

## RECENT MILITARY ACTION IN KHOROG

NEWS - UPDATED to 7 October 2012

*(For a summary of events leading up to the military action in Khorog see [www.pamirs.org/RECENT-MILITARY-ACTION-IN-KHOROG.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/RECENT-MILITARY-ACTION-IN-KHOROG.pdf))*

*All links accessed on 30 May 2013*

**18 September** - Very perceptive blog by Zohra Ismail-Beben on widespread popular support for the Pamiri people in other parts of Tajikistan - [see http://zohraismailbeben.com/](http://zohraismailbeben.com/)

**7 October** – Excellent analytical article by Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh published by Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre. Shahrbanou raises the obvious question: “In response to a murder, why was it necessary to send an entire battalion and risk alienating an important minority group, the Pamiris, during the month of Ramadan, a month after the country celebrated unity 15 years after the signing of the Peace Accord, and a year before presidential elections?” Her article offers several interesting answers – see <http://www.peacebuilding.no/Regions/Asia/Central-Asia/Turf-on-the-roof-of-the-world>

**28 September** – Now I understand why Radio Free Europe/Ozodi is blocked in Tajikistan – see <http://www.rferl.org/content/silly-dictators-rahmons-solution-to-food-shortages-tajikistan/24720708.html>

**25 September** – Tajik statements to OSCE conference in Warsaw: Muzaffar Ashurov, head of the department for the constitutional rights in the Executive Office of the President, accused media of “creating the conditions for the recurrence” of the events in Khorog. Nargis Zokirova, chairperson of the Bureau on Human Rights and Rule of Law of Tajikistan, noted that according to the data of the National Association of Independent Media of Tajikistan (Nansmit), the country’s communications service agency has restricted access to 15 news websites in recent months and called on the Government of Tajikistan to unblock them.

The Asia-Plus representative noted that actions of the Tajik authorities in blocking news websites had caused criticism from the European Union, the OSCE, the United States and many other countries and international organizations. However, this had yielded no results. See <http://news.tj/ru/news/m-ashurov-smi-sozdayut-usloviya-dlya-povtoreniya-khorogskikh-sobytii> (accessed on 30.5.2013) N.B. There is a curious discrepancy between the original text in Russian on the link above and the English version on <http://news.tj/en/news/actions-some-tajik-media-may-lead-recurrence-khorog-events-says-tajik-official> (accessed on 30.5.2013). For the missing part, that is very revealing about the attitude of the government official whose primary responsibility is ensuring **respect for constitutional rights** (!), see <http://www.pamirs.org/AsiaPlus-interview-Ashurov.pdf>

**21 September** – A statement by one of the news agencies whose websites are currently blocked in Tajikistan says the measure is counter-productive and only strengthens opposition to the government on the eve of the presidential election.

The founder of “TojNews”, which has been blocked since September 8 at the request of the Government Communication Services (GCS) says that Internet providers and mobile operators were first given an order via SMS, which was followed by a written order.

*“Unfortunately, the Internet service providers and mobile phone companies contrary to the requirements of the applicable national and international law, and contrary to the culture of professional behaviour appropriate to their respective companies, illegally supported this action and shut down access to the site [www.tojnews.org](http://www.tojnews.org). Our attempts to get official comment on these actions have not yielded any results.” The statement also notes that such actions are clearly criminal in nature and invites the service providers and mobile phone companies to explain their “vile acts” to Tajik civil society.*

*“Asia-Plus” has already asked the GCS to explain the grounds on which their site is blocked. Similar letters were sent to the local Internet service providers, but only one company replied. See <http://news.tj/ru/news/blokirovka-saitov-tolkaet-smi-v-obyatiya-oppozitsii-schitayut-osnovateli-tojnews>.*

*The head of the GCS argues implausibly that the government had nothing to do with the site blocking – see <http://news.tj/en/news/zuhurov-says-he-will-look-reason-why-internet-providers-blocked-internet-access-asia-plus-hi>.*

**20 September** – Radio Ozodi article doubts that the President’s visit and the uncompromising views he expressed in a public meeting will defuse the situation in Khorog. The article suggests that participants in the meeting were carefully selected to avoid criticism of President, but reports a brave statement by Asia Plus reporter Ramzia Mirzobekova - see <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24714054.html>.

