



PAMIR INSIDE

Quarterly Human Rights & Regional Developments Briefing

Tajikistan and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO)

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Independent reporting and analysis on developments in GBAO and Tajikistan

Executive Summary

During the reporting period, developments in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast (GBAO) reflected a mixed but still restrictive human rights environment. A nationwide amnesty brought the release of several individuals convicted in connection with the 2022 events in GBAO and reduced the sentences of others. At the same time, reports continued of pressure related to detention conditions, online expression, conscription, administrative mobilization, religious regulation, and the legacy of the 2021–2022 crisis.

The period also included a notable case of criminal accountability involving a law-enforcement officer: in June, a military court sentenced an Interior Ministry officer to 12 years in prison for the March killing of a resident of Vanj district. The case stands alongside continued reports of limited transparency in other security-related and politically sensitive proceedings.

Key observations include:

- The June 2026 amnesty resulted in the release of journalist Muhammadsulton Mavlonazarov and at least seven residents of Rushan district convicted after the May 2022 events; several other prisoners reportedly received sentence reductions.
- Reports continued of health concerns and disciplinary pressure in detention, particularly in the case of former MMA fighter Chorshanbe Chorshanbiyev, who was reported to have health problems and was later placed in a punishment cell.
- Cases involving online expression and extremism-related charges remained a concern, including the reported transfer of Amchigul Amirshoeva from Russia to Tajikistan and the five-year sentence imposed on former local IRPT representative Mirsaid Shorakhmatulloev.
- Residents reported pressure connected to spring military conscription, compulsory public works, and financial contributions for local construction projects, including stadiums in Rushan district.
- Regional authorities continued campaigns addressing religious practice, “foreign culture,” social media use, and public conduct, with broad wording that leaves uncertainty regarding the scope of enforcement.
- Sharifkhon Safarzoda was appointed head of GBAO in July. Pamir Inside noted that this was the first time in independent Tajikistan that the region had been headed by a person who was not originally from GBAO.

Information access remains constrained

Independent access to reliable information from GBAO remains limited. Official information on sensitive criminal cases, detention conditions and security-related incidents is often incomplete or unavailable, while local sources may face risks when speaking publicly. These conditions continue to affect the scope and speed of independent verification.

Methodology and Access to Information

This briefing is based on Pamir Inside reporting, open-source monitoring, information from local sources, publicly available official statements, and media reports cited in the underlying publications. Where possible, information has been cross-checked through multiple sources.

Reports based on anonymous sources are identified as such. Allegations that could not be independently verified are presented with appropriate attribution and do not constitute findings of fact by Pamir Inside.

The limited availability of official information and restricted access to the region may affect the completeness of the data presented.

One development reported on 25 February 2026 is referenced as contextual background because it became public after the publication date of Issue No. 1, although it falls immediately before the formal March–July reporting period.

Political and Security Context

Four years after the 2021–2022 protests and security operations, the political environment in GBAO continues to be shaped by the institutional consequences of that period. No large-scale security operation was reported in the materials reviewed for this issue, but security structures remain visible in local governance and in matters ranging from conscription to public conduct.

In March, residents reported pressure on families during the spring conscription campaign, including demands that parents ensure the return of sons of conscription age from abroad. According to local accounts, documents related to study or medical treatment were in some cases rejected as insufficient or unreliable. These reports could not be independently verified.

A significant governance change took place in July, when President Emomali Rahmon appointed Sharifkhon Safarzoda as chairman of GBAO following the death of his predecessor, Alisher Mirzonabot. Safarzoda had served as first deputy chairman since 2023. Pamir Inside assessed the appointment as politically significant because, according to its review, it marked the first time since Tajikistan's independence that GBAO was headed by a person not originating from the region. The practical implications of the appointment remain too early to assess.

Human Rights Developments in GBAO

Detention Conditions and Treatment of Prisoners

Concerns regarding detention conditions continued during the reporting period. In late March, Pamir Inside sources reported that Chorshanbe Chorshanbiyev was experiencing pain affecting internal organs and problems with his leg, while allegedly receiving insufficient medical attention. The reporting also described previous transfers between correctional facilities and periods under stricter detention conditions.

In July, a source inside a correctional facility reported that Chorshanbiyev had again been placed in a punishment cell from 25 June to 10 July. The formal reason was reportedly talking during formation, while other prisoners disputed that an infraction had occurred. Pamir Inside could not independently verify claims that pressure on him was ordered by higher authorities.

As relevant background, on 25 February activist Khushruz Jumayev was reported to require surgery while not being informed of his diagnosis. The authorities had not publicly commented on his condition at the time of the report.

