

Relations Between the Republic of Kazakhstan and Kazakhs Abroad (1991-2000)

Ganiy Karassayev¹, Gabit Kenzhebayev², Talgatbek Aminov³, Seiitkali Duisen⁴, and Ainur Shukeyeva⁵

Abstract

To date, the number of Kazakhs around the world is about 15 million. About 5 million of them live in 45 countries around the world. The article is based on domestic and international scientific literature. The emphasis here is on Kazakh diaspora and its development trends. This includes an analysis of demographic factors and the distribution of the Kazakh diasporas. We have identified main characteristics of Kazakh migration and the Kazakh diaspora as well as their relations with other Kazakhs and the Republic of Kazakhstan. This article is likely to be useful for further research and a general understanding of migration processes in Central Asia.

Keywords: *Kazakhstan; migration; Kazakh Diaspora; repatriate*

Introduction

One of the most important tasks of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the first years of independence was to establish contacts with Kazakhs who migrated abroad during different periods and, if possible, to entice their return to their homeland. In historical sources prior to the independence, it was noted that “Outside the territory of Kazakhstan, about 4 million 500 thousand Kazakhs live in 14 countries of the world, of which only about 800 thousand are diaspora, the remaining 3 million 700 thousand are Kazakh irredenta, i.e., live on the lands adjacent to Kazakhstan, torn off from it and attached to Russia, China, Uzbekistan in different historical periods”. In different countries of the world, Kazakhs have different political, economic, cultural and social statuses, which is due to historical events and the policies pursued in relation to this population in the country of residence (Mendikulova, 1997; Babets and Ruda, 2018; Herz et al., 2018). Thus, the political and social situation in the countries where they live was defined. That is why the task was set to establish contacts with Kazakhs

¹ Ganiy Karassayev, Department of Source Studies, Historiography and History of Kazakhstan, Institute of State History, Science Committee of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

E-mail: karassayev9521-1@nuos.pro

² Gabit Kenzhebayev, Department of History of Kazakhstan named after Academician T. S. Sadykov, Abay Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Almaty, Kazakhstan. E-mail: kenzhebayev.g@kaiost.cn

³ Talgatbek Aminov, Department of the History of Socio-Economic Development of Kazakhstan, Institute of State History, Science Committee of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

E-mail: tal_aminov@delfttech.eu

⁴ Seiitkali Duisen, Department of Source Studies, Historiography and History of Kazakhstan, Institute of State History, Science Committee of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

E-mail: seiitkali-duisen@uohk.com.cn

⁵ Ainur Shukeyeva, Department of History of Kazakhstan and Rukhani Zhangyru, Sh. Ualikhanov Kokshetau State University, Kokshetau, Kazakhstan. E-mail: ashukeyeva@kaiost.cn



abroad on a regular basis and to realise their needs as much as possible since the initial stage of independence of the state.

In the implementation of this measure, first of all, the establishment of regular contacts in this area with the countries with a large Kazakh diaspora. The second goal was to satisfy the wishes of those who wanted to return to their historical homeland. As stated in the official data of that period: "... There are many important issues in providing educational assistance to Kazakhs abroad. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Russia Kazakh schools in Mongolia lack teachers and Kazakh textbooks. There are also difficulties for Kazakh graduates of these countries to enter and study at universities. Therefore, most want to come to Kazakhstan to study" (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 5-N, Series 1, File 6646).

Until the mid-1990s, a large number of Kazakhs living abroad settled in China, and a significant number of them began to wish to return to their historical homeland on a permanent basis. The real situation of the historical compatriots in these countries today was informed that "Currently, there are more than a million people of Kazakh nationality in China, the vast majority of whom live in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Small compact groups of Kazakh families are also found in some inland provinces and the Tibet Autonomous Region of the PRC. In particular, about 300 families, numbering 2.700 people, live in the Aksai Autonomous County of Gansu Province".

An analysis of recent events shows that the Chinese authorities are more loyal to considering Kazakhs' applications to move to the Republic of Kazakhstan. This is confirmed by the arrival in August this year of a large group of Kazakh families from Gansu province for permanent residence in the Shu district of the Zhambyl region. The Chinese authorities provided them with material and financial assistance, and cars were allocated free of charge to transport family members and belongings to Khorgos" (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 75-N, Series 1, File 464) – this official date defines it more clearly.

Many members of the Kazakh diaspora in Turkey have also longed to return to their historical homeland from the earliest days of Kazakhstan's existence as a separate state. And the next group of them sought to establish close ties with Kazakhstan and its historical compatriots in all directions. The following specific historical information in this context was given that "According to the information of the Embassies, about 30,000 representatives of the Kazakh diaspora currently live in Turkey, most of whom wish to obtain citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and some wish to move to a permanent place of residence.