**20 September** – Asia Plus reports speech by Rahmon in Khorog criticising the work of law enforcement and security agencies, including judges: “If you had done your work professionally and diligently, the latest events in Khorog would not have happened” - see <http://news.tj/ru/news/prezident-raskritikoval-rabotu-pravookhranitelnykh-i-silovykh-struktur-v-khoroge>.

**18 September** – Radio Ozodi reports on President's visit to GBAO and quotes official sources that 70 people died in government invasion (of which 17 soldiers) the highest official figure released so far [COMMENT: Is this an admission that 53 civilians were killed?] – see <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24711640.html>

**15 September** – YouTube video exposes the censored coverage of events in Khorog by Tajik TV – see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhX7Muf2zI8>

*N.B. The Tajik text accompanying the video says: Official Tajik TV has not shown the truth for more than 20 years now. Have you ever seen a rally on it? Or signs of disagreement of the people with the government? Or programmes showing the problems of our country? The horrors of Khorog: Soldiers are shooting in the direction of unarmed people. The quantity of old firearms (left from the time of the fighting in the 90s), which have been collected from the people, was actually 10 times less than what has been shown on TV. It has been suggested that the Ministry of Defence organised the collection of its own firearms and ammunition to present on TV as if they had been collected from the people. The people express their discontent with the government, whose troops started a military operation in the middle of the night during the Holy Month of Ramadan in this peaceful town, killing many and wounding even more people. Because of this “operation” many of our soldier-brothers have also been killed, which is a disgrace for our state. Is there any other state that sends soldiers, drafted just 2 months ago, to fight? Does it mean that, for our government, the lives of the soldiers and the ordinary people have no value at all?*

To all mothers of Tajikistan, who lost their children during this stupid war, we express our deep condolences. Let all those who fell as martyrs during the Holy Month of Ramadan rest in heaven. Amen!

**15 September** – *Asia-Plus publishes “open letter” to President from GBAO residents – see <http://www.pamirs.org/GBAO-Residents-letter-Rahmon.pdf>*

**14 September** – *Radio Ozodi publishes interview with Muhammadbokir Muhammadbokirov – see <http://www.pamirs.org/ozodi-muhammadbokirov-interview.pdf>*

**14 September** – *Substantive article in Asia-Plus confirms collapse of Tajik tourism due to government invasion of GBAO – see <http://asia-plus.tj/ru/news/pamir-teryaet-turistov>*

**13 September** – *Action plan for peace in Khorog being circulated on Facebook – see <http://www.pamirs.org/road-to-peace.doc>*

**12 September** – *More pictures of violence to civilian structures in Khorog – see <http://www.pamirs.org/more-pictures.pdf>*

**11 September** – *Extraordinary statement by Media Head of Foreign Ministry - Local journalists “unprofessional” - European press accused of disseminating inaccurate information - All future dissemination of information should be handled exclusively by government – See <http://news.tj/ru/news/dnazriev-khorogskie-sobytiya-pokazali-slabuyu-rabotu-gosstruktur> and <http://news.tj/en/news/khorog-events-demonstrate-weak-work-public-institutions-says-mfa-spokesperson> N.B. Ominously, this English version leaves out the suggestion for centralisation of information dissemination!*

**7 September** – *Institute for War and Peace Reporting publishes informative interview with IWPR Central Asia Regional Director Abakhon Sultonnazarov – <http://iwpr.net/report-news/local-heroes-vs-central-government-eastern-tajikistan>*

**7 September** – *The medical services of Badakhshan say that during the army operation in Khorog government troops wounded more than 60 people – see <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24700952.html>*

**7 September** – *OSCE member states urge Tajikistan to allow international organizations and diplomatic missions access to Badakhshan and complain about website blockage – [http://www.humanrights.gov/2012/09/07/statement-by-ambassador-kelly-on-the-situation-in-tajikistan/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=statement-by-ambassador-kelly-on-the-situation-in-tajikistan](http://www.humanrights.gov/2012/09/07/statement-by-ambassador-kelly-on-the-situation-in-tajikistan/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=statement-by-ambassador-kelly-on-the-situation-in-tajikistan)*

**6 September** – *Eurasianet raises questions about US role in supplying arms to Tajik government for GBAO invasion: “To what extent did U.S. aid abet the use of these special forces to carry out a turf war?” - <http://www.eurasianet.org/node/65868>*

