket.

The Lebanese government was forced to react to the situation. The Prosecutor General's Office decided to *suspend a fine* of 300,000 Lebanese pounds (168 euro) for women, 400,000 (224 euro) for men, which were applied to undocumented migrants who wished to leave the country. But this was the only gesture of the Lebanese government.<sup>12</sup>

Farah Baba of the Anti-Racism Movement notes the “tragic banality” of the situation of foreign domestic servants in Lebanon: cheap foreign domestic workers are often used because *it compensates for the lack of services provided by the Lebanese state, especially in terms of caring for the sick and the elderly.*<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, until recently there was no practice in the Moslem world of establishing homes for the elderly or orphanages. As a rule, the Moslem community takes care of them, although isolated cases of the emergence of such organizations for temporary residence took place, as a rule, after any geoclimatic or political upheavals. At the same time, Christians organized similar shelters, having experience in creating monasteries. There are similar institutions for Christians in Lebanon, but not everyone can afford them.

After the explosion in the port, some embassies were forced to organize temporary shelters, and then a mass departure of their citizens. Prior to this, a similar action on a smaller scale took place in 2006 during the aggravation of Lebanese-Israeli relations. In total (estimated), about 170,000 *immigrant women workers* have left Lebanon in the last two years due to the sharp deterioration of the economic situation. However, 11,453 *new work permits* were issued in 2020. This indicates a decrease in demand: compared to 43.825 in 2019, there was a decrease of 73.8 percent.<sup>14</sup>

Wadi al-Asmar, secretary general of the Lebanese Center for Human Rights, believes that “a country that is not able to ensure the safety and dignity of people who come to its territory should simply stop encouraging people to come. It should forbid them to come, saying: “Listen, we are not in a position to protect you.” Unfortunately, this is not being done.” And further: Wadi al-Asmar compares recruitment agencies to *the functioning of a human trafficking mafia.*<sup>15</sup>

In the spring of 2020, a man was arrested in Lebanon after posting an ad on Facebook for the sale of a Nigerian housekeeper. He offered those who wished to purchase a 30-year-old domestic worker for \$1,000. Thus, he wanted to recover the cost of moving

---

a worker from Nigeria to Lebanon.<sup>16</sup> But the Nigerian *refused to return to her homeland* even after the intervention of the Nigerian embassy, who offered to send her to her homeland. The Lebanese embassy in Nigeria *suspended the issuance of work visas* after it became known that already 69 domestic workers who had been victims of violence had been evacuated from Lebanon to Nigeria.

Harassment of domestic servants does not occur in Lebanon only, but is widespread throughout the Gulf region. In Saudi Arabia, kafala covers almost 70 percent of private sector workers. In August 2018 two Nigerian workers *were killed* by their Saudi owners in Riyadh.<sup>17</sup>

\* \* \*

Analyzing the application of the kafala system in Lebanon, one comes to the conclusion that it is nothing but a modern form of slavery. In many African countries, the lack of a clear position on migration, the lack of regulatory laws in this area, as well as the desperate desire of citizens to immigrate to more prosperous countries, have resulted in human trafficking under the guise of domestic workers.

Assessing the current situation, Wadi Al-Asmar notes that *it is difficult for Lebanese to admit that they are racists. For them, racism is something they experience when they travel to Europe or the United States, but they find it difficult to understand that racist behavior exists. The functioning of justice is discriminatory for all people who do not speak Arabic, for all people who come from a country that the Lebanese subconscious considers a country of a lower level.*<sup>18</sup>

Unfortunately, since the ILO adopted Convention No. 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers in 2011, the document has only been *ratified* by 29 countries. At the same time, the countries of the Persian Gulf and the Arab states – Oman, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon, as well as their African partners, such as Ethiopia, Nigeria and Tanzania – *have not yet*

---

*ratified the convention and have not taken it into account in their legislation.*

In the summer of 2021, a special report was prepared by several UN agencies stating that the Lebanese government was primarily responsible for abuses against migrant domestic workers. It calls for the elimination of the kafala system and the creation of legal protection for all foreign workers employed in the household in Lebanon<sup>19</sup>. However, internal turmoil in the country pushed the fight for the rights immigrants to the background. The situation of foreign women working as domestic workers has largely faced the indifference of the population, who are thinking about how to save themselves.

## References

1. Ethiopians make up approximately 80 percent of the domestic workers in Lebanon under the kafala system. One of the reasons for choosing Ethiopians is that they are mostly Christians.
2. Beyrouth. Chroniques d'une ville brisée // [http://www.slate.fr/monde/beyrouth-chroniques-dune-ville-brisee/10-travailleuses-domestiques-immigrees-explosion-liban-escalavage?utm\\_source=ownpage&utm\\_medium=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=hebdo\\_20210905&\\_ope=eyJndWIkJjoiZjMxNGVmODcyNjBiNTRiYmIzMzY4MWY2NzI5NzExN2QifQpercent3Dpercent3D](http://www.slate.fr/monde/beyrouth-chroniques-dune-ville-brisee/10-travailleuses-domestiques-immigrees-explosion-liban-escalavage?utm_source=ownpage&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=hebdo_20210905&_ope=eyJndWIkJjoiZjMxNGVmODcyNjBiNTRiYmIzMzY4MWY2NzI5NzExN2QifQpercent3Dpercent3D) (date of access: 30.12.2021).
3. Migrant Workers' Rights and Women's Rights – Women Migrant Domestic Workers in Lebanon: A Gender Perspective // <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/migrant-workers-rights-and-women-s-rights-women-migrant-domestic-workers-lebanon> (date of access: 03.01.2022).
4. Lebanon's external debt and public debt 2022 // <https://take-profit.org/statistics/government-debt-to-gdp/lebanon/> (date of access: 04.01.2022).
5. Lebanon crises increase suffering of migrant domestic workers. 25.12.2021 // <https://www.bignewsnetwork.com/news/272021126/lebanon-crisis-increase-suffering-of-migrant-domestic-workers> (date of access: 30.12.2021).
6. The state of Imo was formed on February 3, 1976, before that it was part of the unrecognized state of Biafra.
7. Polverini L. Les travailleuses domestiques au Liban ou la honte des invisibles de l'explosion 25.08.2020 // <http://www.slate.fr/story/193851/>

liban-travailleuses-domestiques-esclaves-modernes-precaires-covid-explosion-beyrouth (date of access: 02.01.2022).

8. Beyrouth: la révolte des travailleuses domestiques // [https://www.rtb.be/info/dossier/les-grenades/detail\\_beyrouth-la-revolte-des-travailleuses-domestiques-une-chronique-de-stephanie-ngalula-mukadi?id=10574471](https://www.rtb.be/info/dossier/les-grenades/detail_beyrouth-la-revolte-des-travailleuses-domestiques-une-chronique-de-stephanie-ngalula-mukadi?id=10574471) (date of access: 04.01.2022).
9. La Kafala, système d'exploitation des travailleurs domestiques // <https://www.observatoirepharos.com/pays/liban/la-kafala-systeme-dexploitation-des-travailleurs-domestiques-fr/> (date of access: 03.01.2022).
10. It is known about the death of 5 citizens of the Philippines and 2 citizens of Ethiopia.
11. Polverini L. Les travailleuses domestiques au Liban ou la honte des invisibles de l'explosion 25.08.2020 // <http://www.slate.fr/story/193851/liban-travailleuses-domestiques-esclaves-modernes-precaires-covid-explosion-beyrouth> (date of access: 02.01.2022).
12. Polverini L. Les travailleuses domestiques au Liban ou la honte des invisibles de l'explosion 25.08.2020 // <http://www.slate.fr/story/193851/liban-travailleuses-domestiques-esclaves-modernes-precaires-covid-explosion-beyrouth> (date of access: 02.01.2022).
13. Beyrouth. Chroniques d'une ville brisée // [http://www.slate.fr/monde/beyrouth-chroniques-dune-ville-brisee/10-travailleuses-domestiques-immigrees-explosion-liban-escalavage?utm\\_source=ownpage&utm\\_medium=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=hebdo\\_20210905&\\_ope=eyJndWlkIjoiZjMxNGVmODcyNjBiNTRiYmIzMzY4MWY2NzI5NzExN2QifQ%3D%3D](http://www.slate.fr/monde/beyrouth-chroniques-dune-ville-brisee/10-travailleuses-domestiques-immigrees-explosion-liban-escalavage?utm_source=ownpage&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=hebdo_20210905&_ope=eyJndWlkIjoiZjMxNGVmODcyNjBiNTRiYmIzMzY4MWY2NzI5NzExN2QifQ%3D%3D) (date of access: 03.01.2022).
14. Beyrouth. Chroniques d'une ville brisée // [http://www.slate.fr/monde/beyrouth-chroniques-dune-ville-brisee/10-travailleuses-domestiques-immigrees-explosion-liban-escalavage?utm\\_source=ownpage&utm\\_medium=newsletter&utm\\_campaign=hebdo\\_20210905&\\_ope=eyJndWlkIjoiZjMxNGVmODcyNjBiNTRiYmIzMzY4MWY2NzI5NzExN2QifQ%3D%3D](http://www.slate.fr/monde/beyrouth-chroniques-dune-ville-brisee/10-travailleuses-domestiques-immigrees-explosion-liban-escalavage?utm_source=ownpage&utm_medium=newsletter&utm_campaign=hebdo_20210905&_ope=eyJndWlkIjoiZjMxNGVmODcyNjBiNTRiYmIzMzY4MWY2NzI5NzExN2QifQ%3D%3D) (date of access: 03.01.2022).
15. Polverini L. Les domestiques au Liban, un esclavage qui ne dit pas son nom. 02.09.2018 // <http://www.slate.fr/story/165914/kafala-domestiques-liban-esclavage-racisme>
16. قصص مروعة ترويها العاملات المنزليات الأفريقيات في لبنان. (Terrifying stories about the lives of African domestic workers in Lebanon) 2.07.2020 // <https://ru.globalvoices.org/2020/07/10/95120/> (date of access: 04.01.2022).
17. قصص مروعة ترويها العاملات المنزليات الأفريقيات في لبنان. (Terrifying stories about the lives of African domestic workers in Lebanon) 2.07.2020 // <https://ru.globalvoices.org/2020/07/10/95120/> (date of access: 04.01.2022).