Criminal Prosecutions, Extraditions and Online Expression

Several cases during the period highlighted the continued use of extremism- and terrorism-related provisions in cases involving GBAO residents or former activists.

In April, independent journalist Anora Sarkorova reported that Amchigul Amirshoeva, the mother of Tutisho Amirshoev, who was killed during the November 2021 unrest in Khorog, had been detained in Moscow and transferred to Tajikistan. According to the report, a criminal case was opened over online comments in which she criticized officials and security personnel in connection with her son's death. The

precise charges and procedural status were not publicly detailed in the material reviewed by Pamir Inside.

The case is particularly relevant in light of the May 2025 legislative changes that removed criminal liability for certain forms of online engagement, including “likes,” reposts and comments. Because the exact legal characterization of Amirshoeva’s alleged conduct is not publicly known, it is not possible to determine from available information how those amendments apply to her case.

Also in April, Radio Ozodi reported that Salman Kurbonov, a native of Yazgulom who had been extradited from Armenia in December 2025, was sentenced to five and a half years in prison on extremism-related charges. A relative told the outlet that Kurbonov did not admit guilt and had no lawyer during the investigation or trial. These claims were not publicly addressed by the authorities in the material reviewed for this bulletin.

On 27 May, according to reporting cited by Pamir Inside, former head of the Shughnan branch of the banned Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, Mirsaid Shorakhmatulloev, was sentenced to five years in prison for justification of terrorism. He had reportedly been detained after posting a critical Facebook comment following the death in custody of Sherik Karamkhudoev. No official court comment was available in the source material.

Security Forces and Accountability

A March incident in Vanj district developed into one of the period’s most significant accountability cases. A local resident, 34-year-old Salomatsho Galchaev, was shot and killed during a conflict involving an Interior Ministry officer. The officer, Ivazmad Kodirov, was detained.

On 25 June, Radio Ozodi reported that the Khorog Military Court had sentenced Kodirov to 12 years in prison for the killing. The victim’s family said it did not intend to appeal the judgment, although Galchaev’s brother stated that two other people allegedly present during the incident had not been prosecuted. Their role and the reasons for any prosecutorial decisions remain unclear. The conviction represents a concrete instance of criminal accountability in a case involving a law-enforcement officer, but one case alone does not establish a broader change in accountability practices.

Administrative and Financial Pressure

Reports during the spring and early summer described administrative pressure extending beyond security and criminal justice matters. In April, residents reported that participation in construction and beautification work linked to preparations for the 35th anniversary of Tajikistan’s independence was formally described as voluntary but was, in some cases, enforced through pressure on residents and businesses.

In Rushan district, separate reports alleged that residents and members of the diaspora abroad were being asked to make regular financial contributions toward stadium construction. According to information cited by Pamir Inside, lists of contributors and non-contributors were maintained. These allegations were not independently verified.

In June, district authorities reported that 189 construction projects had been completed ahead of the anniversary, exceeding the official plan of 165 projects. Officials attributed this to mobilization of internal resources and state support. The official figures do not themselves demonstrate coercion, but the simultaneous reports of compulsory contributions and participation warrant distinction between formal development achievements and the methods reportedly used to mobilize resources.

Religious and Social Regulation

At a regional meeting on 5 May, authorities called for stronger measures against what they described as “foreign culture,” unauthorized religious education and extremism, while also addressing religious clothing, including the hijab, and the “proper and targeted” use of social media.

The terminology used in such campaigns is broad, and publicly available information does not clearly define how these instructions are implemented in individual cases. In a context of already limited civic space, the combination of religious regulation and guidance on online behavior may create uncertainty among residents regarding permissible forms of expression and private conduct.

Legacy of the 2021–2022 Events

The effects of the 2021–2022 crisis remained visible in family and community life. In May, Pamir Inside reported that security officials had demanded the removal of a gravestone from the burial place of Gulbiddin Ziyobekov, whose death during a security operation in November 2021 triggered protests in GBAO. According to the report, his family refused to comply and continued to face pressure. Authorities did not publicly comment on the allegation in the material reviewed.

Education and Institutional Space

In March, the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) of the University of Central Asia ceased educational courses in Tajikistan after licenses for its learning centers were revoked. Pamir Inside sources linked the decision to broader pressure on institutions associated with the Aga Khan Development Network following the events in GBAO. The source material does not establish a direct causal link between the license decision and the 2022 events, and this interpretation should therefore be treated as an assessment rather than a confirmed explanation.

National-Level Developments Relevant to GBAO

Amnesty and Releases

The most significant positive development during the reporting period was the implementation of a nationwide amnesty signed by President Emomali Rahmon on 16 June. On 6 July, Radio Ozodi reported that 1,120 prisoners had been released from Correctional Facility No. 3 in Yovon district as part of the amnesty, illustrating the national scale of the measure.

