



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Uzbekistan - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Friday 16 and Monday 19 October 2009**

### **Treatment of Russian Christians including information on percentage of population whether rising~falling and are they leaving the country**

Russians are listed as comprising 5.5% of the population according to the *CIA* (CIA, (7 October 2009), *The World Factbook, Uzbekistan*, Ethnic Group, People).

*Minority Rights Group International* states:

“While Uzbeks make up more than three-quarters of the population, there are 115 ethnic minorities, according to government data. The number of Russians, Ukrainians and Jews continues to fall as many decide to leave; no precise government statistics are available, however” (Minority Rights Group International, (16 July 2009), *State of the World's Minorities and Indigenous Peoples 2009 – Uzbekistan*).

Another publication by *Minority Rights Group International* states:

“Since Russians, Ukrainians and other Slavic minorities are by and large not fluent in the Uzbek language, the country's only official language, the immediate and - in the context of Uzbekistan - discriminatory result is their limited access to civil service and to high political office” (Minority Rights Group International, (Undated), *Russians and Ukrainians, Uzbekistan, World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples*, Current Issues).

The *Institute for War and Peace Reporting* notes:

“After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, 25 million Russians found themselves living in other countries, and many made efforts to move to Russia. The Association of Russian Language and Literature Teachers in Tashkent estimates that one in three of those living in Uzbekistan left, so that Russians now account for 5.5 per cent of the country's 27 million people” (Institute for War and Peace Reporting, (22 April 2009), *Uzbekistan's Russians Find it Hard to go "Home"*).

The *US Department of State* reports:

“No official statistics exist on membership in religious groups; however, an estimated 90 percent of the population is nominally Sunni Muslim, of the Hanafi school. Shi'a Muslims, who are concentrated in the provinces of Bukhara and Samarkand, constitute an estimated 1 percent of the population. Approximately 5 percent is Russian Orthodox, a percentage that declines as ethnic Russians and other Slavs continue to emigrate. The remaining 3 percent includes small communities of Roman Catholics, Korean Christians, Baptists, Lutherans,

Seventh-day Adventists, evangelical and Pentecostal Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, Buddhists, Baha'is, and Hare Krishnas, as well as atheists" (US Department of State, (19 September 2008), *Uzbekistan, International Religious Freedom Report 2008*, Section I. Religious Demography).

This report also states:

"Society is generally tolerant of religious diversity but not of proselytizing. The population maintained its long tradition of secularism and tolerance. In particular, Muslim, Russian Orthodox, Catholic, and Jewish leaders reported high levels of acceptance in society" (ibid, Section III. Societal Abuses and Discrimination).

An article in *Forum 18* notes:

"In Almalyk [Olmalik], near the capital Tashkent, 18 police officers raided Sunday morning worship of the unregistered United Independent Protestant Church, on 16 August. On 12 September prosecutions against six church members - Sergei Galashin, Valentina Kotikova, Rustam Abdulhayev, Mahira Abdulhayeva, Denis Bush (who is a Russian citizen) and Sergei Zarubin – were brought before the town's Criminal Court. The six are being tried under part 1 Article 240 of the Administrative Code, which punishes violations of the Religion Law, a Protestant who wished to remain unnamed for fear of state reprisals told *Forum 18*" (*Forum 18*, (17 September 2009), *Uzbekistan: Muslim and Christian worship attacked*).

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