18. Polverini L. Les domestiques au Liban, un esclavage qui ne dit pas son nom. 02.09.2018 // <http://www.slate.fr/story/165914/kafala-domestiques-liban-esclavage-racisme> (date of access: 04.01.2022).
19. Lebanon crises increase suffering of migrant domestic workers. 25.12.2021 // <https://www.bignewsnetwork.com/news/272021126/lebanon-crises-increase-suffering-of-migrant-domestic-workers> (date of access: 04.01.2022).

## KSENIA ATAMALI. NORTH AFRICA: MUSLIM MIGRATION TO EUROPE AND THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. Condensed Abstract.

*Keywords: international migration, Maghreb, Europe, socio-economic development, integration of migrants, Muslim diasporas, terrorism, pandemic; COVID-19, radicalization, threats.*

**Ksenia Atamali,**

Asia and Africa Department member,  
INION RAN  
e-mail: mrsxeniya@ya.ru

*Citation:* Atamali K. North Africa: Muslim Migration to Europe and the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Condensed Abstract // Russia and the Moslem World, 2022, № 2 (316), P. 92-99. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2022.02.08

1. Tyukaeva T.I. Migration from Maghreb: External and Internal Challenges for Europe // *Sovremennaia Europa*. 2021. № 3 (103). P. 61-70.

2. Kolesnikova JY.S., Boudjenah Sohib. The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on International Migration in North Africa // *Nauchnoe obozrenie Seriia 2 Gumanitarnye nauki*. 2021. № 3. P. 54-62.

T.I. Tyukaeva, PhD(Politics), Center for the Middle East Studies, [1] examines the problem of migration from the Maghreb countries to Europe. The author points out that the uncontrolled

flows of migrants are the source of major external and internal challenges for Europeans with regard to strengthening border security, combating illegal migration, as well as the issue of socio-economic and cultural integration of migrants. According to many studies on the problem of immigration from Arab countries to Europe, the major challenge for Europe is not illegal immigration itself or some associated risks, but the problem of integration of the descendants of immigrants, i.e. European citizens, whose connection with the Arab and Muslim culture is often a formality.

The author notes that Europe is a traditional destination of migrants from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The Arab Spring and the subsequent military, political, social and economic destabilization in the Maghreb countries triggered a surge of migration (illegal, in particular) to Europe and an increase in the number of Libyan refugees. The migration crisis peaked in 2014-2017 when 170-180 thousand of illegal migrants from Libya annually arrived in Italy. Against the backdrop of yet another round of armed conflict, smugglers intensified their efforts to transport illegal migrants from African countries across the Libyan borders. In 2018, illegal migration flow from Libya dropped by 86 percent due to strengthening border control and coast guards. Other directions of illegal migration also became more active. Thus, in 2018, there was a sharp increase of migration directed towards Spain, mainly from Morocco; steps were taken to strengthen border controls. In 2020, illegal migration flow increased once again; for example, the number of people who arrived in Italy throughout the year tripled compared to 2019, reaching 34 thousand immigrants. Most of the migrants were Tunisian citizens, followed by Libyans and Algerians in second and third place, respectively. Spain also recorded a surge in migration, although not as dramatic as in Italy.

European coast guards and navies, in cooperation with the countries of the Maghreb, deported a significant number of migrants back to their homeland. The notably successful

European policies to combat irregular migration have resulted in plummeting of annual arrivals after 2017–2018, save for a surge in 2020. However, the number of irregular migrants from the countries of the Maghreb is extremely small compared to the number of those who arrive legally and subsequently receive a residence permit. Thus, in 2011–2017, over 545 thousand Moroccan citizens received residence permits in Europe, while only a little more than 16 thousand illegal migrants arrived during the same period.

The author points to the fact that a decrease in the number of migrants who actually reach Europe does not mean that fewer people aspire to relocate to the EU. Thus, migration flows will undoubtedly increase in the future, but a repeat of the mid-2010s crisis is highly unlikely.

In discussing the causes of migration from the Maghreb countries, the author draws attention to the fact that migration from Morocco, Tunisia and, to a lesser extent, Algeria is a historically and economically grounded phenomenon. The first agreements on labour migration between the Maghreb and certain European states were signed in the 1960s. Thousands of labour migrants arrived in Europe annually, making up for a shortage of low-skilled workers in the receiving countries and thus easing pressure on the economies of the Maghreb countries with traditionally high unemployment rate. Despite work visas restrictions, the flow of legal migration from the Maghreb countries has been steadily increasing. Over the last decade, there has been an increase in the share of highly skilled migrants and students.

The author notes that the seasonal and cyclical migration of Maghrebis is gradually becoming permanent. Aside from 'family reunions', a significant number of temporary workers arriving in Europe prefer not to return home after their work visas have run out. According to the 2020 opinion polls there is a significant share of those wishing to leave their homeland, especially among the youth. Polls show that 47 percent of Tunisians and 31 percent

of Moroccans aged 18 to 29 are willing to emigrate; the figures are slightly lower in Algeria and Libya, i.e. 23 percent and 21 percent respectively. Moreover, about 40 percent of the respondents are considering illegal emigration. The main reason for emigration is socio-economic grievances. Traditionally high unemployment rate in the Maghreb countries have been increasing over the past few years, especially among young people, rising to 22 percent in Morocco, 29.5 percent in Algeria and 36.3 percent in Tunisia at the beginning of 2020. The share of unemployed university graduates is also increasing, and so does the rate of informal employment. Thus, a considerable share of the population of the Maghreb countries is either unable to find a job, or is forced to eke out a living in conditions of financial instability and social insecurity, working in the informal sector. All this leads to marginalization of the population, with the highest marginalization rates concentrated in rural areas, which lag behind cities in terms of development. In turn, marginalization either radicalizes people or makes them emigrate or both.

The author emphasizes that both low-skilled workers and highly qualified professionals are paid extremely low wages. Consequently, people travel to Europe in hope of a decently paid job. Most migrants refer to the success of their friends or relatives as an incentive to emigrate. As for low-skilled cyclical migrants, they make decent money in Europe and start a stereotype of seeing emigrants as the winners. A vast number of Maghrebis choose seasonal migration, but as many people have no intention of returning home, not least because of the systemic political and economic crisis.

In addition to economic, military and political challenges, climate change may also give rise to migration over the medium term; the average annual temperature is rising and precipitation decreases, causing a shortage of water resources, which in turn would hit most sectors of the economies of the Maghreb countries and reduce quality of life of people living there. By 2040, Libya, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia will be among the most water-scarce

---

countries; at present, however, large parts of the population of the Maghreb (from 40 percent in Algeria to 80 percent in Tunisia) lack regular access to water. Thus, the underlying causes pushing Maghrebis to migration are complex and will not disappear in the foreseeable future.

The author believes that a pressing need makes most of the migrants relocate to Europe, although on rare occasions radical elements may enter Europe with the flow of migrants.

Migrants from the Maghreb typically choose countries with traditionally large Moroccan, Tunisian and Algerian diasporas, i.e. France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Germany. Despite programmes for social integration, immigrants and their children and grandchildren born in Europe are perceived by Europeans as 'outsiders'. Islamophobic attitudes in Europe merely serve to further aggravate the situation, since Islam is often perceived as alien to European values. However, Arab and Muslim cultural background is not always an integral part of the identity of immigrants and their descendants. It should be noted that marginalization is most noticeable at the ethno-cultural level. According to a Paris study, successful second-generation immigrants from the Maghreb are often shunned by the French only because of their non-European looks and name. As a result, many members of migrant communities stay in areas densely populated by immigrants, hampering integration.

