

Unrest in Khorog - May 2014 - Chronology

N.B. **Stéphane Henriod** is providing regular updates on the following site:
<http://crowdmap.com/map/khorog2014/>

3.7.2014

Asia-Plus - GBAO civil society activists apply to the president for help
see: <http://news.tj/en/news/gbao-civil-society-activists-apply-president-help>

16.6.2014

Asia-Plus - GBAO security officers interrupt meeting of local civil society activists with PhD student from Canada

Khorog events spill over into arrest of Canadian researcher, detained and held incommunicado - see

<http://news.tj/en/news/gbao-security-officers-interrupt-meeting-local-civil-society-activists-phd-student-cana>

7.6.2014

Asia-Plus - The main orchestrators of recent events in Khorog are in Dushanbe, says presidential adviser

The presidential adviser on national security Sherali Khairulloyev, well-known from the excessive use of force in the 2012 events in Khorog, implausibly tries to shift the blame for the recent events to foreign influence. "Many of them are even not citizens of Tajikistan. They do not have families or relatives in Khorog. They just study their own political interests and they are no concern of Badakhshan." See:

<http://news.tj/en/news/main-orchestrators-recent-events-khorog-are-dushanbe-says-presidential-adviser>

31.5.2014

Asia-Plus - Ishkashim residents demand resignation of local police chief
see <http://www.news.tj/en/news/ishkashim-residents-demand-resignation-local-police-chief>

Interestingly, this article recalls the 2013 protests in Ishkashim at the time of the military invasion of GBAO by central government forces.

26.5.2014

Asia-Plus - a thoughtful and critical article by Parviz Mullojanov, political scientist (Rough translation from the Russian)

The incident on May 21 in Khorog : preliminary findings

Recent developments in Khorog again attracted the attention of the whole republic and many foreign media. Of course, we all need to wait for the findings and conclusions of a joint commission to investigate the incident, which has just started to work in Khorog.

However, some preliminary conclusions can be drawn already:

First, there is no doubt that the immediate cause of the incident was the operation conducted by the security forces to detain the car with three residents of Khorog. There is also no doubt that the site was poorly chosen, while in its planning and execution made some fundamental mistakes and shortcomings. There are certain rules of special operations to be followed by security officials whether in Dushanbe, Khorog, Khujand, or Kulob. Such operations are not conducted in the city center, in a busy traffic area, surrounded by tens and hundreds of passers-by. Detaining a car does not say that the security forces suspect a crime, so to others it looked just like irrational shooting at a car with three residents of the city inside.

Moreover, it should not be necessary to make a public spectacle of an arrest in Khorog, the population of which has not yet fully recovered from the shock caused by the events of July 2012. The impression is that the persons responsible for planning the operation did not take into account the specifics of the city and region and did not think about possible complications of their action, or about the potential consequences of a political nature. As a result, conducting a special operation directly at the police department, a few steps from City Hall, implicated not only their direct superior, but the political leadership at both regional and national level.

Second, the incident suggests that in addition to the immediate causes of the unrest in Khorog, there are a number of problems of a long-term, systemic nature that must also be considered by a joint commission. First of all, the last incident shows a lack of trust between the public and the power structures. Apparently, the general public does not believe the assurances of official structures that security forces are not going to take revenge for the events of July 2012.

I was told that in the region there are still rumors about alleged lists of alleged participants in the events of 2012. As a result, so far, nearly two years after the events of 2012, there is still a tense situation, and much of the population, especially young people, see a political motive in every action by the security forces, every arrest or detention of suspects.

It follows that for the past two years, the authorities and law enforcement agencies have failed to appease the public opinion of the city and the region, and failed to regain credibility. Moreover, during this period there occurred a number of minor incidents which, nevertheless, received a great response and are unlikely to have contributed to the growth of confidence in the government. The most offensive incident occurred in March this year in Rushan district when the police chief ordered to detain the car of a wedding party, which allegedly interfered with his driving. It ended up with the beating of the detainees and shooting at relatives. This may have been acceptable in relation to the lawlessness of Rizvon or Faizali Saidov during the 90s, but in time of peace and in a peaceful region of the country when such acts are undertaken by police officers who then take not even administrative responsibility for them, is society's response to the incident of May 21 surprising?

It is believed that one of the main causes of social tension in the area was discontent with corruption in official and law enforcement. At the moment in this regard very little, if anything at all, has been done. It turns out that for the past two years, the key reasons for the growth of social discontent are still not resolved and continue to complicate relations between the authorities and society.

