

Migration Processes between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and their Scientific Assessment

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Abstract:

International migration is one of the essential demographic processes in today's world. Its economic, social, and political impacts attract widespread public interest. Migration involves people changing their places of residence due to natural, socio-economic conditions, or various political factors. Migration processes between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have become more pronounced, especially after independence.

Keywords: migration balance, demography, migration laws and regulations, border posts, labor resources, population, rural population, urban population, internal migration.

The migration of people between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is driven by economic, social, and political factors. These processes positively influence the sustainable development of both countries, the efficient use of available resources, and the strengthening of intergovernmental relations. However, several challenges have also arisen within these migration processes.

The two nations are not only territorially close but also share deep historical, cultural, and religious ties. Their traditions and customs have developed in parallel, making their populations closely connected.

Migration Dynamics

After gaining independence, migration between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan entered a new phase. During this period, migration was primarily focused on labor force movement and educational opportunities. For example, M. Kamilov's scientific work, *"Central Asia: Social Changes During the Years of Independence"*, provides detailed information about migration from Uzbekistan to

Kazakhstan in the 1990s. According to the research, the primary goal of Uzbek migrants was employment and settling in favorable living conditions.

By the first half of 2024, Kazakhstan set a migration balance record with Uzbekistan. According to *Sputnik Kazakhstan*, 4,838 migrants moved from Uzbekistan to Kazakhstan for permanent residence, while only 65 people returned. The net migration difference reached 3,773 people, marking a 54% increase compared to the previous year and the highest figure in the past five years. Most migrants settled in the Mangystau and Almaty regions, with a smaller number moving to Almaty and Astana. The majority of migrants from Uzbekistan were ethnic Kazakhs, constituting 65% of the total. The overall migration balance showed a net inflow of 7,289 migrants to Kazakhstan.

Migration in Kazakhstan mainly occurs within the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), with a significant migration corridor existing between Kazakhstan and Russia. According to the 2024 World Migration Report by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Kazakhstan and Russia ranked 8th globally in terms of migration exchange. In 2023, Kazakhstan hosted 3,732,073 migrants, including 2,221,875 from Russia, 317,803 from Ukraine, and 264,862 from Uzbekistan. Many migrants from Eastern Europe relocated due to military conflicts between Russia and Ukraine. In contrast, in the fourth quarter of 2023, about 3.5 million migrants left Kazakhstan, with 1.5 million returning to Uzbekistan, 764,000 to Kyrgyzstan, and 678,302 to Russia. This highlights that the primary migration flow in Kazakhstan involves Russia, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Internal Migration Trends

Analyzing migration departures from Kazakhstan, official statistics show:

- In 2019: **45,225** people left the country
- In 2020: **29,088** people
- In 2021: **32,256** people

The leading regions in population outflow were:

- Karaganda: **4,603** people
- Kostanay: **3,367** people
- East Kazakhstan: **4,078** people

In contrast, Kyzylorda had the lowest emigration rate, with only **75** people leaving in 2021.

In 2023, most incoming migrants settled in:

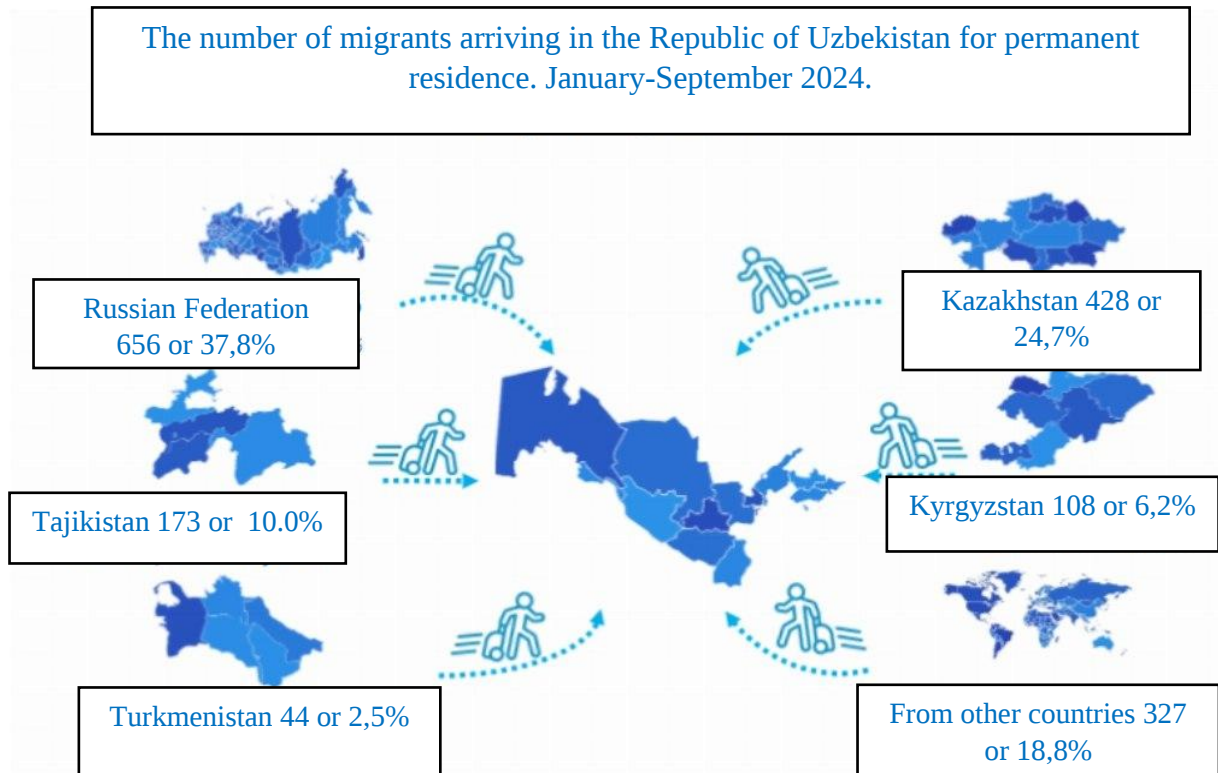
- Mangystau region: **2,753** people
- Almaty city: **1,882** people