The author draws attention to the fact that social and cultural rejection by Europeans, coupled with an acute sense of injustice, may trigger an identity crisis among the children of migrants, causing them to feel alienated from both European and Arab culture. All this nurtures radicalization of young members of migrant communities, who are highly susceptible to Islamist propaganda. The author cites Olivier Roy, a French political scientist, who argues that today 'Islamization of radicalism' seems to take place, where Islam serves as an 'ideological framework' for a global protest against both European and Arab

---

Islamic societies. Descendants of migrants who are at odds with the law are most likely to use Islamic doctrine to justify violence.

The author concludes that the major challenges to European internal security are not those brought about by a large-scale flow of illegal migration, but those caused by alienation of a significant share of migrant diasporas. For example, according to a 2020 poll carried out in France, 57 percent of young Muslims believe that Sharia law overrides the laws of the Republic. This indicates their inevitable radicalization and provides a breeding ground for the activities of Islamist organizations.

Yu.S. Kolesnikova, PhD(Economics), the Institute for Demographic Research RAN, and S. Boudjenah, Kazan Federal University [2] study the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on international migration and associated threats. The authors present an overview of migration from North African countries, listing Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan and Tunisia as transit countries and the source of the migrant flow from Africa. Most emigrants from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia settle down in Western Europe, while emigrants from Egypt, Libya and Sudan head for Western Asia.

The authors note that the number of international migrants has increased over the past five decades, growing from 153 million in 1990 to about 272 million in 2019. North Africa accounts for 9.4 percent of the total number of international migrants.

Turning to the subject of COVID-19, the authors emphasize that countries all over the world are striving to cope with the economic crisis caused by the pandemic. UNDESA expects a contraction in the global economy by 3.2 percent and a reduction in growth rates in North Africa to 1.8 percent. The possible economic revival depends on whether the measures taken by governments are successful.

The North African economies are influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic in two main areas. First, there is a slowdown in economic activity because enterprises are being

shut due to the pandemic and hundreds of thousands of people are losing their jobs. Tourism and transport are the hardest-hit industries in North Africa, with disrupted supply chains affecting manufacturing. Second, there is a drop in world prices for commodities, primarily oil and gas, resources of great importance for countries that heavily depend on oil. In March 2020, fuel prices plummeted by almost 50 percent, dealing a huge blow to the economies of Algeria, Libya and Sudan. Being employed in critical sectors, migrants proved to be the most vulnerable group affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the UN, migrants make up at least 4.5 percent of the population in twelve out of those twenty countries with the highest number of confirmed coronavirus cases, and in eight of these countries the share exceeds 10 percent. About 20 percent of North African immigrants live in relative poverty in the OECD countries in comparison to Europeans. Poor living conditions and overcrowding add to the risk of contracting COVID-19.

The authors point out that labour markets in North Africa suffer from particularly high rates of labour underutilization, which has a clear gender dimension. Overall, 40.1 percent of women encounter some form of labour underutilization compared to 19.7 percent of men. In addition, there is a small chance of remote work for migrant workers, since in most cases they are involved in such areas of work where it proves to be impossible. Migrants, especially temporary and illegal workers, often have very limited access to social security systems, including health care. Moreover, immigrants with an insufficient command of the language spoken in the host country may find it difficult to understand information updates on COVID-19.

Discussing the health care in North Africa as a whole, the authors conclude that the subregion is unable to cope with the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Healthcare systems in North Africa are inadequate, have a shortage of staff and hospital beds. The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the weaknesses of the social security and healthcare systems, emphasizing the

necessity to step up the efforts to halt the spread of COVID-19 after the gradual lifting of restrictions.

In social terms, the most vulnerable categories of people – illegal and low-skilled workers, young people and women – are at risk. The loss of jobs and income makes social imbalance within the country only worse. The leadership of the countries are working to avoid the collapse of the economy, providing financial support to enterprises and workers.

In conclusion, the authors reiterate that migrants are especially vulnerable to the risk of contracting COVID-19, since they work and dwell in crowded places. Several studies in a number of countries have shown that migrants are at least twice as likely to contract COVID-19 as local residents. Mobility also is not bouncing back to its earlier level for some time due to low demand for labour force, restrictions on movement and widespread teleworking.

---

## THE MOSLEM WORLD: THEORETICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS

SERGEY MELNIK. JOINT RUSSIAN-IRANIAN COMMISSION FOR THE DIALOGUE “ORTHODOXY-ISLAM”: HISTORY AND BASIC PRINCIPLES OF INTERRELIGIOUS COOPERATION.

*Keywords: interreligious dialogue, Christian-Islamic dialogue, orthodoxy, Russian Orthodox Church, Islam, Russia, Iran, peacekeeping, eschatology, cooperation.*

**Acknowledgments.** The author expresses gratitude to the President of “United religions” Mr. Akif Gialov

**Sergey Melnik,**  
PhD(Philosophy), Head of the Philosophy Department,  
INION RAN;  
Senior Research Associate,  
Center for Interreligious Dialogue,  
Bolgar Islamic Academy;  
Associate Professor,  
General Church Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies  
e-mail: melnik.s.vl@yandex.ru  
© Melnik S. 2022

*Citation:* Melnik S. Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for the Dialogue “Orthodoxy-Islam”: History and Basic Principles of Interreligious Cooperation. // Russia and the Moslem World, 2022, № 2 (316), P. 100-116. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2022.02.09

---

*Abstract. The article reviews the activities of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for the Dialogue "Orthodoxy-Islam". The Commission was established in 1997 with the direct participation of the Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad (the future His Holiness Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia). The meetings of the Commission were held with a frequency of about once every two years alternately in Moscow and Tehran. The history of past meetings, the topics discussed are described, and excerpts from joint statements following the results of the meetings are given. The activities of the Commission are analyzed in the context of different types of interreligious dialogue.*

## **1. History of the Commission**

On September 4–8, 1995, Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, who at the time held the post of Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, visited Iran. In Tehran, he met with the head of the Organization for Culture and Islamic Relations, Ayatollah Mohammed Ali Tashiri. In 1997, Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Tashiri visited Russia. As a result of the meetings, an agreement was reached to carry out interreligious contacts between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Islamic community of Iran on a regular basis. Representatives of the two religions formed the main principles of interreligious dialogue, which they decided to establish, as follows: "sincere faith in God, love for one's neighbor, mutual respect, clarity of purpose and fruitfulness" [1].

Metropolitan Kirill in this context noted: "As you know, Iran is a religious state, where the principles of faith are the basis for the development of society. On the other hand, Iran is a modern state that faces the same problems that any other country faces. And it was very interesting for us to understand the main ideas that Iranians are inspired by, connecting modern state life with religious principles" [3]. The format for interreligious relations was supposed as meetings at which they would get

---

acquainted with the ideas of the two religions, mainly as can be seen from the quote from Metropolitan Kirill, in the social sphere. In this regard, it was decided to create a Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for the Dialogue "Orthodoxy-Islam". The first meeting of the Joint Commission "Orthodoxy-Islam" was held in December 1997 in the capital of Iran. Within the framework of the Tehran meeting, "the participants presented reports on the issues of mission and proselytism, war and peace, the relationship between religion, state and society. The commission condemned proselytism - the spread of religion through violence and bribery, which destroys inter-religious peace and violates human freedom" [3]. The Iranian side was headed by the Deputy Chairman of the Organization for Culture and Islamic Relations Hojat-ol-Islam Nomani, the delegation of the Russian Orthodox Church was headed by the Deputy Chairman of the DECR Archpriest Viktor Petlyuchenko. Subsequently, meetings of the bilateral commission were held with a frequency of about once every two years, alternately in Moscow and Tehran. The meetings of the Commission were devoted to the following topics: II "Peace and justice in theological, religious-social and international aspects" (May 4-7, 1999, Moscow); III "The Role of Interreligious Dialogue in International Relations" (January 24-25, 2001, Tehran) [4]; IV "The Attitude of the Two Great Religions to the Issues of Globalization from the Standpoint of Religious Morality, Culture and Religious Beliefs" (April 26-27, 2004, Moscow) [5]; V "Eschatology and its influence on modern life" (February 28 - March 4, 2006, Tehran) [6]; VI "Teaching about God and Man in Orthodoxy and Islam" (July 16-17, 2008, Moscow) [7]; VII "The role of religion in the life of man and society" (October 6-9, 2010, Tehran); VIII "Religion and Human Rights" (June 26-27, 2012, Moscow); IX "Importance and strengthening of cooperation and mutual understanding between Islam and Orthodoxy" (August 25-26, 2014, Tehran) [8]; X "Interreligious dialogue and cooperation as tools for achieving a lasting and just peace" (September 26-27, 2016, Moscow) [9],