What can the government and civil society do in these circumstances? In my opinion, the most important thing today is to restore the atmosphere of mutual trust in the region. And the first and crucial step in this direction must be a fair and impartial investigation into the incident on May 21. There should be no double standards or "protection of uniformed officers," and there should be no doubt about the impartiality of the investigation findings.

But most importantly, the authorities should once and for all abandon the practice of military pressure in solving problems with the social protests in Badakhshan and other regions of the country. This practice in today's continuing economic and social difficulties, under the threat of a reduction in remittances and migration in general, only undermines the image of Tajikistan as a stable country and creates conditions for outside interference. From this perspective, I quite agree with Saymitdin Dustov, who recently said that those people who today "beat their breasts" and offer to solve the problems of the region by force for two or three hours, in fact do not act in the interests of the country, but of external forces interested in destabilizing it.

Moreover, I would add that such people should certainly be the subject of increased investigation by the relevant authorities on whether they deserve their position, or they represent the interests of the security services of a foreign power that two years ago unsuccessfully offered a former GBAO warlord \$7 million for destabilization.

In conclusion, it should be noted that in the latest incident of 21 May we can hardly see "Russian", "Ukrainian" or "Western" linkages. The incident occurred because the problems in the relationship between society and the authorities were not solved, and not enough attention has been paid over time to the accumulated social tensions. However, such incidents create favorable conditions for pressure and interference and weaken the Tajik government at the international level.

On the other hand, it should be understood that the situation in GBAO is by no means unique. Problems with corruption and legality exist today in all regions of the country, and Badakhshan is no exception. Specific to the region is only that the local population for a number of objective reasons connected with the history of the 90s, is less accustomed to corruption and extortion, and therefore are much less tolerant of its manifestations. But for the GBAO government this situation should serve as a "litmus test", an indicator of social discontent, which today is gradually accumulated in Tajik society and in all regions of the republic, from Sogd to Kulob and Badakhshan. Our workers often have to face extortion and corruption here in their home country, more than anywhere else even in Russia.

In this regard, the incidents in Badakhshan also illustrate the need for real reform of law enforcement and the judicial system, based on the similar experience in Georgia. Ukrainian events have shown that corruption is destroying the state, and corruption in law enforcement is an obstacle to combating it. And the sooner we realize it, the more likely that our government will finally cease to be the plaything of the superpowers and get a real immunity from external interference.

Facebook posting: "REVISED UPDATE: The "Protocol," as it is being referred to, is still being finalized. When it is finished we will translate it into English and post it. We hope that this will happen later tonight or by the latest, tomorrow afternoon. Peace agreement appears to be holding. Khorog was calm today and people seemed to return to most of the daily

activities. The blockades were removed in many areas. Allegedly the military will remain here for two-three weeks, until President Rahmon's planned visit to GBAO."

A local resident reports: "It seems the sides have come to an agreement, a protocol has been signed, it will be posted in facebook when available. The protesters left the square."

This is confirmed by **Radio Free Europe** - see <http://www.rferl.org/content/situation-in-tajikistans-gorno-badakhshan-calms-down/25398444.html>

However, **Asia-Plus** reports a hard-line government position - see <http://news.tj/ru/news/vlasti-otvergli-predlozhenie-amnistirovat-uchastnikov-besporjadkov-v-khoroge>

(Rough translation)

Authorities reject proposal to grant amnesty to the rioters in Khorog

The authorities have rejected a proposal for amnesty for participants in the latest unrest in the administrative center of Badakhshan. This was announced at a meeting of the joint commission to investigate the events in Khorog on Sunday May 21, a source in the power structures of the country told "Asia-Plus."

"Any crime, whoever committed it, will be punished; this is the stance of the government commission - this was agreed with the understanding of GBAO civil society" - said the source.

The source noted that the government working group to investigate the incident in Khorog included the head of the investigation of particularly serious crimes, Prosecutor General of Tajikistan Jamshed Sangov, and General Prosecutor's Office investigators Bahodur Amonbekov, Abduloik Mirzoev and Nabijon Nabiyeu.

Representatives of GBAO Civil society are Muzaffar Muborakshoev; Faromuz Ergashev, lawyer; Bahtovar Bahtiyrov, retired; and Khursand Mamadshoev, unemployed. However, as the activists informed "Asia-Plus", representatives of civil society GBAO insisted on another list of persons who have to negotiate with the authorities on behalf of the protesters in Khorog.