**6 September** – *Aga Khan Development Network meets Tajik Minister to discuss investment in Khatlon, describes "favourable framework for enhancing cooperation" - COMMENT: With government troops still in Khorog, was this really the best time for such language? - see <http://news.tj/ru/news/v-dushanbe-obsudili-vozmozhnosti-napravleniya-investitsii-fonda-aga-khana-v-khatlonskuyu-oblast>*

**6 September** – Challenging viewpoints on the work of the Aga Khan network and on civil society in GBAO expressed by Oxford historian Faisal Devji in interviews – See <http://www.rferl.org/content/transmission-deep-dive-tajikistan-aga-khan/24700508.html> and <http://www.currentintelligence.net/analysis/2012/8/24/politics-dies-in-the-pamirs.html>

**6 September** – Contrary to conciliatory tone of Radio Ozodi interview (see below) Defence Minister shows arrogance in Asia-Plus interview, deliberately ignoring legal issues involved in invasion of GBAO – he “took his own decisions” – <http://www.pamirs.org/Khairullayev-interview-6-September.pdf>

**5 September** – Radio Ozodi publishes interview with Defence Minister Khairulloyev – “I can see for myself that the additional forces, and those already here are not needed. We need to leave, people are calm and life has returned to normal” he said. See [www.pamirs.org/Interview-Khairulloyev.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/Interview-Khairulloyev.pdf)

**5 September** – German Minister of Development announces freeze of projects in GBAO – see [www.pamirs.org/dirk-niebel.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/dirk-niebel.pdf)

**4 September** – German Marshall Fund of the US publishes perceptive article on the situation in GBAO – see [http://www.gmfus.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files\\_mf/1346248601Peyrouse\\_Tajikistan\\_Aug12.pdf](http://www.gmfus.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files_mf/1346248601Peyrouse_Tajikistan_Aug12.pdf)

**4 September** – Radio Ozodi reports that, far from withdrawal, additional troops are being sent to Khorog, supposedly to ensure the safety of the President for his promised visit end-September. There are also reports of checkpoints using blacklists to look for participants in the recent demonstrations in Khorog. See [www.pamirs.org/Sending-additional-forces.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/Sending-additional-forces.pdf)

**3 September** – Group-20, the civil society group that acted as mediator in solving the crisis in Khorog, said in a statement that most of the operation’s victims in the city were civilians. They appealed to the authorities to define which of the 21 victims were civilians and stated that the lack of clarity makes the process of providing assistance to the families of the operation’s victims more difficult. According to Group-20, the list of the casualties reveals that at least 17 unarmed civilians died. See [www.pamirs.org/most-victims-were-civilians.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/most-victims-were-civilians.pdf)

**2 September** – Internet connection restored in Khorog, but there are reports that there is no access to Asia-Plus, Radio Ozodi or YouTube; in Dushanbe Ozodi is available but not Asia-Plus or YouTube. See also open letter by Reporters without Borders and Tajik National Association of Independent Media to Beg Zuhurov, Director of Communication Services of Tajikistan, protesting government plans to “monitor” websites <http://en.rsf.org/tadjikistan-joint-letter-to-tajik-director-of-07-08-2012,43179.html>. It is also interesting that one of Tcell’s two shareholders, TeliaSonera, has been accused by Swedish media of supporting Tajik special forces by monitoring opposition parties with the latest technological equipment. See <http://archive.org/details/theBlackBoxes-HowTeliasoneraSellsToDictatorshipsupdragGranskning> and <http://www.regnum.ru/news/1561892.html> – TeliaSonera has admitted that it shut down mobile communications with GBAO on 25 July at the request of the government; according to regnum news, under international conventions such action can only be taken by court order. <http://www.teliasonera.com/en/newsroom/news/2012/cr-update/>

**1 September** – Radio Ozodi quotes Minister of Defence that withdrawal of troops from GBAO postponed until after the President’s visit to Khorog – then only Internal Ministry forces will remain. Local people and the civil society Group-20 are sceptical. The Minister also said that border guards at Ishkashim and Murghab will be strengthened with units from his Ministry, that may later be transferred to the Border Guard service – and that two new posts will be built on the Chinese and Afghan borders. <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24693588.html>