XI "Religions and the Environment" (May 5–7, 2018, Tehran) [10]. The next twelfth meeting of the Commission on the role of the media was supposed to be held in Russia in May 2020, but was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic. So, social problems were discussed mainly within the framework of the meetings, although two meetings touched upon theological problems proper (the doctrine of God, eschatology). Approximately 4 to 8 people participated in the meetings from each side. For example, at the second meeting, held in Moscow in 1999, the delegations were headed by the chairman of the DECR, Metropolitan Kirill, and the chairman of the Organization of Islamic Culture and Relations of Iran, Ayatollah Tashiri. Bishop Alexander of Baku and the Caspian Sea, Archpriest Vsevolod Chaplin, Professor of the Moscow Theological Academy A.I. Osipov (he repeatedly took part in the following meetings) DECR employee R.A. Silantiev. That is, representatives of the Department for External Church Relations, clergymen whose activities are carried out in Moslem countries and regions, as well as invited experts, who may or may not be in rank, took part in the meetings on the part of the ROC. During the meetings, the participants alternately made presentations on the topic of the meeting. For example, within the framework of the 5th meeting of the Joint Commission, dedicated to the problem of eschatology, reports were read on the following topics: "Introduction to eschatology: The Last Day from the point of view of Islam and Christianity" (Ayatollah Imami Kashani), "Comparative eschatology: Orthodox and Moslem view" (Archbishop Anastassy of Kazan and Tatarstan), "Orthodox Teaching on the Afterlife" (Professor A.I. Osipov), "The Teaching of the Quran on the Last Day" (Dr. Ansaripur), "Eschatology and Secularism" (G.E. Roshchin), "The Last Day in Islamic Philosophy and Theology" (Khojat-ol-Islam Jabrayili), "Eschatology and Politics" (priest Georgy Ryabykh).

## **2. Position of the Commission on topical social problems (communiqué).**

As a result of the meetings, communiqués were adopted expressing a consolidated position on the topics considered at the last meeting. Here are some examples of such statements. The communiqué of the 2nd meeting (theme: "Peace and Justice") stated: "the doctrinal foundations of both religions recognize the inseparable interconnectedness of peace and justice, morality and law, truth and love. Serving the eternal unchanging truth is our primary duty ... At the same time, such service is not complete if it is not combined with love and forgiveness, with the desire for harmony and reconciliation, with mercy for the fallen ... A fair attitude towards each person and each human community is seen by us closely interconnected with spiritual and moral values and constructive traditions... History shows that the destruction of moral foundations brings death to people, personality crisis, enmity and inner emptiness. That is why we see it as our sacred duty to fully promote moral values in our societies and around the world through education, mass media and the manifestation of the civic position of believers" [11]. In the statement, we see one of the key topics that is constantly touched upon by religious leaders during the dialogue - an indication of the closeness of understanding of moral values by traditional religions and the desire for cooperation in the name of their establishment in society. The communiqué also emphasizes the inextricable link between the categories of justice and morality, that is, it is indicated that a necessary condition for the well-being of society and social prosperity must be adherence to moral principles.

In a joint statement following the results of the third meeting, devoted to the problems of interreligious dialogue in the context of international relations, it was said: "Such a dialogue should develop equal and mutually respectful cooperation of nations in a multipolar world. Religious leaders together can and should guide politicians and societies to the path of peace and

harmony. They can and should also oppose attempts to build a new world order based on the dominance of one culture, civilization or political system. The wealth of this world, created by the Almighty, must be present at all levels of the world political system" [2]. The communiqué cites another topic of paramount importance for the agenda of interreligious relations - peacekeeping. It also emphasizes the idea that it is impossible to build a global world order according to one pattern, trying to level religious and cultural differences. Civilizational differences, the unique identity and originality of representatives of different ethno-confessional groups should be treated with respect.

In the communiqué following the results of the 6th meeting of the Commission in 2008 (the doctrine of God in two religions), it was noted: "The foundations of the teachings of both religions recognize the inseparable connection between the dignity of a person's personality and the fact that they were created in the image of God and is the crown of creation... The participants in the interviews recognize that that, despite the freedom of moral choice granted to man by the Creator, the sin generated by falling away from Him has no justification, and vices destroy not only public morality, but also the spiritual and physical health of a person, and ultimately his life... The parties expressed mutual conviction that the realization of human rights and freedoms must be harmonized with observance of moral norms and moral education. Condemning the desecration of religious values that make up an important part of the lives of many people, we call on states and the world community to prevent the desecration of shrines revered by believers and ensure their religious rights" [13]. The communiqué reflects the idea that believers are called by the Creator Himself to testify to the modern world about the existence of absolute moral standards and sin. In addition, the commission's statement comprehends the idea of freedom of choice, and argues that this gift of God requires a responsible attitude towards it from a person. Freedom should not be perceived as permissiveness, but it is necessary to correlate it

---

with moral standards, then the person himself and society as a whole will be prosperous. The communiqué also touched upon the topic of protecting religious shrines and the rights of believers as one of the possible tasks for cooperation between Orthodox and Moslems. The sixth meeting marked the tenth anniversary of the work of the Commission, in connection with which it was noted in the communiqué that the meetings contribute to the "development of an equal and mutually respectful dialogue between religions, cultures and civilizations. Such an approach preserves and emphasizes the identity of each of the religions and does not lead to syncretism, revision of creeds, blurring of boundaries between spiritual traditions ... such meetings can make a real contribution to the peaceful coexistence of the Christian and Islamic communities in the modern world, set an example of fraternal interaction" [14]. The participants note that the very fact of a friendly meeting between representatives of Orthodoxy and Islam, their readiness to listen and hear each other, their respectful discussion of various problems that concern believers, contributes to the harmonization of relations between religious communities.

The joint communiqué of the 7th meeting of the Commission (2010) noted: "... the participants presented reports on the influence of religion on the spiritual health of society, the role of religion in strengthening the institution of the family and family values, the problems of relations between religious and secular communities, the relationship between religious tradition and doctrine human rights and freedoms, the influence of religious tradition on the morality of the individual... During the dialogue, many times the danger of aggressive secularism, which views religion as a source of violence and conflicts, and also insists on its exclusion from public life, was spoken about... The participants of the meeting noted the atmosphere of cordiality and openness, in which the discussion took place" [15]. Here we again see a number of key topics that are typical for the agenda of interreligious relations at the present stage: the danger of erosion

of traditional family values, the threat of destruction of public morality as a result of the spread of the ideology of secularism, understanding the concept of human rights and freedoms, the place of religion in the life of society.

Representatives of different religious communities in the framework of interreligious dialogue often claim that they are all adherents of the so-called traditional moral values, and this is what brings them together. However, often the concept of traditional values is understood rather intuitively and it is not clear what exactly it includes. In this context, the wording of the concept of "traditional values", which was developed by the participants of the 7th meeting of the Commission and reflected in the final communiqué, is of interest: "It was recognized as necessary to unite the efforts of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Moslem community of Iran to form the concept of "traditional values", its recognition in international law and consolidation in the activities of international organizations. Traditional values refer to the important role of religion in public and private life; human desire for moral perfection; the preservation of the sanctity of family life as a union of a man and a woman; respect for elders; diligence; helping the poor and protecting the weak" [16]. So, the participants of the meeting singled out as traditional moral values shared by followers of Orthodoxy and Islam, two commandments from the biblical decalogue – the fifth and seventh – prescribing to honor parents (elders) and forbidding adultery. The communiqué also speaks of the most important principles of compassion and mercy for religions, which were expressed in the document mainly in a practical aspect – as helping the needy and supporting people who cannot protect themselves. The statement also reflects the fact that religion is not just a system of views and norms, but involves activity, dynamics, the process of internal transformation, change of the believer (self-improvement). In addition, the participants suggested that work and the conviction of believers that religion should not be driven into a kind of ghetto, but religious

---

communities should have every right to actively participate in social life, be attributed to traditional moral values.

It should be added that during the visit of the church delegation as part of the seventh meeting of the Commission, Tehran University hosted a presentation of the Farsi translation of the Fundamentals of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church.

These are, in general terms, the main ideas that were expressed by the members of the Joint Commission "Orthodoxy-Islam". More details on the texts of the communiqué and the list of participants in the meetings can be found in the public domain on the Internet at the links indicated in the notes to this article.

### **3. Analysis of the activities of the Commission for Dialogue "Orthodoxy-Islam" in the context of types of interreligious relations: specifics and limitations**

Having considered the history and conceptual foundations of the Commission's work, let's move on to analyzing its activities in a broader context - as one of the possible approaches to interreligious dialogue.