Kazakh migrants traveling to Uzbekistan mainly do so for tourism, medical treatment, education, and visiting relatives. Uzbekistan is not yet a significant hub for international or regional labor migration. However, since 2016, industrial and economic modernization efforts have led to the, increasing employment opportunities. opening of numerous factories and enterprises

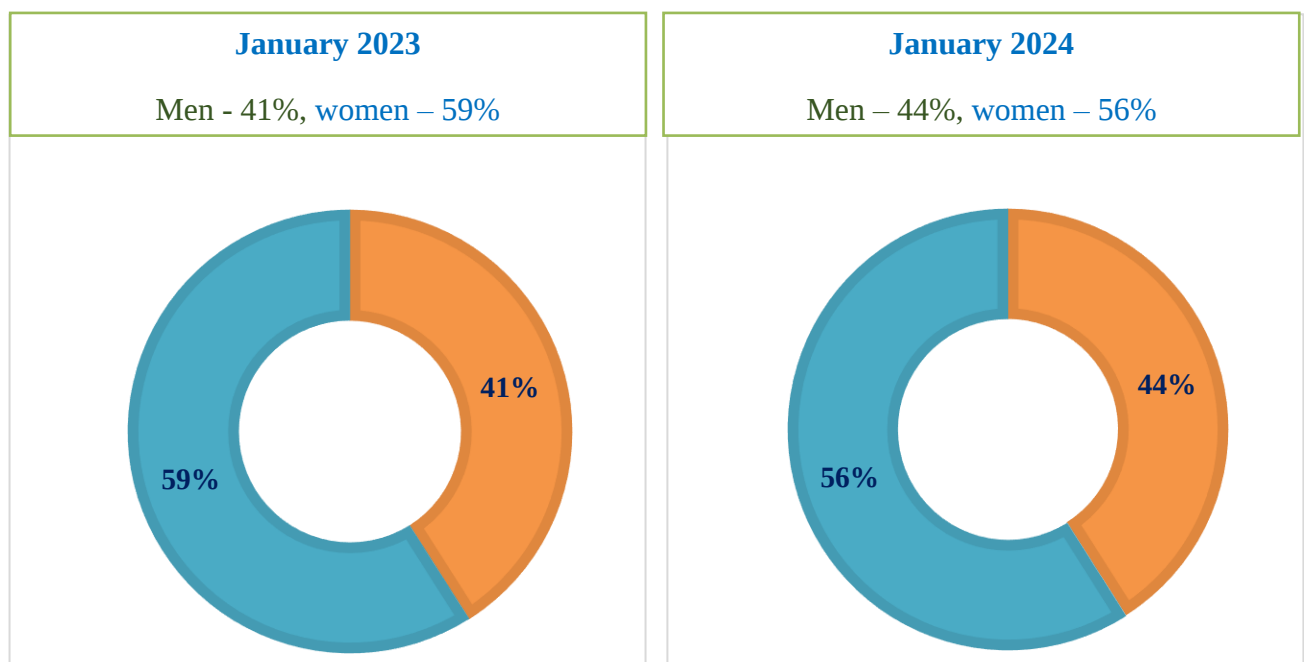
According to the above information, the majority of incoming migrants mainly came from countries such as the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan. These processes are linked to regional relations, economic, social, and cultural factors.