The amnesty also affected individuals convicted in cases related to the 2022 events in GBAO. On 2 July, Pamir Inside reported that journalist Muhammadsulton Mavlonazarov had been released. According to two sources, journalist Ulfatkhonim Mamadshoeva’s sentence was reduced by three years, while activist Ramzi Vazirbekov and blogger Khushom Jumayev reportedly received one-year reductions. Another person detained during the 2022 mass arrests was also reported released.

On 17 July, three independent sources in Rushan district told Pamir Inside that seven residents convicted after the May 2022 protests had been released under the amnesty. Most had reportedly received eight-year prison terms. Pamir Inside withheld their names for security reasons.

These releases constitute a tangible easing for affected individuals and families. However, the materials reviewed for this issue do not provide sufficient information to assess how broadly the amnesty will apply to the wider group of people convicted in connection with the 2022 events or to politically sensitive cases more generally.

International Context

The reporting period continued to demonstrate the cross-border dimension of cases linked to GBAO. Amchigul Amirshoeva was reportedly detained in Russia and transferred to Tajikistan in April, while Salman Kurbonov had been extradited from Armenia in December 2025 before being sentenced during the current reporting period.

These cases make procedural safeguards, access to legal representation, and transparency surrounding cross-border transfers relevant to international monitoring. The source material provided for this issue does not document a specific public response by international organizations or foreign governments to the individual cases described above.

Trends and Observations

The March–July reporting period presents a more mixed picture than the previous issue. The nationwide amnesty and the release or sentence reduction of several people convicted in connection with the 2022 GBAO events represent a limited but concrete easing. At the same time, there is not yet enough evidence to describe this as a broader reversal of restrictive policies.

- Detention-related concerns remain persistent, particularly regarding access to medical care and the use of disciplinary measures in politically sensitive cases.
- Prosecutions linked to extremism, terrorism and online expression continue to generate uncertainty about the practical effect of the 2025 legal amendments concerning social media activity.
- Administrative pressure appears increasingly embedded in routine governance, including conscription, public works, fundraising for construction, religious regulation and guidance on social media use.
- The conviction of a law-enforcement officer for the killing of a Vanj resident is a notable accountability development, although available information does not support conclusions about wider institutional change.
- The appointment of Sharifkhon Safarzoda may mark a shift in the relationship between central and regional governance, but its effects on rights, local representation and administrative practice will require longer-term observation.

Areas for Further Attention

Based on developments documented during the reporting period, the following areas may warrant continued monitoring by diplomatic missions, international organizations, researchers and other stakeholders:

- The scope and implementation of the 2026 amnesty for individuals convicted in connection with the 2022 GBAO events, including future releases and sentence reductions.
- Access to adequate medical care, disciplinary practices and transparency regarding the treatment of detainees from GBAO.
- The legal basis and procedural safeguards in extremism- and terrorism-related cases involving online expression, particularly following the 2025 legislative amendments.
- Cross-border detention and transfer cases involving Tajik nationals, including access to legal representation and publicly available information on proceedings.
- Reports of coercive practices connected to military conscription, public works and financial contributions for local development projects.

- Implementation of policies regulating religious practice, clothing, social media use and other aspects of private and public conduct.
- Follow-up to the Vanj accountability case and the broader handling of allegations involving security or law-enforcement personnel.
- The governance implications of the new regional leadership and any changes in local representation, administrative practices or security oversight.

About Pamir Inside

Pamir Inside is an independent media and analytical platform covering developments in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast and Tajikistan. Its work combines journalism, source-based monitoring and contextual analysis with the aim of improving access to reliable information about a region where independent reporting remains difficult.

The quarterly briefing is designed to provide diplomatic missions, international organizations, researchers and other interested stakeholders with a concise, structured overview of significant developments. It is informational and analytical in nature and is intended to support monitoring, analysis and dialogue rather than advance policy recommendations.

This briefing is intended for informational purposes only.

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Contextual Reference

Pamir Inside. *Khushruz Jumayev reports deteriorating health in detention and need for surgery.* 25 February 2026. [Available online](#)

This item falls immediately before the formal reporting period and is included only as contextual background because it was reported after the publication date of Issue No. 1.

Source Note

Several Pamir Inside reports cited reporting by Radio Ozodi/RFE-RL, independent journalist Anora Sarkorova, local sources, and publicly available statements by Tajik authorities. Where direct source material was not provided for this briefing, the reference above points to the relevant Pamir Inside publication containing the attribution.

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