According to the author, speaking of interreligious dialogue, four main types of the latter should be distinguished: "polemical", "cognitive", "peacemaking" and "partnership". The listed types of dialogue pursue different goals and, accordingly, are based on different principles and are expressed in different forms. These types of dialogue can be compared with the following questions that determine the content and nature of interreligious relations: "Which of us is right, whose faith is better?" (polemical dialogue), "who are you, what beliefs do you adhere to?" (cognitive dialogue), "how can we ensure the harmonious coexistence of followers of different religions and help strengthen harmony?" (peacemaking dialogue) and "what can we do together to improve the world, in what areas can we cooperate?" (partner dialogue). In the polemical and cognitive types of dialogue, it is mainly about theological problems,

---

understanding the relationship between the ideas of religions as worldview systems. Peacemaking and partnership types of dialogue are built around ensuring harmonious coexistence and cooperation of religious communities as social institutions. In each of these types of dialogue, one can distinguish their various subspecies [17].

Polemic inter-religious dialogue, involving a dispute about the truth of religious worldviews, can lead to antagonism and enmity. In many respects, this is precisely the reason why today, at the official level, they tend to refuse this type of interreligious relations. The members of the Joint Commission, as it was noted, at the first meeting condemned proselytism in this sense: "the spread of religion through violence and bribery, which destroys interreligious peace and tramples on human freedom." That is, in fact, the principle of religious freedom is affirmed here – the rejection of forcible compulsion to believe and the refusal of participants to build an interreligious dialogue within the framework of a polemical model.

Within the framework of the Commission's activities, interreligious dialogue aimed not at persuading an opponent and demonstrating the advantages of one's religion, as is the case in a polemical dialogue, but at getting to know the views of a dialogic partner and comparing them with one's own religious worldview. Focusing at the understanding of other religions allows us to shift the emphasis from the problematic and often painful question of the salvation and truth of different religions, in a sense, to put it out of brackets [18]. That is, in the course of interreligious interaction, cognitive dialogue was of considerable importance [19].

Cognitive interreligious dialogue has different types. The most characteristic of them are those that in the Catholic classification are designated as "dialogue of theological exchange" (the terms "theological dialogue", "dialogue of study" are also used) and "dialogue of religious experience" ("dialogue of spirituality", "spiritual dialogue"). The "theological dialogue" aims at forming an objective idea of another religion, obtaining the necessary information for this, eliminating false stereotypes

---

and prejudices. The "dialogue of theological exchange" also includes a comparison of the views of religions on various issues (ideas about God, the afterlife, sin, the soul, the meaning of the scriptures, etc.). At the same time, such acquaintance with another religion and comparison with one's faith, in terms of the Catholic approach, is realized at the level of the "head", that is, it has an intellectual character. The "heart" should also be involved in the spiritual dialogue, that is, the participants strive to feel, to enter deeply into the perspective of the experience of another religion, up to the use of its spiritual practices. The purpose of the spiritual interreligious dialogue is considered to be the "mutual enrichment" of the participants, their "personal and spiritual growth" [20].

The Russian Orthodox Church and the Islamic community of Iran are characterized by the desire to preserve the sacred sphere intact, to protect it from attempts to invade from outside, to refuse any compromises in matters of faith and the fusion of religious worldviews. In this regard, the development of relations corresponding to the paradigm of spiritual dialogue was not discussed during the work of the Commission.

Considering the experience of the Russian-Iranian commission, we can see in it the features of a theological dialogue. It is noteworthy that only two sessions – the fifth and sixth – were devoted to theological issues proper: the analysis of the doctrine of God in two religions and eschatological ideas. Such a model of relations, when Orthodox and Moslems told each other about their religion's idea of God, can be characterized as a theological dialogue. At the same time, in the communiqué of the seventh session on the topic of ideas about God, an excerpt from which was given above, the emphasis was not on theological problems (the Christian doctrine of the Trinity and monotheism, the possibility of God incarnation, etc.), but on moral aspects. That is, it was noted that God acts as a source of eternal and unchangeable moral norms, according to which personal and social life should be built, the emphasis was placed on what consequences ideas about God have in the social

dimension. In this regard, it was said about the fallacy from the point of view of religious consciousness of the idea that human freedom should be limited only by the freedom of another person. But it is necessary, including when formulating the concept of human rights and freedoms, to take into account the concept of sin and moral principles, so that freedom is not understood as permissiveness. While at all other meetings, except for the two mentioned, issues related to the harmonious coexistence of believers in the conditions of the modern world and their possible positive contribution to the life of society were discussed. That is, in fact, various aspects of the peacemaking dialogue and possible areas of cooperation of religious communities within the framework of the partnership dialogue were conceptualized.

Generally speaking, for believers of different religions who have decided to actually start building a dialogue from scratch, it is appropriate and logical to offer to get acquainted with the views and values of their religious traditions. For example, the beginning of the modern Catholic-Christian dialogue is considered to be the international conferences held in 1988 in Hong Kong and in 1991 in Berkeley. These interreligious meetings were attended by prominent Christian and Confucian experts who discussed three main topics. First, it is the relationship between God and the world. In Confucianism, this problem is considered in the context of the categories of interaction between "heaven" ("chan") or "tao" and humanity ("ren"). The second topic was related to the study of the ethics of Christianity and Confucianism, including the problems of the correlation of personal and public morality. The third topic was the understanding in the two religions of the relationship between man and wildlife [21]. Another question raised during the interreligious meetings was whether Confucianism could be considered a religion. Following the results of these two conferences, collections of reports were published.

As His Holiness Patriarch Kirill noted in one of his speeches: "A trusting, balanced system working according to the

correct methodology can lead to remarkable results, namely: interreligious dialogue should give a meaningful spiritual intellectual product" [22]. The meetings of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission on Dialogue "Orthodoxy-Islam" have not always been in the nature of deep theological, scientific discussions aimed at a comprehensive analysis of the positions of religions on various issues, as was the case at the aforementioned Christian-Confucian conferences. In this context, it is significant that in Russia, conference materials and speakers' speeches were not published at all.

At the same time, it seems wrong to believe that the meetings of the Russian-Iranian commission were only an imitation of a genuine theological dialogue. Indeed, the very ideological, conceptual content of the meetings was partly of a secondary, auxiliary nature, was considered only as a means. The activities of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission can be characterized mainly as one of the forms of peacemaking interreligious dialogue – as a diplomatic dialogue. The participants did not have the goal of a thorough study and theological understanding of the relationship between the views of Christianity and Islam (cognitive dialogue). Also, the members of the Joint Commission did not seek to organize specific practical activities of believers, which is typical for a partnership dialogue (one example of such a dialogue is the work of the Interreligious Working Group on Humanitarian Assistance to the Residents of Syria, which operates under the Council for Interaction with Religious Associations under the President of the Russian Federation).

At the same time, the main task of the Commission was not so much to study the topics discussed with academic thoroughness, as to establish and maintain communication between the two religious communities. And this goal was achieved: thanks to the activities of this platform, it was possible to establish strong diplomatic contacts and benevolent, trusting relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Islamic community of Iran, to discuss many problems of concern to

believers. On this basis, if desired, religious communities have the opportunity to develop interreligious dialogue in any spheres: to implement scientific theological interreligious research, to carry out academic exchange of students, to make joint peacemaking statements on the current agenda of international relations, to organize joint practical activities of believers.

The communiqué of the sixth session stated that thanks to the Joint Commission, it was possible to “show an example of fraternal cooperation for other religions and the whole society.” That is, an important aspect of the commission's activities was to demonstrate to ordinary believers an example of good, respectful interreligious relations, the fact that differences in religious beliefs should not lead to antagonism and hostility. Moreover, the proximity of the position of Islam and Christianity on various moral and social issues allows believers to be “in the same camp”, to cooperate in areas of common interest. The very fact of having the same benevolent meetings has an important symbolic meaning.

Of course, the relations between the two religious communities were not limited only to meetings once every two years, other contacts and mutual visits took place. For example, the author accompanied a delegation from the University of Religions and Confessions of the city of Kuma consisting of more than twenty people (teachers and students of postgraduate and doctoral studies) during a tour of the Trinity-Sergius Lavra in August 2017. From July 14 to 18, 2019, the head of the Center for Interreligious Dialogue of the Organization for Culture and Islamic Relations of Iran, Khojat-ul-Islam M. Tashiri, visited Moscow. During the visit for M. The Tahsiri Department for External Church Relations organized the following events: a meeting with the DECR Chairman Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, an excursion to the Moscow Cathedral Mosque, a visit to the Ss Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute of Postgraduate Studies, a visit to the residence of the Spiritual Assembly of Moslems of Russia, a visit to the Novospassky Stauropegial Monastery, a meeting in the Public Chamber of the

Russian Federation with the Chairman of the Commission for the Harmonization of Interethnic and Interreligious Relations I.E. Diskin, a meeting with Metropolitan Feofan of Kazan and Tatarstan in the plenipotentiary mission of Tatarstan in Moscow [23].

In general, the experience of the Commission, within which bilateral cooperation between representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and Moslems of Iran was carried out on a regular basis, can be called unique for the history of religious communities of the two countries. More than twenty years of work of the commission has allowed to establish strong and friendly relations between the two religious communities, which can serve as a foundation for further development of interreligious dialogue in various fields.