This proposed GBAO civil society list included Faromuz Ergashev, lawyer; Mahmadbokir Mahmadbokirov, Chairman of the Board of Mahalla Upper Khorog; Tolib Aembekov, chairman of the board of the Mahalla "Bread factory"; Zoir Radjabov, chairman of the board of the mahalla UPD; Egibek Egibekov, a civil society representative; Holbash Holbashev, Head of Border Troops Badakhshan; Sherzamonov Alim, chairman of the Social Democratic Party in Badakhshan; and Ulfat Mamadshoeva head of the NGO "Nomus va INSOF".

A message was conveyed yesterday on behalf of "civil society" of Badakhshan to the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon and to the parliament, the government, the board of Badakhshan and the international community.

The authors blamed the destabilisation of the situation in the center of Badakhshan on "irresponsible" members of the security apparatus, who "provide information to the political leadership of the country, contrary to fact, not only unsupportive of a solution of the existing problems, but also exacerbating them."

1. Establishment of competent newly created joint committee of representatives of the President, the Attorney General, Ministry of Internal Affairs, National Security Committee, leadership GBAO law enforcement on the one hand and, on the other, representatives of political parties, the media, experts, local non-governmental organizations, the Council of Elders, and lawyers.
2. In order to create normal conditions for the valuable work of the joint commission all parties to refrain from hasty and ill-considered statements.
3. To avoid provocative actions for the analysis of the incidents, temporarily suspend the Badakhshan police chief, chief of the city police department of the city of Khorog, GBAO SBA chief prosecutor of the region and the city, law enforcement officers, as interested parties in the investigation of the incident.
4. Convene an extraordinary session of the Council of Khorog city and the assembly of people's deputies of Gorno-Badakhshan with the agenda "On the situation in Badakhshan."
5. Results of the commission's deliberations must be submitted to the President, the Government and published in all the media and social networks.
6. Given the spontaneous nature of the peace rally, invite city Khukumat to authorise the rally and grant immunity to the participants.
7. The circumstances of the unlawful action, namely arson and mayhem from the crowd was a response to the misuse of weapons by law enforcement agencies and the loss of life among civilians; it provoked an illegal emotional outburst by those young people that was not conscious and volitional behavior and an amnesty should be granted to persons who participated in this.
8. Systematically and promptly to cover events in GBAO given the importance of an objective and accurate information during the crisis in order to prevent further escalation of rumors.
9. Provide written guarantee of compliance with these demands and put forward specific dates for their performance.

Last Saturday, the Council of Elders, Council of mothers and formal youth organizations of GBAO adopted an appeal to the public, which requested to prevent further escalation of tension in the territory of Khorog.

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A day earlier, on Friday, civil society GBAO issued a statement calling the bloody events of May 21 in Khorog " planned action of law enforcement."

The action, according to civil society activists, whose statement was distributed on May 22, is "pressure on the people of Badakhshan, and the constant desire to suppress the rebellion of the society of the region against the central authorities, to create an atmosphere of fear and blind obedience to powerful forces, rather than common sense, justice and truth for the peaceful

coexistence of the government and civil society."

In a statement, the activists stated that, " based on the higher aims of national unity and peace, which are marked in the Basic Law of the RT, and with knowledge of civil and human responsibility, with an indication of the inextricable link with the brothers in all regions of Tajikistan," civil society activists in GBAO demand an investigation into the events of May 21 in Khorog, by a joint committee of representatives of the central authorities of the Republic of Tajikistan, including the chairman of the region Shodihon Dzhamshevdov, law enforcement on the one hand and representatives of civil society on the other.

"This commission should investigate the cause of the bloody events of July 24, 2012 in Khorog and similar events in Rushan a month ago in order to prevent the recurrence of such events in the future. It is also necessary to restore the political and social rights of participants in the summer 2012 events in Khorog, to provide financial assistance to the families of victims and the release of political prisoners," - the statement said.

It will be recalled that on May 21 in Khorog, as a result of an armed incident between police officers and a group of local youth, one person, a resident of Khorog, was killed - six were wounded, two of whom later died in the hospital, including one policeman David Niyozbek. The OMVD building in Khorog, the regional court and the prosecutor's office were burnt down.

In the night from Friday to Saturday, according to a report by the State Committee for National Security of GBAO, during the assault on the SCNS building 20-year-old resident of Khotog, Azamat Pallau Khorog was killed, and two more residents of Khorog were injured.

25.5.2014

The news agency OZODAGON in Dushanbe published a list of some of the sponsors of the civil society requests to government (see 23 May).

