

Box 4.1.1 Tajikistan

UN Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding (UNTOP)

- Start Date 1 June 2000
- End Date 31 July 2007
- Executive Representative of the Secretary-General Ambassador Vladimir Sotirov (Bulgaria)
- Strength as of 30 September 2007 Civilian Staff: 31 (10 internationally recruited, 21 local)

OSCE Centre in Dushanbe

- Authorization Date December 1993 (Rome Ministerial), October 2002
- Start Date February 1994
- Head of Mission Ambassador Vladimir Pryakhin (Russia)
- Budget \$5.2 million (October 2006–September 2007)
- Strength as of 30 September 2007 Civilian Staff: 17

Two events in 2007 highlighted Tajikistan's dramatic transformation over the past fifteen years: the tenth anniversary of the end of the country's civil war (1992–1997), and the end of the mandate of the UN Tajikistan Office of Peacebuilding (UNTOP) on 31 July 2007. Since 2000, UNTOP had provided political advice to the Tajikistan government to follow up the UN Mission of Observers to Tajikistan (UNMOT). While both events are indicative of general progress in Tajikistan's postconflict recovery process, the post-UNTOP environment is

rife with political tension characterized by a democratic deficit.

In May 2006, the UN Secretary-General requested a year-long mandate extension for UNTOP to ensure assistance for the November 2006 presidential elections. UNTOP developed and implemented a technical assistance project for the elections and coordinated activities with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Centre in Dushanbe. Limited access to the media during the campaign emerged as a major

shortfall in the country's first postconflict elections, with five candidates vying for the presidency. Despite the challenges, the elections proceeded peacefully, resulting in a third consecutive seven-year term for President Imomali Rakhmon.

Throughout its seven-year history, UNTOP facilitated programs on a range of peacebuilding issues, including fostering national dialogue and reconciliation, strengthening democratic institutions, reintegrating former combatants, training police, and promoting human rights and rule of law. After a two-month mandate renewal in May 2007 to allow for a smooth handover of its activities to national authorities, UNTOP closed its doors, having successfully fulfilled its mandate.

Following the end of UNTOP's mandate, in December 2007 the UN opened a regional preventive diplomacy center in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, to facilitate communication among regional organizations within Central Asia and to provide continued political advice and assistance. While this is a promising sign, Tajikistan remains the poorest country in Central Asia, and it is evident that continued engagement of international actors will be necessary to consolidate the gains registered with the support of the various UN missions in Tajikistan.