## References

1. DECR Chairman met with the leadership of the Center for Interreligious Dialogue of the Islamic Republic of Iran. [Electronic source]. Available at: <https://mospat.ru/ru/2011/10/21/news50153/> (accessed: 07.07.2021).
2. Interreligious relation. [Electronic source]. Available at: <https://patriarch.patriarchia.ru/mezreligioznye-otnosheniya/> (accessed: 07.07.2021).
3. Communiqué of the meeting of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission on the Dialogue "Islam-Orthodoxy". [Electronic source]. Available at: [mospat.ru/ru/news/86207/](https://mospat.ru/ru/news/86207/) (accessed: 07.07.2021).
4. Orthodox-Muslim Dialogue in Tehran [Electronic source]. Available at: <https://mospat.ru/ru/news/85126/> (Accessed: 07.07.2021).
5. Joint communiqué of the 4 meeting of the Russian-Iranian Commission on dialogue "Islam-Orthodoxy". [Electronic source]. Available at: <https://mospat.ru/ru/news/81891/> (accessed: 07.07.2021).
6. The 5 meeting of the Russian-Iranian Commission on the dialogue "Islam-Orthodoxy" was held in Tehran. [Electronic source]. Available at: [www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/87262.html](http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/87262.html) (accessed: 07.07.2021).
7. The 6 meeting of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission on the Dialogue "Islam-Orthodoxy" has ended. [Electronic source]. Available at: [www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/437442.html](http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/437442.html) (accessed: 07.07.2021).
8. The ninth meeting of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission on the Dialogue "Islam-Orthodoxy" was held in Tehran. [Electronic source]. Available at: [www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3710805.htm](http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/3710805.htm) (accessed: 07.07.2021).

9. Communiqué of the 10 meeting of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission on the Dialogue “Islam-Orthodoxy” on the topic “Interreligious dialogue and cooperation as tools for achieving a lasting and just peace”. [Electronic source]. Available at: <https://mospat.ru/ru/news/49177/> (accessed: 07.07.2021).
10. The eleventh meeting of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission on the Dialogue “Islam-Orthodoxy”, dedicated to environmental problems, has ended in Tehran. [Electronic source]. Available at: <https://mospat.ru/ru/news/47480/> (accessed: 07.07.2021).
11. Hilarion, Metropolitan of Volokolamsk. Patriarch Kirill. Life and worldview. Moscow: Eksmo; 2010. 580 P.
12. Orthodox-Muslim Dialogue in Tehran. [Electronic source]. Available at: <https://mospat.ru/ru/news/85126/> (accessed: 07.07.2021).
13. Communiqué on the results of the 6 meeting of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission on the Dialogue “Islam-Orthodoxy” Communiqué on the results of the 6 meeting of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission for “Orthodoxy-Islam” dialogue: Analysis of the Experience of Christian-Muslim Relations // Internet portal of the press service of the Moscow Patriarchate. [Electronic source]. Available at: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/437430.html> (accessed: 07.07.2021).
14. Communiqué on the results of the 6th meeting of the Joint Russian-Iranian Commission on the Dialogue “Islam-Orthodoxy” // Internet-portal press-sluzhby Moskovskoj Patriarhii. [Electronic source]. Available at: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/437430.html> (accessed: 07.07.2021).
15. Joint communiqué of the 7th meeting of the Russian-Iranian Commission on the dialogue “Islam-Orthodoxy”. [Electronic source]. Available at: <http://www.mospat.ru/ru/2010/10/12/news27994/> (accessed: 07.07.2021).
16. Joint communiqué of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Russian-Iranian Commission on the dialogue “Islam-Orthodoxy”. [Electronic source]. Available at: <http://www.mospat.ru/ru/2010/10/12/news27994/> (accessed: 07.07.2021).
17. Melnik S. Types of Interreligious Dialogue // Journal of Interreligious Studies. 2020. № 31. P. 48–72. Accessed: <https://irstudies.org/index.php/jirs/article/view/499>
18. Madigan D. Christian-Muslim dialogue. In: Cornille C. (ed.). The Wiley-Blackwell companion to inter-religious dialogue. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons; 2013. Pp. 244–260.
19. Melnik S.V. Kognitivnyj mezhreligioznyj dialoga [Cognitive interreligious dialogue]. Vestnik Russkoj hristianskoj gumanitarnoj akademii [Bulletin of the Russian Christian Humanitarian Academy]. 2019; Vol. 20. № 2: 209–227.
20. Moyaert M. Interreligious Dialogue In: D. Cheetham, D. Pratt, and D. Thomas. (eds.). Understanding Interreligious Relations. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. P. 193–217.

21. Berthrong J. Christian-Confucian dialogue. In: CornilleC. (ed.). The Wiley-Blackwell companion to inter-religious dialogue. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons; 2013. P. 303-304.
22. His Holiness Patriarch Kirill: Without support from below, interreligious dialogue loses its meaning. [Electronic source]. Available at: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1546480.html> (accessed: 07.07.2021).
23. The visit of the head of the Center for Dialogue of Religions and Cultures of the Organization for Culture and Islamic Relations of Iran to Moscow has ended. [Electronic source]. Available at: [www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5474165.html](http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/5474165.html) (accessed: 07.07.2021).

## OLGA CHIKRIZOVA, YURII LASHKHIA. RELIGIOUS FACTOR IN WORLD POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

*Keywords: religion; international relationships; global politics.*

**Chikrizova Olga,**

PhD(Hist.), Associate Professor,

Department of Theory and History of International Relations,

RUDN University

e-mail [chikrizova-os@rudn.ru](mailto:chikrizova-os@rudn.ru)

**Yurii Lashkhia,**

Postgraduate Student, 3d year,

Department of Theory and History of International Relations,

RUDN University

e-mail: [george-leo@mail.ru](mailto:george-leo@mail.ru)

© Chikrizova O., Lashkhia Yu. 2022

*Citation:* Chikrizova O., Lashkhia Yu. Religious factor in world politics and international relations // Russia and the Moslem World, 2022, № 2 (316), P. 116-128. DOI: 10.31249/rmw/2022.02.10

*Abstract. The article is dedicated to identifying the key features of the influence of the religious factor on world politics in the light of the traditional science of international relations ignoring religion and defending the position on the separation of "secular" and "spiritual" in the studies of international relations.*

---

For a long time, the religious factor was practically not considered by the theory of international relations (TIR). Having emerged as an academic discipline after World War I, the science of international relations initially reflected the position, according to which, under the pressure of secularization processes, religion would have a very limited value for the world order. As a result of this conviction, religion was paid very little attention, especially in the United States, where most of the leading experts in international relations lived.

The political realism that has prevailed in America since the 1940s and 1950s is based on three fundamental premises, which can be formulated as follows: 1) the foreign policy of states pursues two main goals – the accumulation of material goods, mainly resources and power; 2) all states share similar international motives and goals; 3) the international system is an anarchic self-help system characterized by conflict, competition and strategic cooperation [1].

Another, no less important, aspect of realism is the clear separation of foreign and domestic policy. Within the framework of this paradigm, it is usually believed that the opposing forces within the country are united in order to protect the objectively existing “national interests”, the main of which realists consider ensuring the security and survival of the state, which, in turn, is conceived by the supporters of this school as the primary unit of analysis and the primary ontological unit in international relations. As for non-material factors, realism in all its diversity naturally sees in them a kind of tinsel, which individual states, as necessary, use as a grounding and justification for their policy, which is in fact determined by “real” national interests, which is always due to some kind of material factors. Liberal and neoliberal approaches to the study of international relations also do not pay much attention to the religious factor. For liberals, the global system is an intertwining of various problem areas, including trade, the environment, energy, human rights, and democracy. Along with the state, liberalism recognizes the

importance of transnational actors, such as intergovernmental organizations and transnational corporations (TNCs). Religious actors are also recognized for transnational importance, but their importance is considered in terms of specific issues, in particular those identified above, and not in general [2]. Truly speaking, some liberal authors (for example, Madeleine Albright in her book "Religion and World Politics") tried to deal with the issue of religion, starting from their own beliefs, but in some places their works are extreme emotional and lacking of some important knowledge. So, M. Albright makes extremely controversial judgments about the religions of the peoples of Africa south of the Sahara, and also actually reproduces the colonial division of Islam into "black" (Islam noir) and "Arabic", linking it with another, not indisputable, classification of Islam into "moderate" and "extremist" [3].

Marxism, the third classical school of understanding the nature of international relations, and its derivative, neo-Marxism, offer a view of world political processes as a manifestation of the class struggle. Religion is not considered by neo-Marxists as an important aspect of class-based conflicts and is seen by them as a veil that hides the true economic interests of the subjects of international relations.