<http://catoday.org/centrasia/tjru/14478-predstaviteli-grazhdanskogo-obschestva-v-horoge-vyrabotali-spisok-peregovorschikov.html>

Davlatmirov Muzaffar (Caliph) Irgashev Faromuzov (Attorney and representative of NGO League of lawyers) Ayembekov Tolib (representative of microrayon "Bread factory") Mamadbokirov Mamadbokir (Chairman jamoat Barkhorug), Radjabov Zoir (Chairman jamoat DFC), Egibekov Egibek, (civil society representative) Holbashev Holbash (commander Border Guards), Sherzamonov Alim (human rights activist,) Mamadshoev Ulfathonim (Manager of NGO Nomus INSOF).

Asia-Plus is still accessible in Dushanbe, whereas it was blacked out in 2012. **A local person** explains this - and the absence of critical press reports (compared with July-August 2012) - by the fact that some of the most active journalists in 2012 were fired by their agencies after these events, almost certainly as a result of government pressure - on this occasion there are thus no press reports critical of government.

Local reports: 6 helicopters flew to Khorog, carrying about 100 soldiers (they say they belong to OMON - special purpose police regiment). Some heard that up to 15 helicopters are

expected to arrive today. Allegedly snipers are ringing the square, where people are still demonstrating peacefully.

24.5.2014

Another reader's comment on the Asia-Plus website (rough translation from the Russian):

see <http://news.tj/ru/news/v-khoroge-opyat-nespokoino> - scroll down

What happened in Khorog shows all of us that the situation in Tajikistan is very tense. Nobody asked why in Khorog mostly young people engaged in drug trafficking - it is because the government does not deal with the solution of urgent social problems at national level, namely, providing citizens of Tajikistan in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic free medicine, education, and most importantly a decent job.

1. In Tajikistan, the level of corruption continues uninterrupted (bribery everywhere - in hospitals, universities, police, traffic police, the courts, for example); what is the Republican Parliament doing? No one fully solves the problem of migration, medicine, education, the creation of new jobs (jobs - we're not talking about opening a sales stand at the bazaar, working in a sauna, a swimming-pool, or a restaurant - we should be talking about productive jobs). It amounts to a serious call on our President, as the guarantor of the Constitution.

2. As you know, tens of thousands of citizens of Tajikistan are deported annually from the territory of Russia; how can these people be employed in Tajikistan ? ? ? Where will they go to work ? ? ? How will they feed their families ? ? ? (according to the Federal Migration Service the number of Tajik citizens deported in recent years reached nearly 100,000 people.) Today, we distribute thousands of hectares to the Chinese and create very comfortable conditions for them with taxes, inspections, etc., only for them to operate and collect the fruits of your labour. If, God forbid, our simple farmer wishes to lease his land, in the first place he is forced to plant cotton and then sell it at rock-bottom prices, he is crushed by taxes, inspections (phyto-sanitary, tax, fire, police, environment, etc.) that he voluntarily gives up everything and loses his shirt. This is our policy to support small and medium-sized businesses.

3. Today we have a very serious problem in the growing influence that Salafists are exercising on ordinary citizens of Tajikistan. Because the Government does not solve the immediate problems of the people, young people follow their line. You all know what the Salafists are doing today in Africa, Syria, Sudan, Egypt, Afghanistan, etc. - all the examples of their political views. What is the Tajik National Security Committee doing ? ? ?

I have listed only a few of the problems. The main thing is that they must be addressed as soon as possible or the point of no return will be passed and the State will begin to collapse, as in the case of Ukraine.

- **Asia-Plus 24/05/2014 19:16 (rough translation from the Russian)**

See <http://news.tj/ru/node/188926>

GBAO : Badakhshan considers itself an integral part of sovereign Tajikistan
Avaz Yuldashev

Today, as reported in the press service of Badakhshan, the Council of Elders, Council of mothers and formal youth organizations of GBAO adopted an appeal to the public, requesting people to avoid further escalation of tension in of Khorog.

According to a source, today the Governor of the Oblast, Shodihon Dzhamshekov, also appealed to the population of GBAO and all other citizens of the Republic of Tajikistan: "Events in Khorog in recent days, are presented the country's media in a one-sided and biased manner - they are all based on rumors spread by detractors and criminal elements," he said in a statement.

According to the source, the head of GBAO stated that Badakhshan considers itself an integral part of sovereign Tajikistan and the vast majority of the region's population supports the policy of the central authorities and the President of the republic.

The source further said that, a joint commission of government and civil society of Badakhshan were evaluating the recent incident in Khorog. " It is premature to blame any side for wrongdoing," - he said.