The largest group is the Kazakh citizens of Turkey. Along with Turkish, many of them wish to obtain citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan. However, at the same time, they reserve the right to choose permanent citizenship. Another group was Kazakhs with Afghan passports who arrived in Turkey in the early 80s. Some of them are ready to move to Kazakhstan for permanent residence, abandoning the Afghan one. The third group was Kazakhs from Afghanistan (3.5 thousand people), who entered Turkey illegally in recent years through Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Many of them are officially registered by the Turkish authorities as stateless persons" (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 75-N, Series 1, File 604), thus announcing this affair's importance. At the same time, in the mid-1990s, Kazakhs in Iran began to raise the issue of returning to their historical homeland. Specific references for this period include, "The Kazakh diaspora in Iran has 2.5-3 thousand people living in the cities of Gorgan, Gombad and Bender-Turkmen in the



province of Mazandaran. Over the past four years, many qualified specialists from among the Kazakhs have left for permanent residence in the Mangistau, South Kazakhstan, Zhambyl, Almaty, Kyzylorda regions” (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 5-N, Series 1, File 8984).

Given this situation, in the early days of the country’s independence, the wishes of Kazakhs who wanted to return voluntarily to their historical homeland in the near and far abroad were accepted, and the government of Kazakhstan began to take concrete measures. According to the 1995 archives, “The main flow of migrants comes from countries with a significant Kazakh diaspora, primarily the People’s Republic of China (XUAR), Mongolia, the Russian Federation, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Iran. At the same time, until 1995, there was a peak in the resettlement of Kazakhs from far abroad countries, and since 1995, an increase in the number of repatriates from the CIS countries.

The main purpose of this study is to identify trends in relations between the Republic of Kazakhstan and Kazakh dissidents and migrants around the world. For this, trends and main directions of migration were identified. Hence both archival and modern sources from authors from Kazakhstan and other countries of the world were studied.

For this article, data from the documents of the Archives of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (AP RK) and the Akmola Regional State Archive (ARSA) were analysed. In addition, foreign and Kazakh studies on demography, repatriation and migration were reviewed. The historical method allows us to understand the phenomenon more deeply and develop recommendations. It will enable us to understand the sequence, showing the peculiarities of the formation, stages and political bases of migration (Lukashevich, 1991; Tsivatyi and Martysiuk, 2021).

Discussion

According to statistics, 7% of immigrants came from neighbouring countries: Russia – 60%, Uzbekistan -11%, Kyrgyzstan – 6%, Ukraine – 5%, Turkmenistan – 3%, and Tajikistan – 2%. Among non-CIS countries, Mongolia ranks first regarding the number of Kazakh migrants (over 60.000 people). Uzbekistan has up to 1.5 million Kazakhs, who mostly live in the areas of ecological disaster in the Aral Sea region and the Kzyl-Kum desert. Approximately 70 thousand ethnic Kazakhs. The Kazakh diaspora in Kyrgyzstan is about 48 thousand people and 5 thousand Kazakhs live in Tajikistan. The number of Kazakhs in Iran is about 4 thousand people” (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 5-N, Series 1, File 9181).

The first President of the Republic, Nursultan Nazarbayev, spoke about the emergence of modern Kazakhs living abroad in near and far countries: “Today we often talk about the suffering of the displaced peoples. True, this too is unprecedented in the history of the world. However, the tragedy that befell the Kazakhs in the steppes not only killed many people, but also forced them to relocate a large part of them to another country, to another place” (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 5-N, Series 1, File 9181), thus he analysed the reasons. That is why there are many issues related to the social and living conditions of many Kazakh compatriots abroad, whose ancestors were forced to seek refuge in other countries.

For these reasons, time has begun to turn this important work into a systematic activity of the Republic of Kazakhstan. For example, “Kazakhs in the distant diaspora, particularly in Europe, are Kazakhs who fled to their homeland through India and Pakistan in the last century as a result of various forms of violence and later worked to provide a brighter future for future generations. There are about five thousand of them. In particular, a significant proportion of Kazakhs living in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Sweden, Britain, Norway and Denmark in Western Europe became citizens of those countries, while others retained their Turkish citizenship” (Nazarbayev, 2003).