Among the reasons underlying the traditional theories of disdain for religion as a factor in foreign policy and international relations, one should name, firstly, the worldview inherited from the Enlightenment, according to which religion and other "irrational" forms of cognition and thinking will eventually give way to secular mind. Secondly, the modern system of international relations dates back, as is commonly believed, to 1648. For more than a century, religious wars and their attendant violations of sovereignty served as the main cause of strife in European politics, however, after the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia, this type of conflict in Europe disappeared [4]. In political science and international relations of the XX century skepticism towards religion reached an even greater degree.

---

Traditional schools of international relations and their analytical tools are extremely ill-suited to research.

Of great importance for the theory of international relations is the period of the “third debate” (1970s), when reflectivist approaches, primarily constructivism, came to the forefront of science. Unlike traditional paradigms, constructivism is not so much a school or a coherent theory as a method. An important unifying element of all research and work produced in the mainstream of constructivism is the giving of central importance to ideas, norms, cultural traditions and identity. Moreover, it was the constructivists, and not the adherents of classical theories, who began to write detailed works on the topic of the religious factor in international relations. It is the constructivist approach that is able to provide researchers of religion in world politics and international relations with the proper tools due to its concentration on non-material factors.

Although relatively suitable methods for the study of the religious factor in world politics and international relations have appeared, some of the questions related to this topic have not yet found definitive answers, acting as points of disagreement in the scientific community. The main of them should be considered the lack of a generally accepted definition of the term “religion”, which creates significant difficulties for delineating the boundaries of the phenomenon it denotes and, consequently, determining its place in political processes; the rest, in one way or another, stem from or are related to this problem. Be that as it may, religion today has taken place as a factor in international politics, which makes it necessary to attract the closest attention of the scientific community to it. Being inextricably linked with the worldview, being its basis or influencing it in some other way, religion to some extent sets the patterns of human thinking and, consequently, its activities, including in the field of politics.

Today, religion sets the patterns of behavior for both state and transnational players. As for state religious entities, only two countries are currently considered to be such in the full sense of

---

the word – the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Besides them, no other state in the world proclaims religion as a guiding principle in domestic and foreign policy at the level of a framework law, although they also cannot be considered the only state entities with a religious identity. In general, religion is a very powerful persuasion tool that allows one state actor to influence the heads and citizens of other states, and in the context of global politics, it is used to justify very different lines of foreign policy activity. Religion in international relations “is a double-edged weapon that can bring benefits to any actor” [5], since one state is able to resort to it in confrontation with another state, but the second can also use religion against the first. A similar thing is observed in the case of the Sunni-Shia confrontation, in which Iran and its proxies, primarily the Lebanese group Hezbollah, compete with the countries of the Sunni world, in particular with Saudi Arabia.

Religiously motivated state subjects of world politics found themselves on opposite sides of the barricades during the “Arab spring” in Syria, where, among other things, the Turkish-Qatari alliance based on the Moslem Brotherhood\* clashed with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the vector of foreign policy formation of which is set by the Wahhabi current of Sunni Islam [6].

But, naturally, religious legitimacy has limits, since the arguments of a particular religious movement are fully accepted only by its supporters and inevitably reveal differences with adherents of other areas of the same religion, not to mention non-believers and secular players. The more particularistic thinking a political subject manifests, forming arguments in support of its own course, the fewer other subjects will be inclined to support it. For example, this is one of the obstacles to the spread of the Saudi model in the Islamic world, since Wahhabism is largely known for “its excessive severity and fanaticism in the methods of its implementation” [7].

---

\* The organization is banned in the Russian Federation.

However, paradoxical it may seem, but sometimes the governments of officially secular countries adhere to religious doctrines to one degree or another. For example, Israel is a Jewish state only in the national sense, remaining secular since its declaration in 1948. Nevertheless, it is difficult to say that its government is always and in everything guided by considerations of a narrowly understood pragmatism. In particular, a very important place in the vision of Israeli political figures is occupied by Jerusalem, which should not be allowed under any circumstances to be controlled by Moslem Arabs, since it is extremely holy to the Jews. The situation is complicated by the fact that Jerusalem is also important for Moslems, because it was this city that played the role of the first qibla (direction for ritual prayer) and is second in importance only to Mecca and Medina. The issue of Jerusalem's allegiance is one of the significant stumbling blocks between Israel and countries with a Moslem majority population, primarily partially recognized Palestine, which maintain the relevance of the Arab-Israeli conflict, its dependence to this day.

States outside the Middle East and North Africa do not always ignore religion either. Thus, Christian religious beliefs clearly shaped the foreign policy approach of the 43rd President of the United States, George W. Bush. George Bush argued that it was by the will of God that the United States was spreading freedom and democracy in the Middle East [8]. It is also necessary to mention the coming to power in India in 2014 of Narendra Modi, professing the Hindutva (Indian nationalism with religious Hindu overtones) the leader of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is known to the general public in various countries of the world for its policy aimed against Indian Moslems. For example, the BJP, together with another ideologically similar organization, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, was behind the destruction of the Babur Mosque (Babri Masjid) in Ayodhya in 1992.

According to many Hindus, Moslems in the 15th century built a mosque on the ruins of the temple of Rama destroyed by the commander of Babur Mir Baki Tashkandi, and the land itself is revered as the birthplace of Rama (janmasthan). The legal battle over the place of importance to followers of both religions continued for many decades, and the issue of land ownership has become one of the key issues of Indian politics. On November 9, 2019, the Supreme Court of the Republic of India recognized the right to the disputed territory for the Hindus, while the Moslems were awarded another site in Ayodhya for the construction of a new mosque to replace the destroyed Babri Masjid. Finally, in 2020, despite the quarantine, Narendra Modi laid a Rama temple in this area [9].

It is also interesting to pay attention to the ways in which state religious players implement their policies. They often act directly, as partly illustrated by the examples above, but they may also use indirect means. For example, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia spreads its vision of Islam in politics through its wealth, which to this day remains the main thing for this country - petrodollars. As part of the programs to promote the socio-economic development Saudi Arabia manages to practice the so-called "mosque diplomacy", which consists in financially supporting the construction of mosques around the world. Islamic scholars who work in mosques and Islamic centers funded by the Kingdom promote the Saudi understanding of Islam, often as graduates of the Saudi educational institutions. Saudi Arabia implements its strategy through the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, as well as the Saudi Development Fund and numerous charitable foundations, formally non-state, but in fact headed by one of the members of the ruling family or a person close to it [10].

However, the main religious subjects of world politics and international relations today should not be considered states, but various and quite numerous transnational religious organizations. Examples include the Roman Catholic Church

with its headquarters in the Vatican; the Anglican (in America Episcopal) church centered in Canterbury, England; the World Council of Churches, consisting of about 350 Protestant churches with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland; The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, an intergovernmental organization of Moslem countries, which includes 57 members and 5 observers. The OIC headquarters is located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Speaking about the role of international organizations, it is impossible to ignore Pope John Paul II, whose name is associated with the era of the demise of the ideology of communism in Europe. The leader of the Vatican in the eyes of many people is as bright a symbol of it as the first and last President of the USSR Mikhail Gorbachev. At the same time, John Paul II was not only an ardent anti-communist, but also criticized the negative aspects of the modern capitalist world, and also exposed political authoritarianism. During his papacy, the Vatican declared its rejection of the US-British invasion of Iraq.

The variety of transnational Islamist organizations, some of which practice methods of struggle called "terrorist" should be noted separately. It must be said that the very concept of terrorism is largely conditional, since there is no universally recognized definition of it and various actors in international relations can often consider to be "terrorist" the organizations, which is not necessarily so from the point of view of other actors. In this context, the example of Hezbollah is indicative, it is considered terrorist and is banned in the United States, Great Britain, the Gulf countries, Egypt and many other states, but is not considered in a similar capacity by Russia, Syria and Iran. The same is the case with another political Islamist organization – the Palestinian HAMAS. Russia, Norway, China, Turkey, Qatar, China and the OIC do not recognize this organization as a terrorist organization, while, for example, the position of the United States, Canada, the EU, Japan and Israel is the opposite.

It is equally important to understand that even organizations famous for their truly impressive atrocities, such as

the infamous IS, banned in the Russian Federation, often enjoy the support of the population they control. The main reason for this is considered to be, and apparently not unreasonably, the effective social policy of the "caliphate" and other similar groups. For example, after the capture of Mosul by the IS group, three-quarters of the population of more than one and a half million of the city did not relocate, besides, about 35 percent of citizens felt that the city became cleaner and safer under the militants than under the internationally recognized Iraqi government [11].

Among the most likely reasons for successful social policy and popularity among the broad masses, it is necessary to list the following: the absence of a cumbersome bureaucratic apparatus and the relative simplicity of the structure of jihadist organizations [12]; the small distance between the cell leaders and the rest of the members; the lack of legal grounds for rebel formations to exercise political power.