**30 August** – WHAT IS THIS WAR ABOUT? - see women and other civilians braving army bullets: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=Os5Wb6k-OBQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Os5Wb6k-OBQ)

**29 August** – Mayor of Khorog expresses rather unrealistic hope that tourists will return soon to GBAO. Radio Ozodi notes that “Recent events in Khorog caused serious damage to regional tourism organizations, bringing them to the brink of bankruptcy” and that the government is still not issuing GBAO permits to foreigners. <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24691341.html>

**29 August** – President announces infrastructure improvements in GBAO and centralisation of government offices in Khorog – <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24691163.html>

**28 August** – Asia-Plus reports on problems in implementation of arms surrender of arms and states that President Rahmon will visit Khorog in the second half of September “if the situation there is stable.” Eyewitnesses in Rushan deny figures given for withdrawal of troops [www.pamirs.org/Asia-Plus-28-August.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/Asia-Plus-28-August.pdf) and <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24690234.html>

**28 August** – Articles on situation in Khorog published in German and Swiss newspapers – [www.pamirs.org/FAZ-27-August-2012.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/FAZ-27-August-2012.pdf) and [www.pamirs.org/NZZ-24-August-2012.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/NZZ-24-August-2012.pdf)

**27 August** – In implementation of last week's agreement between the protesters and the heads of the power ministries of Tajikistan, more than a thousand government troops have left Khorog. The return of government troops to their permanent bases will continue until September 5. One hundred and fifty soldiers and officers of Internal Ministry special forces (OMON) will remain. There has been much scepticism in Khorog about this government commitment and it must be hoped that the report (by Radio Ozodi) will be confirmed. <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24689392.html>

**27 August** – Contaminated drinking water was the cause of typhoid fever in Khorog. No new cases reported in the last three days. <http://news.tj/ru/news/gryaznaya-pitevaya-voda-stala-prichinoi-vozniknoveniya-sluchaev-zarazheniya-tifom-v-khoroge>

**27 August** – Asia-Plus reports that ambassadors of European countries held a meeting in Dushanbe with Muhiddin Kabiri, leader of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, at the initiative of the EU Delegation in Tajikistan. Kabiri reportedly said that the IRP is a supporter of the rule of law throughout the country, “but it is the duty of the authorities to use legal means.” He also said that “force can be used if negotiations do not yield results...and even in this case, the force used must be proportional.” In his opinion, the lack of transparency of the operation has generated many rumours and speculation in the community. Kabiri demanded that the relevant state bodies find and arrest the murderer of the head of the Party cell in GBAO Sabzali Mamadrioeva.

<http://news.tj/ru/news/lider-pivt-vyskazal-evropeiskim-poslam-svoyu-pozitsiyu-po-situatsii-v-gbao>

**26 August** – Eyewitness accounts disagree with claim that all army units have left GBAO.

**25 August** – Asia Plus quotes government source that all army units have left GBAO – only Interior Ministry troops remain – <http://news.tj/ru/news/svyaz-s-khorogom-polnostyu-vosstanovlena>

**25 August** – Telephone connection to Khorog fully restored – It will be recalled that the head of the state communications service, Beg Zukhurov, claimed on 30 July to cries of ridicule that a stray bullet had severed telephone, mobile, and Internet connections to the region<sup>1</sup> – <http://news.tj/ru/news/svyaz-s-khorogom-polnostyu-vosstanovlena>

**25 August** – Radio Ozodi publishes denial that Tolib Ayombekov has been taken to Dushanbe: “A senior law enforcement official said that Tolib Ayembekov is currently in Khorog, and will be questioned in the regional center ....” – Ayombekov tells Radio Ozodi he is under house arrest – see <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24686972.html> and <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24687511.html>

**24 August** – Social Democratic Party of Tajikistan demands report on situation in GBAO - According to a statement by the Social Democratic Party Presidium, government attempts to isolate Badakhshan from the outside world only complicate the delivery of food and the movement of people, impede tourist and other visits to the region, and cut the region off from the outside world. They have created panic and great concern among ordinary people and have had an extremely negative impact on the socio-political and socio-economic life not only of the population of the poorest region of Tajikistan, but of the whole country. <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24686780.html>