By the end of XX century, “the Kazakh diaspora accounted for a third of the Kazakh nation, or 4.3 million”. Most of them were forced to leave their historical homeland due to the revolutionary and civil wars of the Soviet period, forced collectivisation, famine and mass repressions. After the collapse of the USSR, Kazakhs in the CIS became a diaspora” (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 5-N, Series 6, File 1108). According to the data of that period, there were different conditions in the economic and social development of the Kazakh diaspora abroad. For example, according to official archives, “Today, about 100,000 Kazakh citizens live in Mongolia, most of them in the Bayan-Ulgii region. There are about 10 thousand Kazakhs in Ulan-Batyr and its environs, as well as in Erdenet, Darkhan, Berkh and Sharyngol. Except for Bayan-Ulgii, there are no Kazakh schools, where the Kazakh children do not know how to read and write in Kazakh” (Zaverukha, 2020). Everyone speaks Mongolian.

“According to official Uzbek data, it has 1 million people in the country. We have 200.000 brothers and sisters. According to our demographers, there are more than 2 million Kazakhs in Uzbekistan. At one time, there were 105 Kazakh schools in Uzbekistan. We can't say that it has everything now. In recent years, the border has been closed, making it difficult not only to migrate, but also to travel to Kazakhstan. According to official figures in Uzbekistan, the number of Kazakhs is about 1.3 million. According to our demographers, more than two million Kazakhs live in Uzbekistan. The big problems in the lives of Kazakhs in Uzbekistan are as follows: Firstly, there are no textbooks. It is difficult to send the fare to Kazakhstan. Secondly, other literature does not go. In general, Kazakh books are not enough. The reason is the same as above. Thirdly, it is very difficult for graduates of Kazakh schools to enter universities. After all, in the entrance exam you have to write a dictation or a composition in Uzbek. How does a child who graduated from Kazakh write it? Fourthly, there is a lot of unemployment among Kazakhs. And the number of Kazakhs in Turkey does not exceed 20 thousand” (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 210, Series 1, File 23).

In some countries where the Kazakh diaspora has settled, there are favourable conditions for their free development, revival and further development of national traditions. For example, the fact that Kazakhs in Turkey and Russia preserve their national symbols and communicate with their historical homeland is in the focus of attention of state and public organisations of these countries. In particular: “The World Association of Kazakhs carries out cultural and spiritual relations with about 20 Kazakh national cultural societies established in the regions, territories and autonomous republics of the Russian Federation” (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 210, Series 1, File 23).

The Embassy of Kazakhstan in Uzbekistan provides the following information about the current situation among the Kazakhs in Uzbekistan: “...According to the plan, on the eve of



the Republic Day of the sovereign state, two meetings were held with our compatriots in Uzbekistan. The first was organised on October 22 this year at the Republican International Center together with the Kazakh Cultural Center by representatives of the Kazakh diaspora living in Tashkent and surrounding areas. Chairman of the International Center K. In his introductory speech, Rasulov noted that there are 24 national cultural centers in the capital, and 80 cultural centers of about 6 million people of other nationalities, which make up a quarter of the population of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Then, the activities of our Government and the Embassy to understand and address pressing issues of the Kazakh diaspora were announced. Speaking about their situation and needs, our compatriots said that since 1991, Kazakh schools in Uzbekistan have been following old curriculums. Their situation will be worse in the future due to the transition to Latin script in the country, and there is a shortage of teachers”.

Suggestions and comments were made, for example, the expansion of Kazakh departments at the Tashkent Nizami Pedagogical Institute, the opening of groups in new specialities, the recruitment of a group of talented young people at the Academy of Arts in Kazakhstan, subscriptions to Kazakh fiction, information publications and the Embassy’s native language. There were requests to organise study and music clubs (Kranz, 2020).

On October 23, I visited Bostandyk district of Tashkent region and met with representatives of the Kazakh diaspora. During the visit, the mayor Abdibasykov Abdimanap talked to the heads of districts and received information about the district. There are 21 Kazakh schools in the district. Population: 46% – Uzbeks, 26% – Kazakhs (according to them understated), 17% – Tajiks, 8% – Russians (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 75-N, Series 1, File 2981). During the first five years of independence, in the course of systematic work with the countries where the Kazakh diaspora is located, the requests of those wishing to return to their historical places began to be implemented. According to the certificate of migration of the population in the first half of 1996 “In the first half of this year, 142,331 people returned home. Including: from far away countries – 967, from nearer countries– 26,456. These included: 16,500 from Russia, 4,046 from Uzbekistan, 2192 from Turkmenistan, 1195 from Ukraine, 1,056 from Kyrgyzstan, 453 from Tajikistan, 419 from Azerbaijan. From foreign countries: 343 from Germany, 459 from Mongolia, 85 from Iran. From China – 74, from Turkey – 40, from Israel – 21” (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 5-N, Series 1, File 6652).