Finally, it is impossible to ignore the role that some Sufi brotherhoods (tariqas) play today. Being powerful transnational network organizations, modern Sufi tariqas and communities, as the Ukrainian Islamic scholar O.A. Yarosh convincingly shows, are "one of the tools for attracting indigenous residents of Western countries to Islam, which is facilitated by the aura of "mysticism", familiarization with the "innermost" surrounding them, the cult of "divine love", which arose, to a large extent, thanks to the efforts of orientalist scientists and became widespread in the works of Western esotericists and "traditionalists". At the same time, Sufi tariqas in the West attract not only seekers of "enlightenment", rushing between different spiritual traditions and teachers, but also those who sincerely seek to radically change their own way of life and worldview through religious conversion" [13].

Currently, in almost all countries of the world with very rare exceptions, there are old and even new Sufi groups, which differ from each other in a number of parameters, including in relation to the Islamic normative tradition. Not always directly

involved in politics, Sufis usually have a significant impact on the culture and identity of the societies they are a part of, and therefore it is quite possible to influence domestic and foreign policy.

Also, Islam in general and Sufism in particular sometimes merge with all kinds of countercultural paradigms, including politicized ones. The so-called “anarcho-Islam” should be considered one of the most interesting manifestations of this. Adherents of its diverse interpretations combine self-identification as Moslem believers or are influenced by some Islamic, often Sufi, concepts with an anarchic worldview. The first personalities in the history of European Islam who tried to synthesize Islam and anarchism in their views have been known since the last century and are represented by the names of the Swedish artist and the first student of Al-Azhar of Western origin, the author of the term “Islamophobia” Ivan Agueli (Ageli; 1869–1917); Italian anarcho-pacifist and feminist Leda Rafanelli (1880–1971); Swiss feminist and researcher Isabelle Eberhardt (1877–1904), as well as French cartoonist and philosopher Gustave-Henri Josso (1866–1951).

Nowadays, among the most famous there are an African-American anarchist thinker Mohammed Jean Venez, whose interpretation of the principle of divine unity in Islam (at-tawhid) is to worship only God, but not artificial political institutions; a British blogger, journalist and writer Yunus Yaqoob Islam (Julian Hoare); American short story writer and founder of the musical style taqwacore Michael Muhammad Knight, an American philosopher Peter Lamborn Wilson (pseudonym Hakim Bey). It cannot be denied that this and other similar trends will continue to develop and in the hypothetical future there will be political organizations defending similar concepts as a basis for a more just and organic way of life.

As you can see, there are quite a lot of religious actors and they all have their own specifics, expressed in a specific form of religious worldview and means of realizing political interests. For

example, the Pope uses his authority as the head of the most numerous Christian church in the world and makes judgments on the burning problems of our time, which are invariably listened to. Islam, unlike the Orthodox and Catholic interpretations of Christianity, does not know the phenomenon of the church, and, as an American Islamic scholar Ira Lapidus points out, Islam as a civilization is based on the "network principle", that is, it traditionally existed in the form of networks of ulema (Islamic scholars), Sufi tariqas, merchants, etc., acting over the boundaries of the possessions of specific polities. In addition, the Moslem communities themselves (Jamaat) were "networks of relations between its constituent groups" [14].

Some religious actors, such as Sufi tariqas, do not always directly interfere in politics, but often have a noticeable impact on the cultural and civilizational identity of society, and the foreign policy of any state actor is formed under the influence of both external and internal factors. Moreover, a relatively large community hypothetically may eventually get the opportunity to lobby for its interests and to some extent adjust the country's foreign policy course. Given the attractiveness of Sufism for Western spiritual seekers, we can assume a further increase in the number of Sufi groups and even the emergence of new ones identifying themselves as Islamic and demanding acceptance of Islam from new members, as well as conditional "heterodox" focusing exclusively on the so-called "spirituality".

It is impossible, as the authors believe, to discount the likelihood of the emergence of new religious and political movements, including the most unusual and capable of combining elements of different worldviews in their ideologies. No matter how strange it may look at first and superficially, in fact, the appearance of such groups is very likely. So, in his debut novel *The Taqwacores*, a representative of the punk scene and "anarcho-Moslem" Michael Muhammad Knight described a fictional community of Moslem punks who gathered at the home of the main character, Pakistani-American engineering student

Yusuf Ali. This unusual book already in the early 2000s, when it was first published, inspired the emergence of a whole musical subculture playing punk rock with Middle Eastern motifs and often interesting lyrics, and quite politicized.

Thus, M.M. Mchedlova notes, “modernity is changing the traditional meanings and forms of religion, and the religious factor is changing traditional theoretical constructions and political configurations: religion in new and multiple forms permeates social reality, blurring traditional political constants and forcing us to reflect on the algorithms of the socio-political process, the meaning of life and value imperatives and needs” [15].

There are a “politicization of religion and confessionalization of politics” [16], indicating the fallacy of the ideas traditional for the science of international relations about the complete disappearance of religion from the research field of social sciences. All this gives grounds to speak, firstly, about the need for an urgent revision of the statement about the universality of classical paradigms of TIR, which has been overdue for a long time, and secondly, to include areas of public space on which religion has a serious influence in the subject of the science of international relations, which is already happening in the West. In Russia, there are still very few specialists who feel this trend.

## References:

1. *Haynes J.* An Introduction to International Relations and Religion. 2nd ed. Routledge, 2013.
2. *Haynes J.* An Introduction to International Relations and Religion. 2nd ed. Routledge, 2013
3. *Albright M.* Religion and world politics. M.; Alpina Business Books, 2007
4. *Marsden L.* Religion and International Security. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2019. P. 10-11.
5. *Demchenko D.A.* The Religious Factor in the Foreign Policy of the Persian Gulf Countries: Thesis... PhD (History. Pyatigorsk, 2020. S. 53.)
6. *Khairullin T.R.* The Qatar-Turkish Alliance and Saudi Arabia: the struggle of ultra-conservative projects in Syria // Islam in the modern world. 2018. B. 14. No. 4. S. 235-246.

---

7. *Chikrizova O.S.* Saudi model of development for the “world of Islam”: features and limitations // Bulletin of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia. Ser.: International relations. 2019. B. 19. No. 4. S. 546.
8. *Haynes J.* An Introduction to International Relations and Religion. 2nd ed. Routledge, 2013.
9. Narendra Modi laid the foundation of a Hindu temple, despite quarantine // BBC News Russian Service. 05.08.2020. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-53664949> (date of access: 11.01.2022).
10. *Chikrizova O.S.* Saudi model of development for the “world of Islam”: features and limitations // Bulletin of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia. Ser.: International Relations. 2019. Vol. 19. No. 4. P. 545–565.
11. *Revkin M.R.* Competitive Governance and Displacement Decisions under Rebel Rule: Evidence from the Islamic State in Iraq // The Journal of Conflict Resolution. 2021. Vol. 65. No. 1. P. 46–80.
12. *Naumkin V.V., Kuznetsov V.A., Sukhov N.V., Zvyagelskaya I.D.* The Middle East in the Era of trials: Traumas of the Past and challenges of the Future. Report of the International Discussion Club “Valdai”. Moscow, 2016. P. 17.
13. *Yarosh O.A.* Problems of studying conversion to Islam in Sufi communities of the West: socio-cultural context, institutions, charisma // Islamology. 2017. Vol. 7. No 1. P. 72–87.
14. *Lapidus I.* Hierarchies and Networks: A Comparison of Chinese and Islamic Societies // Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China / ed. by F. Wakeman Jr., Carolyn Grant. Los Angeles, L.A.: University of California Press, 1975. P. 26–42.
15. *Mchedlova M.M.* Religion in political constructions of modernity: I present the issue // Bulletin of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia. Ser.: Political Science. 2020. Vol. 22. No. 4. P. 546.
16. *Mchedlova M.M., Kudryashova M.S.* Religion and politics: from secularization to new theoretical coordinates of research // Political Science. 2016. No. 5. P. 44.

РОССИЯ  
И  
МУСУЛЬМАНСКИЙ МИР  
2022 - 2 (316)

Научно-информационный бюллетень

Содержит материалы по текущим политическим,  
социальным и религиозным вопросам

Дизайн М.Б. Шнайдерман

Компьютерная верстка К.Л. Синякова

Гигиеническое заключение

№ 77.99.6.953.П.5008.8.99 от 23.08.1999 г.

Подписано к печати 14 / VI - 2022 г. Формат 60x84/16

Бум. офсетная № 1 Печать офсетная

Усл. печ. л. 7,6 Уч.-изд. л. 6,5

Тираж 300 экз. (1-100 экз. - 1-й завод) Заказ № 41

Институт научной информации  
по общественным наукам Российской академии наук РАН  
Нахимовский проспект, д. 51/21, Москва, 117418  
<http://inion.ru>

Отдел маркетинга и распространения  
информационных изданий  
Тел.: +7 (925) 517-36-91, +7 (499) 134-03-96  
e-mail: [shop@inion.ru](mailto:shop@inion.ru)

Отпечатано по гранкам ИНИОН РАН  
ООО «Амирит»,  
410004, Саратовская обл., г. Саратов,  
ул. Чернышевского, д. 88, литеру У