According to a source, city residents gathered today in front of the regional administration but stood peacefully. Compared with the crowd in front of the administration on May 22-23, their number was much less.

Asia-Plus 24/05/2014 19:07 (rough translation from the Russian):

See <http://news.tj/ru/news/ugknb-po-gbao-my-dadim-adekvatnyi-otvet-na-lyubuyu-provokatsiyu>

SCNS GBAO : We will give an adequate response to any provocation

The Office of the State Committee for National Security (SCNS) of Tajikistan's Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region said in a statement released on May 24 that at 00:43 hours in the night of 23-24 May 2014, gunmen in two passenger cars attempted an armed incursion into the Office's headquarters, and an RGD-5 hand grenade exploded at its gates. In addition, they opened fire on the administrative buildings with a "Kalashnikov" machine gun.

Office guards, in accordance with the regulations, use firearms to prevent loss of personnel and protection of a key public facility. As a result, one of the attackers, Pallau Azamat, born in 1994, a native of GBAO and resident at 24 Kyrgyzstan Street in Khorog, was killed.

"Other participants in the attack - Noebshoev Asilshoh, born in 1986, native and resident in the town of Suchan, Shugnan District and Aidarbekov Nowruz, born in 1985, native and resident 36 Ayni Street, Khorog - were seriously injured and are in a regional hospital. At the scene, a calibre 5.45 "Kalashnikov" machinegun and a "Makarov" pistol were found. A criminal investigation into the circumstances of the armed attack incident is being undertaken,"- the SCNS said in a statement.

The Management of the SCNS strongly requests residents of Khorog "to avoid further provocation and incitement of mistrust between civil society and local authorities, and to remain calm and refrain from any illegal acts that threaten security, peace and stability."

"The Office of the State Committee on National Security of the Republic of Tajikistan in the Gorno- Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast emphatically declares: An appropriate response, in accordance with the current legislation of the Republic of Tajikistan, will be made to any provocative actions of organized criminal groups or individuals intending to harm employees of the SCNS, citizens, society and important public facilities will be given in a timely manner," the statement says.

Asia-Plus 24.5.2014 (rough translation from the Russian)

See: <http://news.tj/ru/news/v-khoroge-soversheno-napadenie-na-zdanie-ugknb>

Last night in the administrative center Khorog GBAO unknown persons assaulted the building of the regional Department of State National Security Committee of Tajikistan (УТКНБ), a source in the power structures of the country informed Asia-Plus.

According to him, the attackers threw two grenades towards the building and opened fire with small arms.

"The assailants retreated after employees of the State Security Committee responded with fire, leaving the bodies of two of the attackers whose identity is established," - said the source. He said that a criminal investigation had been launched into the case. *Avaz Yuldashev*

Anonymous eye-witness account of events described above:

At approximately 1:30 a.m. a masked man (as seen on CCTV footage) walked past the KGB building and threw a flash grenade into the building causing KGB officers to fire at three pedestrians walking outside of the building. According to the CCTV footage, the grenade caused no damage and killed no one inside of the building which highlights it was not a real grenade. Additionally, the pin from the grenade was found at the scene by the demonstrators and currently is under examination.

The shots were fired at the three pedestrians as well as a Mercedes from KGB Headquarters without prior warning. Two of the bullets ricocheted, injuring two of the pedestrians, and the third pedestrian died on the spot from wounds to the back of the neck (indicating that the shots came from behind). The locals at the scene brought the injured pedestrians and driver to the hospital, which resulted in saving of their lives.

Mr. Alim Sherzamonov said that at the time he saw three local citizens lying in the street and one of them dead. No response from state security or emergency services was made. The demonstrators in the square nearby did not take action largely because the older demonstrators at the scene urged the younger ones to wait and see what the outcome of the shooting would be and to take action later if necessary.

There is some speculation that the masked man was part of the police force and provoking the KGB for unknown reasons but this is not clear. Two of the demonstrators recognized him from the CCTV footage as one of the assailants involved in the May 21st events. Again, this is anecdotal at this point.

Additionally, currently, only one of demands made by the local civil society leaders and community has been met which is the investigation into ambush of people on 21st. Currently, the security forces are beginning an operation to disperse the protesters.