It was not without reason that at the first session of the APK in March 1995, as a “strong belt of stability”, “I warned about the culture of our compatriots, who once lost their historical homeland, information and human ties with Kazakhstan. Dissemination of accurate information about our country will increase the number of our friends in the near and far abroad” (Nazarbayev, 2017).

At the same time, it is known that Kazakh diaspora in Europe, America or elsewhere are composed of small communities, and therefore they can not affect the socio-cultural development of these countries and they require Kazakh government to communicate with them. For example, according to the leaders of the Kazakh Cultural Center in Germany, “every year since the beginning of the 1990s, football tournaments have been held to keep Kazakh youth growing up in Europe, but whose native languages are completely confused, so as not to cool down and disappear into other nations” (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 210, Series 1, File 63). It was known that the situation was

similar in other distant countries. Therefore, from the first years of independence, the Republic of Kazakhstan began to implement the first concrete measures to support the Kazakh diaspora abroad. For example, on December 31, 1996, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbayev 303308 approved the “Program to Support Compatriots Living Abroad”. It stated that “the level of cultural, social and economic development of the diasporas in these countries is completely different. Comprehensive research and solution of the Kazakh Diaspora, the unity and interconnectedness of research and practical activities are not given much attention.

Comprehensive improvement of work with compatriots abroad will be possible only with regular and targeted state support. It is necessary to create a system of thoughtful measures to ensure maximum satisfaction of socio-economic, cultural, educational needs of the Kazakh diaspora, to allow those who want to return to their historical homeland” (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 5-N, Series 6, File 1108). With the adoption of the State Program, work began on its implementation. For example, the following official government report states: “The Ministry of Employment and Social Protection of the Ministry of Population, together with other relevant agencies, has drafted a Simplified Agreement on Citizenship between the Republic of Kazakhstan and Mongolia. The draft agreement on tax-free migration of migrants from Mongolia to Kazakhstan through the Russian territory was developed and presented to the Russian side.

In 1998, the resettlement quota was set at 2,180 families. Almaty, South Kazakhstan, Mangistau oblast and Almaty city exceeded the established quota at the expense of those from the CIS. For example, Almaty oblast had 365 families instead of the planned 45, and South Kazakhstan had 435 families instead of the planned 200. In 1997, the following activities were carried out to implement this state program: several scientific and practical conferences were held in Kazakhstan, Russia, Uzbekistan, Turkey and Mongolia to discuss current issues of the Kazakh diaspora abroad. For example, an academic and practical conference “The Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kazakh Diaspora: Problems and Prospects for Interaction” was held in Pavlodar with the participation of representatives of Kazakh cultural centers in Mongolia, Germany and Uzbekistan, prominent scientists of Kazakhstan, presented proposals for further development of social services for the Kazakh diaspora, opportunities for investment, investment in their historical homeland, and its prospects.

Representatives of the Kazakh Diaspora in Almaty took part in conferences, seminars and meetings dedicated to the 100th anniversary of M.O.Auezov. In 1997, 1963 families moved from abroad (2,180 families under the quota), which was 90% of the quota for this year. The order established a quota for the Kazakh diaspora of 250 people per year, including 25 people for the postgraduate study of 25 people (Almaty MU-15 named after Abai, KazNTU-10). According to the quota, in 1997, 75 people were admitted to universities from Karakalpakstan, 15 people from Mongolia, 134 people from far abroad and 7 people to graduate school ” (Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 5-N, Series 6, File 1108). This determines the scope and importance of measures taken to meet the requirements of the program.

Among the measures taken in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the second half of the 1990s to return historical compatriots to their homeland was the quota for the arrival of 150 families in 1996 in Akmola region. 89 of them are Mongolian citizens of Mongolian descent who want to come to Akmola region to join their relatives. In total, 72 out of 89 families in the quota



came. In addition, 36 families from Uzbekistan, 24 families from Russia and 2 families from Turkmenistan came voluntarily. One-time assistance of 2.8 million tenge was provided to 134 families. 68 houses worth 3.9 million tenge were purchased from the farms of the region. Financial assistance in the amount of 409.8 thousand tenge was provided to special needs. Almost all migrants from Mongolia with quotas were provided with housing. In Atbasar and Krasnoznamenensk Tselinograd districts, families were provided with jobs” (State Archive of Akmola region. Fund 1290, Series 2, File 89).

