



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Genocide Warning: Tajikistan/Kyrgyzstan May 2021

From April 28th to May 1st [violent clashes](#) along the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan killed dozens of people. Initially starting in the Kyrgyz town of K k-Tash, mobs of Tajiks and Kyrgyz began throwing stones, scuffling, and trading insults. Over the course of the week, the violence spread to a dozen villages along the border. Eventually Kyrgyz and Tajik security forces joined the fighting, armed with heavy weapons.

[Forty-one people](#) were killed, with the majority being ethnic Kyrgyz. Approximately [40,000 people](#) were evacuated or displaced from the border zone. Several sources reported that Tajik forces used mortars and machine guns against both Kyrgyz troops and civilians. Tajik troops used bulldozers and firebombs to destroy Kyrgyz homes, shops, and hospitals. [A ceasefire](#) was called on May 1st. Each side agreed to withdraw troops built up along the border.

There have long been tensions between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan over the demarcation of the border. During the [Soviet Union](#), Communist Party officials created arbitrary and irregular borders that divided ethnic groups between several Soviet republics. Following the [collapse](#) of the Soviet Union, conflicts broke out as ethnic minorities found themselves cut off from their newly independent national homelands.

Fierce competition over the limited water and agricultural resources in the rich [Fergana Valley](#) has long contributed to ethnic violence. The current round of violence began with an incident in April, when a group of Tajiks attempted to put up a [security camera](#) on a shared water intake station along the border. While the fighting has now stopped, [tensions](#) along the border remain high and the potential for violence has not abated.

Genocide Watch considers the border area between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to be at **Stage 6: Polarization** and **Stage 7: Preparation**.

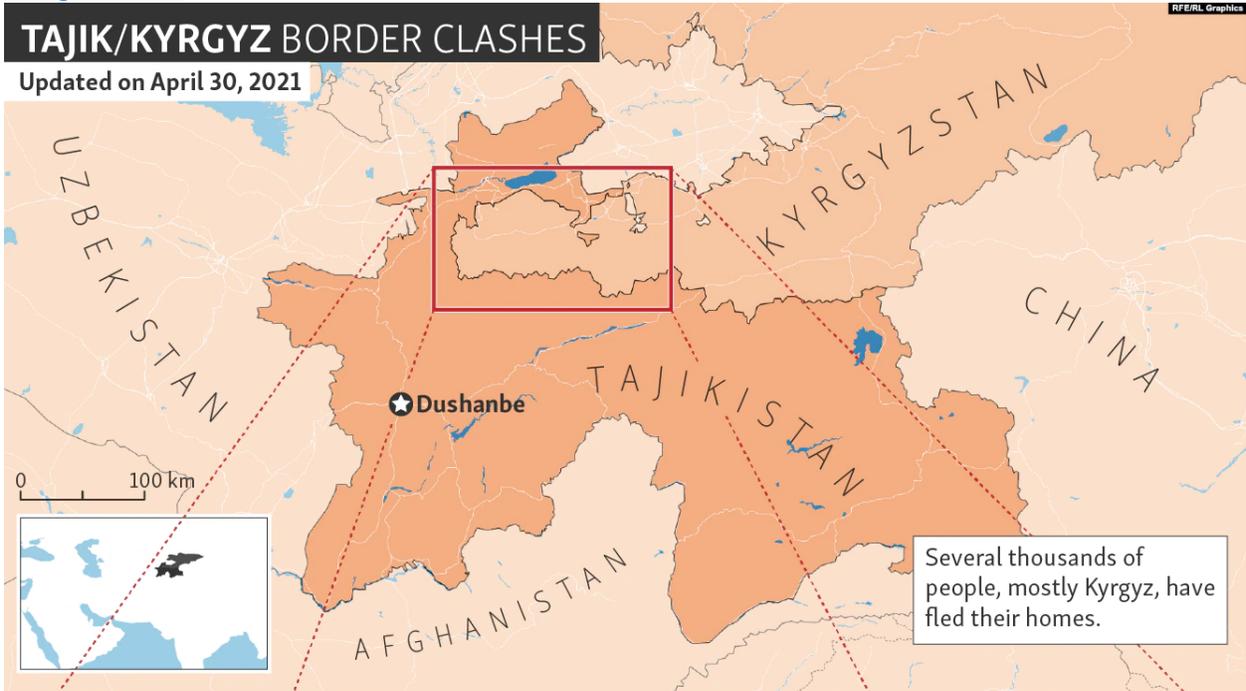
Genocide Watch Recommends:

1. An independent border commission should be appointed to resolve border disputes left over from the breakup of the Soviet Union. Preferably, the commission would be appointed by a multinational organization such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Eurasian Union, or the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).
2. A face-to-face meeting should be convened between Tajik President Emomali Rahmon and Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov, preferably on neutral territory, to discuss de-escalation of violence, distribution of resources along the border, and other issues in dispute.

Image Source:

TAJIK/KYRGYZ BORDER CLASHES

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C. Coelho | Sources: RFE/RL's Tajik and Kyrgyz services