Other links:

<http://www.rferl.org/content/tajikistan-gorno-badakhshan-deadly-violence/25396636.html>

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23.5.2014

Statement by 'Civil Society' - see <http://catoday.org/centrasia/14446-v-horoge-prodolzhaetsya-miting.html>

"DECLARATION

Civil society of GBAO expresses its utmost concern about the situation in the city of Khorog,

in order to avoid a further escalation of tensions in Badakhshan, DECLARES:

The incident that occurred in the city of Khorog on 21 May 2014, which led to the loss of human life, was an act of deliberate, pre-planned power influence imposed upon the residents of GBAO through use of the armed structures of the state, that aimed to create an image of permanent disobedience of a separate group of people in the region by the central government, and to place in the minds of the Pamir residents a syndrome of fear, submission, and blind obedience to power, rather than that of common sense, justice, and objectivity of co-existence between authorities and civil society.

Based on the highest priorities of national reconciliation and peace enshrined in the Constitution, and acknowledging our civic and humane obligations, while expressing full solidarity with our brothers from other regions of Tajikistan, as a sole and indivisible part of our beloved Tajikistan, we hereby DEMAND:

- 1. The establishment of a joint committee of representatives of the President and the Government of Tajikistan, including the Chairman of GBAO Shodihon Dzhamshevdov and representatives of law enforcement agencies of the Government on one hand, and representatives of civil society on the other, for a comprehensive investigation of the armed incident which occurred in the city of Khorog on 21 May 2014.*
- 2. The above-mentioned commission completes the investigation of the events of 24 July 2012 in Khorog, as well as the incident in Rushan district in 2014, and to take all available measures to prevent similar occurrences in the future.*
- 3. The political and social rehabilitation of the participants and affected families of the events in 2012, as well as to release those imprisoned on political grounds.*
- 4. The convening of an extraordinary session of the Regional (GBAO) and Municipal (Khorog) Majlises involving a broad representation of members of civil society to discuss the overall situation in Badakhshan in light of the disproportionate use of force in the densely populated regional center.*
- 5. The dismissal of all employees of the regional administration and power structures of the region and city that held advance knowledge of the upcoming operation, yet took no precautions to protect civilians from the armed action in the center of Khorog.*
- 6. The publishing of this statement in Tajik, Russian and English languages in all media outlets on behalf of GBAO civil society:*

*Khorog, GBAO
May 22, 2014"*

* I am trying to obtain more information about this group.

- *Asia-Plus* 23.5.2014

see - <http://news.tj/en/news/badakhshan-civil-society-puts-ultimatum-authorities>

"Badakhshan Civil Society Puts Up "Ultimatum" to the Authorities



Civil society in Badakhshan Province thinks that the bloody events of May 21 in Kharough are part of the planned actions by law-enforcement structures.

According to civil society activists, whose statement was disseminated today, aim of the action was to “put pressure on Badakhshan residents and the central authorities’ will to suppress continued disobedience by part of the region’s population; to create an atmosphere of fear and blind obedience to powerful forces, and not to common sense, justice and truth for peaceful coexistence of state and civil society.”

The activists’ statement says that “basing on the high goals of national unity and peace, which are marked in the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan, and with the understanding of civil and human responsibility, with an indication of the inextricable link with brothers in all regions of Tajikistan,” Badakhshan civil society activists demand the creation of a joint commission with the representatives of the central government, including the Governor, Shadikhan Jamshedov, and representatives of law-enforcement agencies on one side, and representatives of the civil society on the other side in order to investigate the May 21 Kharough events.

The statement reads: “The Commission must investigate the reasons of bloody events of July 24, 2012 in Kharough, and similar events of a month ago in Roushan in order to prevent such events in the future. It is also important to restore political and social rights of participants of summer 2012 events in Kharough, and provide material support to victims’ families and to release political prisoners.”

They also demand to call an extraordinary meeting of Badakhshan Majlis and of Kharough Majlis with the participation of society in order to discuss the situation with the use of guns in the center of the Province.

The statement notes: “All the Badakhshan administration and provincial and Kharough law-enforcement agencies, who knew about the incident beforehand, but did not take any steps to protect civilians, should be fired from their positions.”

They demand: “Firstly we demand from the Government of Tajikistan to refrain from preliminary evaluations and wait for the results of the incident investigation.”

According to the latest information, a group of people are in the center of Kharough in this moment. Based on some estimates, approximately three thousand people are waiting for officials. They demand the speedy implementation of the civil society statement and the removal of the provincial police chief in Badakhshan. So far no government representatives have appeared.

Ministry of Interior reported that the past night was quite in Kharough, and there were no incidents registered."