**24 August** – First contingent of soldiers leaving GBAO, says Governor  
<http://news.tj/en/news/additional-military-forces-begin-leave-gorno-badakhshan>  
<http://www.eurasianet.org/node/65823>

**24 August** – IRP leader Kabiri meets with Antje Lindertz, Chairperson of the Division for Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia, German Federal Foreign Office. Kabiri reportedly expressed appreciation for support of all international organizations and diplomatic missions active in the country for solution of the GBAO problems but regretted that some Western countries are not well aware of the real situation in the region and this ignorance leads to a faulty assessment of the situation. <http://news.tj/en/news/irp-leader-german-mfa-representative-discuss-situation-gorno-badakhshan>

**24 August** – Following negotiations between the security forces, “Mediation team-20”, members of the City Council of Khorog, religious leaders and civil society activists, an agreement was signed last night for ending the stand-off in Vahdat Square in Khorog. Previously, all the agreements were oral. The signed agreement consists of three parts: a) all the participants in the last unauthorised demonstration will be exempt from prosecution for participating in an illegal rally; b) after signature of the agreement the demonstration will end and all participants will leave the area; c) all military forces in or near residential areas

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/07/30/tajikistan-respect-rights-security-operations>

of the city will be withdrawn to their base in Khorog, and consideration will be given to their subsequent full withdrawal to their permanent bases. The negotiating team has set up an office to work out the implementation of the third point. According to Asia-Plus, the protesters have now returned to their homes and Khorog is calm again.

<http://news.tj/en/news/first-written-agreement-reached-khorog>

<http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24686411.html>

<http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24685690.html>

<http://www.eurasianet.org/node/65816>

**24 August** – IRP condemns “cowardly murder of one of informal leaders of Gorno Badakhshan, Imomnazar Imomnazarov” – <http://news.tj/en/news/irp-condemns-cowardly-murder-imomnazar-imomnazarov>

**23 August** – Tajik Interior Ministry denies involvement in Imomnazarov’s death – see

<http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24685426.html>

**23 August** – CNN publishes in-depth article on situation in Khorog – see

<http://edition.cnn.com/2012/08/22/world/europe/tajikistan-violence/>

**23 August** – Asia-Plus publishes in-depth article on situation in Khorog – see

<http://news.tj/ru/news/khorog-smert-imumnazara-i-novyi-miting>

**23 August** – More than four thousand demonstrators in front of government headquarters in Khorog demand governor’s resignation – Many stayed overnight in the square and tents installed – Joined by residents of other villages as far as Rushan – Troops open fire, two injured – Local authorities and Defense Minister to negotiate with demonstrators – Extraordinary session of the GBAO Regional Council of People’s Deputies planned – see

<http://news.tj/en/news/demonstrators-khorog-demand-governor-s-resignation>

<http://news.tj/en/news/demonstrators-stay-overnight-vahdat-square-khorog>

<http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24685305.html> and

<http://news.tj/en/news/two-demonstrators-reportedly-wounded-khorog>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHb\\_7Fh-wXE&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHb_7Fh-wXE&feature=player_embedded)

**22 August** – Government refuses access to GBAO by ICRC – see

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/tajik/institutional/2012/08/120821\\_mm\\_red\\_cross\\_kharugh.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/tajik/institutional/2012/08/120821_mm_red_cross_kharugh.shtml)

**22 August** – Letter addressed to President by GBAO youth – see

[www.pamirs.org/Letter-to-the-President-from-GBAO-youth.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/Letter-to-the-President-from-GBAO-youth.pdf)

**22 August** – Large protest taking place in Khorog following death of Imomnazar Imomnazarov – shooting heard, stones thrown at government headquarters,

<http://www.pamirs.org/Demonstration-continues-in-Khorog.pdf>

<http://www.eurasianet.org/node/65809>

<http://www.pamirs.org/One-of-informal-leaders-of-GBAO-reportedly-killed-in-Khorog.pdf>

and

<http://www.pamirs.org/Protest-in-Khorog-22-August.pdf>

**22 August** – Military call-up announced in Khorog (<http://news.tj/en/news/males-troubled-gorno-badakhshan-ordered-report-military>)

**17 August** – PHOTOS FROM KHOROG – see <http://www.pamirs.org/photos-no-comment.pdf>

**17 August** – Asia-Plus publishes important interview with Boymamad Alibakhshev – see [www.pamirs.org/Alibakhsho-Asia-Plus.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/Alibakhsho-Asia-Plus.pdf)).