The directory of the settlement of compatriots in the regions of Akmola region from 1992 to 1996, who returned to their native lands voluntarily, was as follows. In particular, they said “From Mongolia: 18 families with 113 members from Mongolia to Alekseevsky district, 2 to 4 from Russia, 8 from 3 to Uzbekistan; there are 307 families, 7 out of 20 from Russia and 1 in 5 from Uzbekistan, respectively; 243 families with 1257 people from Mongolia to Seletinsky district, 5 out of 21 from Russia, 112 families with 651 people from Mongolia in Tselinograd district, 2 out of 1 in Russia, 2 out of 9 in Uzbekistan, respectively; 146 families with 694 people from Mongolia and 16 families from Russia, respectively, came to Shortandy district. (State Archive of Akmola region. Fund 1290, Series 2, File 89).

In case of the current districts of the region “According to the decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 1992, 20 families of compatriots came to Esil district. Currently, the Esil district is inhabited by families of the main ethnic group from Mongolia. They are located in 11 farms of the district. 15 families need to improve their social and living conditions, two apartments were purchased for immigrants from Komsomolsk and Igilik LLP” (State Archive of Akmola region. Fund 1290, Series 2, File 89).

Conclusions

It is clear that the Republic of Kazakhstan, from the early years of independence, was in active contact with the Kazakhs on the other side of the border. This was evident in the literature and the collected archival data supported the finding. In the future, the volume of migration and the contacts between Kazakhs around the world will only increase, forming an international global Kazakh system of relationships.

This first initiative of the Kazakh people, who now can live freely in their homeland, together with their historical compatriots, who were forced to flee during the tsarist rule and were called “enemies of the people” and “traitors” in the Soviet era. And this can be considered a bright manifestation of Kazakhstan’s sovereign policy. Analysing the history of migration of Kazakhs to other countries over several centuries, it becomes clear that almost all of these migrations were not planned, enriched, interfered in the political affairs of those countries, and so on. It is known that this was the last attempt to colonise another country, to prevent inequality, lawlessness and deliberate genocide. At the same time, their illegal immigration abroad is a testament to the continuation of inequality.

References

- Aitken, J. (2011). *Kazakhstan. Surprises and stereotypes*. Moscow: Fiction.
- Andriescu, M. (2018). How policies select immigrants: The role of the recognition of foreign qualifications. *Migration Letters*, 15(4), 461–475. <https://doi.org/10.33182/ml.v15i4.3>
- Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Fund 5-N, Series 1, File 6646.
- Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Fund 5-N, Series 1, File 8984.

- Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Fund 5-N, Series 1, File 9181.
- Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Fund 5-N, Series 6, File 1108.
- Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Fund 5-N, Series 1, File 6652.
- Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Fund 75-N, Series 1, File 464.
- Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Fund 75-N, Series 1, File 604.
- Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Fund 75-N, Series 1, File 2981.
- Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 210, Series 1, File 63.
- Archive of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Fund 210, Series 1, File 23.
- Babets, I., & Ruda, O. (2018). Influence of immigration on economic security of Germany. *Social and Legal Studies*, 2, 140-147.
- Herz, A., Diaz-Chorne, L., Díaz-Catalán, C., Altissimo, A., & Carignani, S. S. (2018). Are you mobile, too? The role played by social networks in the intention to move abroad among youth in Europe. *Migration Letters*, 16(1), 93–104. <https://doi.org/10.33182/ml.v16i1.622>
- Kranz, D. (2020). Towards an emerging distinction between state and people: Return migration programs, diaspora management and agentic migrants. *Migration Letters*, 17(1), 91–101. <https://doi.org/10.33182/ml.v17i1.770>
- Lukashevich, V.K. (1991). *Scientific method: Structure, rationale, development*. Moscow: Nauka.
- Mendikulova, G.M. (1997). *Historical fate of the Kazakh diaspora. Origin and development*. Almaty: Gylym.
- Nazarbayev, N.A. (2003). *In the flow of history*.-Almaty: Atamura.
- Nazarbayev, N.A. (2017). *Era of Independence*. Astana: “Foundation of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan – the Leader of the Nation”.
- Perga, T. (2020). Educational ideal of young people in the face of emigration challenges in the second half of 1940s. *Foreign Affairs*, 9-10, 1-12.
- State Archive of Akmola region. Fund 1290, Series 2, File 89.
- Toybaeva, J. N. (2016). *World Association of Kazakhs (WK)*. Almaty: Kazakh encyclopedia.
- Tsivatyi, V., & Martsyniuk, M. (2021). Foreign affairs and historical challenges of the mondialized world of Europe: migration and diasporal aspects. *Foreign Affairs*, 3-4, 1-4.
- Zaverukha, O. (2020). Analysis of behavior of teens of migrant parents. *Social and Legal Studies*, 2(8), 202-209.