- **Asia-Plus 23.5.2014**

see - <http://news.tj/en/news/interior-ministry-will-not-be-sending-extra-forces-kharough>

"Interior Ministry will not be Sending Extra Forces to Kharough



No need to send extra Tajik law-enforcement forces and means to maintain law and order in the administrative center of Badakhshan Province – Kharough, says the Interior Ministry Spokesperson, Jalaliddin Sadriddinov.

According to him, the forces and means that are currently in the City are sufficient to maintain stability.

He noted that an investigative commission of the General Prosecutor's Office, Interior Ministry, and the National Security Committee are currently in Kharough, which is investigating the riots, as a result of which people were killed, Ministry of Interior Office, Prosecutor's Office, and Provincial Court buildings was burnt.

Mr. Sadriddino said: "Last night was quite in the City, and there were no incidents."

According to him, the Interior Minister, Lieutenant-Genral Ramazan Rahimzadeh, has left for Kharough."

Other Links:

<http://www.rferl.org/content/situation-tense-in-tajikistans-khorugh-after-deadly-clashes/25395311.html>

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22.5.2014

- *Asia-Plus* 22.5.2014

see - <http://news.tj/en/news/emomali-rahmon-instructed-investigate-thoroughly-khorugh-incident>

"Emomali Rahmon instructed to investigate thoroughly the Khorugh incident

The President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon today morning held a working meeting with the heads of military forces and law enforcement agencies; there was considered an issue of taking under a strict control a situation with crime in Khorugh and strengthening the fight against drug smugglers in GBAO.

As it is reported by the press service of the President, during the meeting there was noted that as a result of the operation to capture drug smugglers the day before in Khorugh a skirmish occurred between police officers and suspects. As a result of this skirmish, two people were killed and several citizens were injured. After the incident, supporters of members of organized crime groups among youth of Khorugh town attacked the building of the local police, the Regional Court and General Prosecutor Office.

Rahmon set specific tasks for the military and law enforcement structures for the investigation of the incident and bring those responsible to justice. By order of the president as head of the working group Sherali Khayrulloev, Aide of the president departed to Khorugh."

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see - <http://news.tj/en/news/ministry-internal-affairs-reported-details-incident-khorugh>

"Ministry of Internal Affairs reported details of the incident in Khorugh



General Prosecutor Office, Ministry of Internal Affairs and State Committee of National Security of Tajikistan created the operational committee of inquiry in order to investigate what yesterday has happened in the Khorugh events, resulting in the deaths of people.

Press centre of the Ministry of Internal Affairs reports details of the incident in Khorugh. «On the 20th of May at the territory of Vanj region there was arrested Shirinbek Shirinbekov, a resident of Shughnon who was found with 17 kilograms of hashish.

The hashish was seized. During the investigative action it was found that arrested received hashish from his compatriot, 42 -year-old Munavvar Shanbiev in order to deliver a consignment of drugs to Dushanbe. Giving evidence of detainee filmed on video in the presence of witnesses, “said the law enforcement agency.

On the eve of May 21, the head of Department of Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Khorugh, B. Bahtidavlatov attempted to detain Shanbiev on suspicion of involvement in the drug trafficking. "However, Shanbiev hit a police car on his jeep in the territory of Khorugh. Residents of Khorugh, 38 -year-old Sobir Khudoikhonov and 40 -year-old Fraydun Abdurasulov opened fire to the police from the car of Shanbiev, resulting of injuries of various degrees of police officers David Niyozbekov, Khushvakh Kushanbekov, Maruf Zevarshoev and Alisho Hamroev. Khuudoikhonov S. was killed and two of the attackers were injured and hospitalized by fire back of the officers of Ministry of Internal Affairs, "- said in a statement.

It is also reported that after the incident, a group of young people, residents of Khorugh set on fire an official car of the police, the building of the Department of Ministry of Internal Affairs of Khorugh town, the building of Prosecutor Office and Court of GBAO. They did not allow to the fire service to extinguish the fire for 3-4 hours. During the riot, a 23 -year-old intern of the Department of Ministry of Internal Affairs, Gavhar Ashurov, died from the received injuries."

Conspiracy theory - reader's comment on Asia-Plus Russian version:

See <http://news.tj/ru/news/v-khoroge-opyat-nespokoino> - N.B. scroll down

"Folks! The conversation here, I completely see like the kind of conversation primary one pupils have. The situation that is ruling in GBAO today is very far from reality, people are just being mocked. To the regime destabilisation in the region is useful, since it shows to the whole world that Tajikistan supposedly fights against drug traffic that in fact is carried out between Kulyab and Europe. But the GBAO is a region which isn't worth pitying. To the representatives of the EU this is shown as an account for some well done work.