**17 August** – Representatives of the general prosecutor's office begin interrogating one of the ex-commanders of the opposition in Badakhshan – according to Asia-Plus, he is accused of the Soviet-era crimes of “hooliganism” and “illegal organization of a meeting” – see <http://news.tj/ru/news/v-khoroge-prodolzhaetsya-protsess-razoruzheniya-0> and [www.pamirs.org/ozodi-Mamadbokir-questioned.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/ozodi-Mamadbokir-questioned.pdf)).

**16 August** – Asia-Plus publishes comments by prominent lawyers stating that a number of constitutional norms were violated during the operation in Khorog. Such armed intervention requires official announcement of an emergency situation or the direct order of the President. The Law “On Armed Forces” does not foresee the use of the army inside the country in the time of peace either (see [www.pamirs.org/Lawyers.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/Lawyers.pdf)).

**16 August** – Eyewitnesses report that the typhoid outbreak is under control. However, contrary to official reports, police and military checkpoints are still in place and have not yet been handed over to civilian volunteers.

**16 August** – Radio Ozodi publishes interview with the Governor of GBAO (see [www.pamirs.org/Kodiri-Kosim.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/Kodiri-Kosim.pdf))

**15 August** – Representatives of security agencies of Tajikistan have invited the three commanders of Badakhshan to testify and prove their innocence – see [www.pamirs.org/ozodi-warlords-questioning.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/ozodi-warlords-questioning.pdf).

**15 August** – Major article by Radio Ozodi on the current situation in Khorog (see [www.pamirs.org/OZODI-SITUATION-IN-KHOROG.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/OZODI-SITUATION-IN-KHOROG.pdf) for full Tajik text and a rough summary English translation). The main points:

- Children are suffering from headaches, due to the nervous tension of the situation and to having heard and being scared of the sound of shooting.
- The lack of mobile phone connection is adding to the tense situation, as people have to spend all day nervously worrying for their loved ones, who have to go to work and are unable to talk to them or know where they are.
- Wounded people in the hospitals are being physically treated, but the hospital does not have specialists in the sphere of psychology, to lead the people out of their depression and trauma.
- News is not reaching the city, the state TV channels are showing only entertainment programmes. The only news that people receive comes from word-of-mouth.
- People's trust in the government has suffered a great decline after the attack in the middle of the night. Thus many are on the commanders' side.
- Despite of all of this, the celebration dedicated to 80 years of Khorog is still underway, though most people are against it and have no strength and desire for joy and celebration.( <http://www.ozodi.org/content/article/24672967.html>)

*N.B.* Today the national news agency Khovar reported 17 cases of typhoid in Khorog.

**15 August** – President Rakhmon visit to Khorog will be cancelled – deadline for withdrawal of troops has passed (<http://news.tj/ru/news/vopros-vyvoda-voisk-iz-khoroga-ostaetsya-otkrytyy> and <http://ria.ru/analytics/20120814/723298868.html>)

**15 August** – Tolib Ayombekov questioned by Attorney General’s office about circumstances of Abdullo Nazarov’s death. (<http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24676324.html>)

**14 August** – Tajik Minister of Defense Sherali Khairulloev appeared on regional GBAO TV late on 13 August, and urged people to remain calm. He announced a government investigation into the shooting of civilians in taxi at Bidurth and claimed that 200 government soldiers, including the division of airborne troops, left Khorog last Saturday. (<http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24676040.html>)

**14 August** – Following the Bidurth incident, negotiations between local civil society and government authorities have led to agreement to reduce tension by replacing soldiers at six check posts in Khorog with young civilian volunteers.