According to data provided by Uz.statistics, the recorded migration flow in January-March 2024 amounted to 56.2 thousand migrants. Of these, 31.6 thousand (56%) were women, and 24.6

thousand (44%) were men. This figure increased by 6.3% compared to 2023. In 2024, the majority of registered migrants, 42.1 thousand people (75%), moved from rural areas to cities, while 14.1 thousand people (25%) relocated from cities to rural area



There are several reasons for the high share of women in Uzbekistan's internal migration. Among them: - family reasons; In many cases women move to a different territory after getting married. This situation, in turn, influences internal migration.



Source: uzstst.uz 2024.

In recent years, the number of women migrating to other places for work has been increasing. For example, the service sectors (education, healthcare, trade, and others) are creating favorable conditions for women.

Internal Migration Challenges:

- **Uzbekistan:** in Uzbekistan, migration within regions and the Republic of Karakalpakstan is primarily directed from rural areas to cities and districts. However, when analyzing internal migration across Uzbekistan as a whole, it becomes evident that migration is accelerating toward the capital, Tashkent. The positive aspect of this migration is that the working-age population gains access to better job opportunities and higher incomes. On the negative side, the rapid increase in the capital's population leads to challenges such as overpopulation, transportation issues, and economic, social, and environmental difficulties in service sectors.
- **Kazakhstan:** In the Republic of Kazakhstan, internal migration activity is significantly lower compared to Uzbekistan. Due to the migration of people from the northern and western regions of Kazakhstan to relatively well-developed cities and oblasts, industrial sectors in these territories are underdeveloped, and the population has sharply declined. The most common migration destinations are Almaty city, Almaty oblast, and East Kazakhstan oblast. Such migration processes create challenges in ensuring an even distribution of the population across the country. Migration dynamics have become an important demographic and state policy issue within the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Migration Policies and Border Control

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been adopting laws and resolutions aimed at improving the country's welfare, enhancing living conditions for the population, as well as studying and regulating migration processes. Notably, the *Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on External Labor Migration* (Resolution No. SQ-617-IV of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of Uzbekistan, dated September 13, 2022) and the *Presidential Decree No. PQ-149* (dated March 1, 2022) "On joint measures to support citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan temporarily engaged in labor activities abroad and their family members" are worth mentioning.

Mutually beneficial conditions have been created for the interaction of the peoples of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Specifically:

- **"G'ishtko'prik" (Uzbekistan) – "Jibek Joly" (Kazakhstan):** Open for pedestrian crossing.
- **"Yallama" (Uzbekistan) – "B. Konysbaev" (Kazakhstan):** Operates 24/7 for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- **"Malik" (Uzbekistan) – "Syrdarya" (Kazakhstan):** Allows passenger cars and pedestrians during the daytime.
- **"Oqoltin" (Uzbekistan) – "Selinney" (Kazakhstan):** Open for cars and pedestrians during the daytime.

Additionally, construction and modernization efforts are ongoing at several checkpoints. For instance, the *Navoiy-Kaplanbek* checkpoint was temporarily closed in December 2022. In February 2023, restrictions were placed on *S. Najimov-Qazygurt* and *Syrdarya-Atameken* checkpoints, leading to congestion at *G'ishtko'prik*. To ease traffic, travelers are encouraged to use the *Yallama-B. Konysbaev* checkpoint instead.

The border customs checkpoints between the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the Republic of Kazakhstan are as follows:

- **“Dawit-Ata”:** This checkpoint is located 450 km from the city of Nukus and operates on the border with Kazakhstan. A new customs terminal was planned to open at this location in October 2024. The terminal covers an area of 6 hectares and has the capacity to accommodate up to 350 freight transport vehicles at a time.
- **“Karakalpakstan Railway Border Customs Checkpoint”:** Located in the Konirat district of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, this checkpoint is designated for the customs inspection of freight and passenger trains crossing the border.

Future Prospects

In summary, economic cooperation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is developing and reaching new stages. This process creates new opportunities for labor migrants. In the future, large-scale projects in agriculture, industry, and service sectors may meet the needs of migrants. Joint projects aimed at regulating migration are expected to be implemented. Agreements on a visa-free regime or labor contracts between the two countries will help protect migrants' rights and prevent illegal migration.

Joint projects aimed at improving education and training will enhance the quality of migration. This will lead to the more efficient utilization of labor resources in both countries.

Climate change and the increasing demand for water resources may introduce new trends in migration. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan need to manage mutual migration flows by jointly addressing water resource management and environmental challenges.

The future of migration between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan holds great potential. Strengthening bilateral cooperation will contribute not only to economic growth but also to social stability. Effective mechanisms and joint projects regulating migration processes will ensure sustainable and long-term development in this area.

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Summary: This article analyzes the migration processes between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, considering the economic, social, and demographic aspects. It also discusses the measures being implemented by the governments of both countries to manage migration flows.