The leaders of the republic [of Tajikistan] are wastefully selling the resources and the land of GBAO. All the profit goes to their own pockets and the region doesn't receive its money and remains in need of support. In this moment the destabilisation in Khorog is being done on purpose, since the Chinese have illegally been mining for molybdenum, wolfram and gold in the district of Murghab, for a week now.

In order to prevent people from disrupting them, with the help of the police forces of the regime, they apply a diversionary tactic for the local population. The mineral resources of the Pamir, are owned today by very small number of public officials.

But this won't last for long, one day the people will stand up and declare a referendum."

Other links:

<http://www.rferl.org/content/tajik-president-sends-envoy-to-east-in-wake-of-deadly-clashes/25394008.html>

<http://www.rferl.org/content/one-killed-in-tajik-security-operation-on-afghan-border/25392837.html>

<http://en.ca-news.org/news:541736>

<http://catoday.org/centrasia/tjru/14442-predsedatel-gbao-shodihon-dzhamshedov-ob-incidente-21-maya-v-horoge.html>

<https://twitter.com/search?src=typd&q=khrog>

<http://www.rferl.org/content/one-killed-in-tajik-security-operation-on-afghan-border/25392837.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOaKzTur7RU#t=76>

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/sns-rt-us-tajikistan-clashes-20140521.0,1981155.story>

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21.5.2014

The following information has been received from **an eye-witness in Khorog**:

Today, 21st May 2014, at about 10 or 11 am, in the Gulaken region (near the urban department of the police – miliziya – and opposite the UCA building), the security forces (“omonovzy”) shot at a car with three inhabitants of Khorog, without warning. Their vehicle was stopped on the main road, a Kamaz truck blocked the road from which the security forces jumped down to attack the vehicle. During the firing on the vehicle, one person was killed and two were seriously wounded, and were brought to the hospital. Within half an hour, people spontaneously gathered in the centre of the town. They requested justice. Not receiving any answer or explanations, they attempted to enter the building of the urban department of the police, which was answered with shooting from the building. One more inhabitant of Khorog died.

After this, the unarmed crowd stormed the building, broke the windows and doors of the building and burnt it. One more person was injured. After this, *prokuratura* and court buildings were also burnt down as well as some vehicles. Shooting could be heard several times. The representatives of the *hukumat* were unable to calm down the crowd. At the moment, about 100-200 persons (mainly young men) are gathering on the main square in front of the *hukumat* building. They demand the surrender of those members of the security forces who were involved in the initial shooting. The City Mayor of Khorog is said to be negotiating with unknown representatives of the Khorog population but the crowd in front of the *hukumat* is said not to have listened to him. There are rumours that a group from the *prokuratura* or the Ministry of the Interior has left from Dushanbe to analyse the reasons for today's events.

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In the administrative center of GBAO, Khorugh, today there was a clash between a group of locals and representatives of law enforcement agencies. As it was reported to Asia-Plus the source in the administration office of GBAO that today representatives of law enforcement agencies attempted to arrest some residents of Khorugh town who are suspected in committing several crimes. “A group of local residents came to the defence of their countrymen; as a result it was applied firearm by representatives of law enforcement agencies,” said the source. According to him, in the firefight three local residents received injuries of various degrees. One of the suspects in committing a crime by name Sobir, a resident of microrayon Barkhorog was killed. Supporters of killed and wounded set fire a building of Khorugh police office,” noted the source. According to him, at this point, negotiations are under way in the administration office of GBAO between the population of town and authorities. “At this point, there is a relative silence in Khorugh but the situation in general remains tense,” concluded the source. We recall that government forces of Tajikistan began a special operation in Khorugh at the end of July 2012 in order to eliminate the illegal armed groups in GBAO. Members of these illegal armed groups were blamed for the murder on 21 July 2014 of General A. Nazarov, the Head of Department of State Committee of National Security of the Republic of Tajikistan in GBAO. According to official data, on 24 July 2014 during the special operation, there were killed 13 officers of law enforcement agencies and 30 militants, and 40 militants were detained. Immediately after the special operation the population handed over numerous weapons and ammunition to the government.

See also the following websites for pictures of today's events:

<http://catoday.org/centrasia/tjru/14421-foto-segodnyashnego-incidenta-v-horoge.html>

<http://catoday.org/centrasia/tjru/14419-v-horoge-proizoshel-incident-raneno-troe-zhiteley-odin-uzhe-skonchalsya.html>