



# SAFERWORLD

## in Tajikistan

**SAFERWORLD**  
PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES



# Introduction



**After a civil war that ended in 1997, the post-Soviet country of Tajikistan has gone through a slow reform process, especially around governance and the security sector. Through joint efforts by the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the international community, safety and security in the country have improved substantially. However, there are still major challenges to ensuring a stable environment for sustainable peace and development.**

Communities in Tajikistan face a range of insecurities in their daily lives – from corruption and human rights abuses to cross-border conflicts and gender-based violence – which they are not always able to resolve through formal channels. There is evidence that segments of the population (including young people) are looking to alternative groups for provision of security and access to justice, as well as a moral framework and opportunities for employment, education and recreation. Such groups can be religious, ethno-nationalist, or criminal. Therefore, it is important that formal security and justice systems in the country are able to meet the needs of diverse groups of people.

Tajikistan must also contend with a complex external environment. To the north, it is bordered by the Fergana Valley, sharing a complicated grid of disputed borders and natural resources, which are a source of tension with Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. To the south lies Afghanistan, which has a long history of violence and instability that often spills over or creates tensions in communities along the border.

To respond to these challenges, in 2007 the government began a police reform process, supported by the international community, which represents a new approach to the development of policing within Tajikistan and takes account of international practice. It also seeks to take account of lessons learnt from past phases of police development.

Saferworld has been working with the government, national and local authorities, civil society, affected communities and others to ensure that this reform process leads to improved security for people around the country.

**“We used to be afraid of the police and we did not want to communicate with them. Anyone who collaborated with police used to be perceived as a person under investigation or as an informer. Now we understand they are not punishers but service providers.”**

A participant of community police partnership team activities in Ghafurov town.





# About us

**We believe in a world where everyone can lead peaceful, fulfilling lives, free from fear and insecurity.**

We are an independent international organisation working to prevent violent conflict and build safer lives, with programmes in East Africa, Central Asia, South and South East Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa. In Central Asia, Saferworld works in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and has started piloting a new initiative in Uzbekistan as part of a regional grant supported by the United States Institute of Peace. This promotes community policing approaches in the five Central Asian countries, to address the drivers of violence and support for or participation in violent groups.

Saferworld has been working in Tajikistan since 2010 and set up an office in Dushanbe in 2016. Together with our partners, we bring communities and authorities (including security providers) together to discuss their safety and security problems and to find solutions that reduce and prevent insecurity, conflict and violence.

To do this, we:

- strengthen community-police relations
- work in partnership with police at all levels (local, sub-national, national) and with civil society and communities to build trust and improve cooperation
- work with partners to improve the accountability of police services and make recommendations on security policies and practices
- provide civil society and communities with the skills and support they need to advocate with authorities for timely, effective and efficient security services and justice provision that meet the needs and respects the rights of all communities
- support young women and men to push for police-community initiatives that are inclusive of everyone
- challenge harmful gender norms and roles that perpetuate conflict, insecurity, and violence
- seek to understand the underlying causes of violence and support for violent groups, helping authorities and communities to address these drivers



# Our work

## Promoting people-centred policing

Saferworld has developed and used a **people-centred approach to security** in conflict-affected and fragile contexts for more than 15 years.

In Tajikistan, this approach helps us to tackle security concerns – from domestic violence, road safety and crime, to youth grievances and access to education and jobs – by working directly with people who are affected by conflict and insecurity and ensuring that responses take into account the experiences and needs of women, youth and marginalised groups.

Together with our civil society partners – Jahon, Association of Scientific and Technical Intelligentsia of Tajikistan (ASTI), Zarshedabonu, Marifatnoki, and Lawyers Association of Pamir (LAP) – we bring communities and authorities together to discuss their safety and security concerns and to find solutions that reduce and prevent insecurity, conflict and violence and contribute to building sustainable peace and security. We pass our learning on to government officials, law-makers and the national police service to influence national policy. We believe it is vital for community members to be included in discussions that address the security issues that affect them directly.

Saferworld’s experience shows that using evidence from community-level work increases the effectiveness of advocacy for greater systemic change nationally and internationally. We are conducting research to inform and improve our programming work, and also to better inform our advocacy at all levels to influence changes in behaviours, relations and structures.

