



Tajikistan: New report details human rights violations during July 2012 special security operation

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A new report by the [Civic Solidarity Platform](#) assesses the human rights dimension of the July 2012 special security operation in Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Province (GBAO), a geographically isolated but sizeable region bordering Afghanistan. The 60-page report, which is based on monitoring conducted by a group of six Tajik NGOs, **details violations of the right to life, the right to truth, and the right to justice and reparation of the civilian population** documented during the operation and in its aftermath.

The special security operation was carried out by Tajik law enforcement and security forces in GBAO's capital, Khorog, on 24 July 2012. It was targeted against former civil war field commanders and informal leaders of the region, who the authorities had accused of killing a high-ranking security official and other crimes, as well as of having ties to militant groups in Afghanistan. The informal leaders and their supporters responded by putting up armed resistance, and more than 16 hours of fire exchange followed. The special operation resulted in numerous deaths and injuries among both the government forces and the local population, with some sources reporting up to 200 casualties in total. The operation also caused significant property losses, with the damages amounting to some USD 400,000 according to official figures.

In light of international human rights standards and applicable national legislation, the Civic Solidarity report **analyses the actions taken by the Tajik authorities** during and after the special operation in Khorog, as well as the impact of these actions on the region's civilian residents. Key findings include:

- More than a year after the special operation, the authorities have still **not provided satisfactory information about** its course, motives and objectives; the troops that participated in it; **the exact number of people who were killed or injured**; or **efforts made to investigate the events**.
- The authorities **did not evacuate civilian residents** from the areas where the special operation was conducted and did not inform them about the start of it, which led to civilian victims. The special operation also involved **disproportionate use of force and firearms** in violation of international human rights standards, which require any special operation to be planned so as to minimize the risk to the life of those involved and the general population. The monitoring group documented 22 cases where civilians died and 25 cases where civilians were injured during the 24 July 2012 operation, and in its aftermath.
- In connection with the special operation, **mobile, fixed line and internet communications** with Khorog **were disconnected** for almost a month. **Entrance to and exit from the city was also limited** and some websites that had actively reported about the events leading up to the special operation were blocked.

- The authorities have to date **failed to take effective measures to investigate the deaths and injuries resulting from the special operation and to hold accountable those responsible for civilian casualties**. In most cases documented by the monitoring group, families of civilian victims have not received any information about the circumstances of the deaths of their relatives or any possible criminal investigations opened into these deaths. There was no forensic examination of victims' bodies. In some cases, the deaths of victims were not properly documented, and relatives of these victims have still not received death certificates.
- **Loss caused to civilians as a result of the special operation has not been adequately compensated**. While there has been some compensation for property damage, the monitoring group found that the payment of this compensation has not been commensurate to the damage incurred. No compensation has been paid in cases of civilian deaths, and there have only been isolated cases of compensation to people injured during the special operation.

Based on its findings, the report makes recommendations to the authorities of Tajikistan for how to address the concerns identified. Among its major recommendations are: to provide the local population with full information about the 2012 Khorog events and measures taken in follow-up to these; to conduct a rapid and impartial investigation of all civilian deaths that occurred during the special operation and to bring to justice those responsible for these deaths; to ensure respect of relevant legal requirements by security structures; and to take measures to support the restoration of trust and promote dialogue and engagement with the local population in Khorog.

The report is based on monitoring conducted by the following Tajik NGOs: the Pamir Lawyers Association, the Bureau of Human Rights and Rule of Law, the Independent Human Rights Protection Centre, the Human Rights Centre, the Children's Rights Centre and the Nota Bene Foundation, with support of the Warsaw-based Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights. The report has been prepared as part of the activities of a Civic Solidarity working group on crisis situations and was presented at the [OSCE Human Dimension Implementation Meeting](#) that recently took place in Warsaw.

The full report is available [here](#)

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