

## Statement of Political Movement Group-24

### National Minorities and Nationalism

Ethnic Tajiks make up over 80% of the population. As part of the government's nation building process, it has emphasized the importance of an ethnic Tajik nation and culture at the exclusion of minorities. Uzbeks make up 13% of the population. There are smaller minorities of Pamiris, Kyrgyz, Arabs and Turkmen, as well as a largely urban-based Russian minority. The government continues to limit the access to education in minority languages. Uzbek representatives who criticize the government's policies towards ethnic minorities have been targeted. For example, activist Salim Shamsiddinov disappeared in 2013 after he appealed to the Uzbek minority to support an opposition candidate in the presidential election. Shamsiddinov had criticized the government's policies towards minorities in media interviews.

Officials have prevented members of minority religious groups, including Jehovah's Witnesses, from registering their organizations. Pamiris, who practice Ismailism, continue to face discrimination.

Christian groups have also been targeted by the government. In July 2017 a court sentenced Bahrom Kholmatov, a pastor from South Korean church Sonmin Sonbogim, to three years' imprisonment on charges of extremism.

In conclusions, I can say that Rahmonov and his regime not acknowledged national minorities and religious minorities entirely in Tajikistan and he will be the cause of conflict and separation in our country.

Nuriddin Rizoyi

Head of foreign affairs