<http://news.tj/ru/news/soldat-na-postakh-v-khoroge-smenili-dobrovolsy> and [http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/international/2012/08/120814\\_pamir\\_investigation.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/international/2012/08/120814_pamir_investigation.shtml)

**13 August** – Tolib Aymobekov, his brother Oqil and driver Hamza Gulnazar are ready to surrender to authorities; a GBAO police directorate official noted that an agreement on handing over those suspected of involvement in the murder of Major-General Nazarov had been reached during negotiations with commanders of the GBAO armed formations that have been conducted in Khorog through intermediary of the public commission comprising local activists and religious leaders. (<http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24672780.html> and <http://news.tj/en/news/we-are-ready-serve-tajikistan-says-head-gbao-rebel-group>)

**13 August** – The death toll from the incident at a checkpoint in GBAO has risen to two after one of those wounded at the checkpoint after the Bidurth tunnel died in a hospital in Khorog Saturday evening. Angry demonstration took place against local government in Khorog centre to protest the shooting at civilians during ceasefire. (<http://news.tj/en/news/death-toll-incident-checkpoint-gbao-rises-two> and <http://rus.ozodi.org/content/article/24672948.html>)

**11 August** – Radio Ozodi publishes interview with Tolib Ayombekov – see <http://www.pamirs.org/Ozodi%20article.pdf>

**11 August** – Red Cross/Crescent offers trauma counselling to Khorog inhabitants in UPD and RimStroy districts and medical items to Khorog hospital for treating the injured.

**10 August** - A statement released by the Tajik diaspora on August 10 signed by 50 persons, including Tajik-language poet Sharifjon Uchqurghoni, writer Saidazim Poulodi, says that “activists of the Diaspora, permanently residing in Kyrgyzstan, with great pain in their hearts have learned about the current military and political situation in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region of the Republic of Tajikistan.... We consider it necessary to nip in the bud any attempts to divide the Tajiks on the basis of regional identity because it may lead to separatism and the split of Tajikistan.” (Central Asian News Service).

**10 August** – The website of AsiaPlus, which, together with Radio Ozodi, provides some of the most reliable reporting on Tajikistan, has been blocked by the government. The Tajik Communist Party has requested unblocking of the site – how times have changed! The

Russian news agency RIA-Novosti website has also been blocked, joining YouTube, and two other Russian news sites Lenta.ru and Vesti.ru. Two other news portals specializing in Central Asia – Fergananews.com and Centrasia.ru – as well as the local forum Pamir-vesti.ru, were also blocked. At the same time Tajik Minister of Justice Rustam Mengliyev claims to UN that “Freedom of speech reigns in the country ....” See (<http://news.tj/en/news/cpt-asks-tajik-authorities-unblock-internet-access-asia-plus-news-agency>, <http://www.rferl.org/content/dushanbe-criticized-for-blocking-access-to-news-websites/24665126.html> and <http://news.tj/en/news/minister-justice-freedom-speech-reigns-tajikistan>)

**10 August** – AsiaPlus interview with one of the GBAO commanders, Imom Imomnazarov – see [www.pamirs.org/Imomnazarov.pdf](http://www.pamirs.org/Imomnazarov.pdf)

**9 August** - Khorog is calm and hotels, shops, the market and other services are open.

**8 August** - According to a report by AsiaPlus,<sup>2</sup> the head of the Islamic Renaissance Party organization for Khorog, Sherik Karamkhudoyev is being held in a GKNB detention centre in Dushanbe (it was announced earlier by the IRP that he had disappeared). No charges have been made against him, reinforcing the suspicion that the Dushanbe government simply wants to neutralise him.

**2 August** - The government has sent “humanitarian assistance” from Dushanbe to Khorog.<sup>3</sup> Eyewitnesses report that some local people are refusing to accept it, demanding instead that government troops leave GBAO.

**30 July** – Human Rights Watch calls on government to respect human rights in the security operation in GBAO: “Whenever the lawful use of force and firearms is necessary, law enforcement officials are required to use restraint and act in proportion to the seriousness of the offense.” In an earlier report, HRW had pointed out that “Torture is an enduring problem ..... While torture is practiced with near impunity, authorities took a few small steps to hold perpetrators accountable.”

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/07/30/tajikistan-respect-rights-security-operations>  
<http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/world-report-2012-tajikistan>

**29 July** - A message (farman) from the Aga Khan to the Ismaili community in Tajikistan instructed them to respect the law and promote peace and reconciliation.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://news.tj/ru/news/ranee-obyavlenniyi-propavshim-glava-khorogskoi-yacheiki-pivt-soderzhitsya-v-izolyatore-gknb>

<sup>3</sup> <http://news.tj/en/news/humanitarian-aid-sent-gorno-badakhshan>