In Tajikistan, Saferworld supports the implementation of the national police reform strategy (2013–2020) by strengthening the capacity of public councils (PCs), community police partnership teams (CPPTs), civil society organisations, police and communities – developing skills that they will need to make the people-centred approach to policing a success. Regionally, Saferworld brings together law enforcement and civil society representatives from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to discuss community policing approaches and to address the root causes of support for violence and participation in violent groups.

# Our achievements



Together with our partners, we:

- developed the skills and capacities of seven PCs to raise public awareness about the positive impact of police reform and community policing on people's security
- established partnerships with 15 local *Hukumats* (district-level government) and *Jamoats* (village-level government) and helped set up twelve CPPTs. Three of these teams are in communities along the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border and use community policing approaches to address the underlying causes of violence and support for violent groups
- trained around 150 members of CPPTs on community policing approaches and organised study tours to Northern Ireland for five police officers and five civil society members to learn about community policing best practices
- supported seven PCs to bring community concerns to the police, and advocated with the local *Hukumats* and police for increased support for CPPTs
- renovated and equipped 14 community policing centres for communities to gather with each other and with the police to address their safety and security concerns
- trained around 180 police officers at the local, sub-national, and national levels on conflict- and gender-sensitive community policing approaches as part of the national police reform strategy (2013–2020) in Tajikistan
- reached an estimated 1,500,000 people through awareness-raising and educational campaigns, supported by 27 community and police action plans to address community security concerns, such as domestic violence, road safety, crime, youth grievances, and access to education and job opportunities
- improved collaboration between PCs and CPPTs throughout Tajikistan

- organised learning visits between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan for Ministry of Internal Affairs officials responsible for police reform, police officers, and civilian members of PCs and CPPTs to share experiences on how community policing and community security is used in their respective countries
- researched the root causes of violence and recruitment into violent groups, and trained PCs, CPPTs and civil society organisations in developing peacebuilding strategies to address these issues collaboratively with police, communities and authorities
- supported 17 CPPTs that had been previously established

**“Just the name ‘community policing centres’ tells you that they are about collaboration between people and police. The partnership teams are helping us to maintain order and safety in our small town.”**

Assistant to the Head of the *Hukumat* (local government structure) of Nurek city.

**“We learnt how to go through a process of identifying, analysing, and prioritising safety concerns of the communities where we live. The best part is that we learnt how to do it together with the police and other authorities.”**

A member of the Bokhtar PC.





## SUPPORTING POLICE REFORM

The PCs set up by the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) in Dushanbe, Districts of Republican Subordination, Sughd, Khatlon and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Regions are consultative and supervisory bodies to represent citizens' interests during the police reform process. We also support them to advocate for better security provision that takes into account gender and conflict dynamics, and is inclusive, transparent and accountable to all.

**“Before, we did not go to the communities with crime maps or any other information. But now we realise that in order to become closer to the people we serve we have to share information with them. It is essential to be as open as possible.”**

Police officer in Khujand.

## COMMUNITY POLICE PARTNERSHIP TEAMS

CPPTs, which are set up by the MIA with support from Saferworld and the United States Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) are made up of a cross-section of society – civil society, elders, religious leaders, youth leaders, journalists, teachers, local business owners, and an equal balance of men and women – and provide a platform for communities to work with local authorities to identify and prioritise security concerns and to develop action plans to resolve them peacefully. They facilitate trusting, respectful, and inclusive partnerships between the police, local governments and communities. They also facilitate collaborative problem-solving and dialogue at the local level, aimed at preventing conflict and violence and addressing the drivers of insecurity and marginalisation.

**“Because of our work to address domestic violence, the local *Hukumat* [city and regional government] understood the scale of the issue and started to support us.”**

A member of the CPPT in Rasht.

We have set up 15 new CPPTs and supported 16 existing ones, and together with our civil society partners and PCs we have provided guidance and training to help them analyse local safety concerns and to address them in ways that are sensitive to conflict and gender. Many of these CPPTs have prioritised public concerns around gender-based violence, drug and alcohol abuse, youth violence, and recruitment of young people into violent groups.

**“Our community is very traditional, religious and patriarchal. That is why any issue related to women is very sensitive. However, we decided to address domestic violence, and you know what? Our women feel more empowered to come to one of the female members of our CPPT and to share their stories. I think this is a great achievement.”**

A member of the CPPT in Rasht.





**CASE STUDY:  
WORKING WITH THE POLICE TO CHANGE APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY SAFETY**

Many in Tajikistan worry that young people are vulnerable to recruitment into violent groups, such as ISIS, Al Qaeda, the Taliban and affiliated groups. Through CPPTs, Saferworld and partners have brought police and communities together to discuss these issues and to explore how to address the underlying causes. “Before, I always thought that we need to gather people together and talk to them about the negative consequences of joining the violent movements,” said a police officer who is a member of the team. “But we never thought of triggers and causes, and motives of youth to join these groups.” Together, the group identified several factors that needed to be addressed – including school drop-out rates, limited time and space for leisure, unemployment and poverty, and hard-handed police tactics that increase feelings of discrimination and marginalisation. To address some of these issues, the teams developed action plans that included activities such as vocational trainings and dialogue workshops that bring young people together and help them gain skills and knowledge to tackle some of their concerns.

“We know that our action plan will not change things overnight,” said a police officer in Hamadoni district. “But working on it has helped us to understand that there are alternative approaches to addressing recruitment into violent groups and that all cases are different and require their own strategy.”

**“Before, I always thought that we need to gather people together and talk to them about the negative consequences of joining the violent movements [...] but we never thought of triggers and causes, and motives of youth to join these groups.”**

A police officer and CPPT member.



**CASE STUDY:  
TACKLING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

Violence against women and girls is increasingly recognised as a problem in Tajikistan. Because of the different roles and expectations of women and men in the household and a masculine police culture dominated by men, many cases of abuse are never reported. While there have been some efforts to address the issue nationally, these have not gone far enough to challenge patriarchal systems or the underlying causes of violence against women and girls. A joint report from leading human rights organisations estimated that nearly half of all women and girls in Tajikistan have faced some form of physical or sexual violence in their lifetimes – so their security concerns are a top priority for many communities.

Saferworld, together with our civil society partners, has been working with women and girls in communities to ensure their concerns are heard by authorities and that they can work together toward finding solutions.

We facilitate problem-solving processes within CPPTs and support them to develop and implement effective action plans that are conflict- and gender-sensitive, to address the problems faced by women and girls. With this knowledge, in addition to their background in community policing, they are able to change their approach to policing to become more gender sensitive to the particular threats that women and girls face – enabling them to report abuse. By speaking with people who are affected by these issues, the police are able to get a better idea of some of the insecurities that people face. This process of identifying, analysing and prioritising safety concerns – and hearing different perspectives from women, youth and minority ethnic groups – is absolutely crucial. As a result, towns like Guliston in Sughd Region identified domestic violence as a major issue that is perpetuated by harmful stereotypes and women’s social and economic dependence on husbands and fathers. Together, the Guliston CPPT conducted awareness-raising activities by bringing women together to discuss these issues and to take part in trainings or pursue their hobbies, such as sewing or computer classes.



# SAFERWORLD

PREVENTING VIOLENT CONFLICT. BUILDING SAFER LIVES

For further information about us and our work in Tajikistan, please visit [www.saferworld.org.uk/tajikistan](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/tajikistan) or email us at [general@saferworld.org.uk](mailto:general@saferworld.org.uk)

You can keep up to date with our work by signing up for email alerts at [www.saferworld.org.uk/stay-informed](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/stay-informed). You can also follow us on Twitter ([@Saferworld](https://twitter.com/Saferworld)) or like our Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/Saferworld>).

The Tajikistan programme is generously funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

## CONTACT US

### SAFERWORLD IN TAJIKISTAN

[communications@saferworld.org.uk](mailto:communications@saferworld.org.uk)

Web: [www.saferworld.org.uk](http://www.saferworld.org.uk)

Twitter: [@Saferworld](https://twitter.com/Saferworld)

### OFFICE

127 Rudaki Avenue, office 911  
Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Phone: +922 (93) 500 71 01

Saferworld is a UK registered charity (1043843) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (3015948) in England and Wales.

**PHOTOGRAPHS** FRONT COVER: © KHUSRAV ZUHUROV/SAFERWORLD;  
INSIDE PAGES: © KHUSRAV ZUHUROV/SAFERWORLD, KHIRAD KARGASOV/SAFERWORLD,  
MAX SLAUGHTER/SAFERWORLD; BACK COVER: © NINARA/Flickr