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TURKISH RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN MODERN KAZAKHSTAN: LEADERS, VECTORS OF ACTIVITY

Sufism on a global scale has a rich history and has influenced various cultures and religious traditions. In the context of Kazakhstan, it is associated with a rich Sufi heritage: hagiographies, manuscripts, and architectural monuments, descendants of Sufis and Sufi groups. Sufi teaching has its roots in Islam, but despite this, the modern meaning of Sufism transcends religious boundaries and dogma, making it relevant to various aspects of modern life, including science and personal practice. Modern Sufism has the characteristics of a “universal truth” that incorporates various Sufi traditions. As noted in postmodern theories, traditional religious teachings, including Sufism, are being transformed and adapted to modern realities. The legitimacy of such actions is the subject of scientific and lay debate. In general, the centuries-old history of Sufism and its popularity in modern times indicate the relevance of the stated topic. In recent years, Turkish religious groups have become increasingly active on the world stage, engaging in activities ranging from humanitarian aid to educational initiatives and religious activities. These groups, often associated with various Islamic movements and organizations, play a significant role in shaping the discourse around Islam and Turkey's role in the international community. The purpose of this article is to consider the activities of Turkish religious groups in modern Kazakhstan, including the study of current leaders.

Key words: Sufism, Sufi jamaat, Turk religious groups, Sufi tradition, Sufi activities.

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Қазіргі Қазақстандағы түрік діни қауымдастықтары: көшбасшылар, қызмет бағыттары

Әлемдік ауқымдағы сопылық бай тарихқа ие және әртүрлі мәдениеттер мен діни дәстүрлерге өз ықпалын тигізді. Қазақстан кеңістігі мәнмәтінінде сопылық мирасқа қатысты агиографиялар, қолжазбалар, сәулет ескерткіштері, сопылардың ұрпақтары һәм сопылық топтар жайында сөз қозғауымызға болады. Тамыры исламнан бастау алған сопылық ілімнің қазіргі таңдағы бітім-болмысы діни шекаралар мен діни қағидаттар аясынан шығып кетеді, бұл оны қазіргі өмірдің түрлі аспектілеріндегі, соның ішінде ғылым мен жеке адамның тәжірибесіндегі өзектілігін арттырып отыр. Қазіргі заманғы сопылыққа саналауан сопылық дәстүрлерді бойына сіңірген «универсал шындық» сипаттамалары тән екенін бағамдауға болады. Постмодерн теорияларында байыпталғанындай, дәстүрлі діни ілімдер, соның ішінде сопылықта қазіргі реалйге трансформацияланып, икемделуін жалғастыра беретіндігі анық. Мұндай үрдістердің легитимдігі ғылыми да, қарапайым да пікірталастардың арқауына айналғанына мысалдар да жетіп артылады. Түйіндей келгенде, сопылықтың жүздеген жылдық тарихы мен бүгінгі таңдағы кемімеген тартымдылығы да тақырыптың өзектілігін айғақтау арнасындағы дәлелдерді үстей түседі. Кейінгі жылдары түрік діни топтары гуманитарлық көмектен бастап білім беру бастамалары мен діни қызметке дейінгі түрлі іс-шараларға қатысып, әлемдік аренада белсенді бола бастады. Көбінесе түрлі исламдық қозғалыстар мен ұйымдармен байланысты бұл топтар ислам төңірегінде дискурсты қалыптастыруда және Түркияның халықаралық қауымдастықтағы рөлінде маңызды рөл атқарып келеді. Аталған мақаланың мақсаты қазіргі Қазақстандағы түрік діни топтарының қызмет бағыттарын, оның ішінде қазіргі көшбасшыларын зерттеуге бағытталған.

Түйін сөздер: сопылық, сопылық жамағат, түрік діни топтары, сопылық дәстүр, сопылық белсенділік.

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Турецкие религиозные сообщества в современном Казахстане: лидеры, векторы деятельности

Суфизм в мировом масштабе имеет богатую историю и оказал влияние на различные культуры и религиозные традиции. Казахстан связан с богатым суфийским наследием: агиографии, рукописи, архитектурные памятники, потомки суфиев и суфийские группы. Суфийское учение уходит своими корнями в ислам, однако, несмотря на это, современное значение суфизма выходит за рамки религиозных границ и догм, что делает его актуальным для различных аспектов современной жизни, включая науку и личную практику. Современному суфизму присущи характеристики «универсальной истины», вбирающей в себя различные суфийские традиции. Как отмечается в теориях постмодерна, традиционные религиозные учения, в том числе и суфизм, трансформируются и адаптируются под современные реалии. Легитимность подобных действий является предметом научных и обывательских дискуссий. В целом, многовековая история суфизма и популярность в современности свидетельствует об актуальности заявленной темы. В последние годы турецкие религиозные группы становятся все более активными на мировой арене, участвуя в разнообразной деятельности, начиная от гуманитарной помощи и заканчивая образовательными инициативами и религиозной деятельностью. Эти группы, часто связанные с различными исламскими движениями и организациями, играют значительную роль в формировании дискурса вокруг ислама и роли Турции в международном сообществе. Целью данной статьи является рассмотрение направлений деятельности турецких религиозных групп в современном Казахстане, в том числе изучение действующих лидеров.

Ключевые слова: суфизм, суфийский жамагат, турецкие религиозные группы, суфийская традиция, суфийская деятельность.

Introduction

Sufism is an important component of the spiritual and cultural heritage of the Central Asian region. The spread of Sufism in Kazakhstan dates back to the 11th-12th centuries. Moreover, it is linked with the activities of the Turkic Sufi sheikh Kh.A. Yassawi inextricably. Representatives of this Sufi school spread the teaching far beyond the borders of Kazakhstan and Central Asia (Temirbayeva, etc., 2021: 92). Naqshbandi groups, which also have their own tradition in Kazakhstan, exist throughout the Muslim world from Morocco to Indonesia and from China to East Africa. In general, in the history of the country there were Sufi practices of Yassawiya, Naqshbandiya, Kubrawiyya, Qadiriya, which continue in modern times.

The Republic of Kazakhstan historically belongs to the regions where a significant part of the population identifies themselves as Muslims. The history of Sufism in Kazakhstan indisputably demonstrates that the Islamization of the Kazakhs occurred thanks to the preaching activities of Khoja Akhmet Yasawi. In the spiritual capital of the Central Asian region, Turkistan, there is a shrine – the Mausoleum of Kh.A. Yasawi, who is revered throughout the Turkic world. Historically, different Sufi traditions existed

on the territory of Kazakhstan; the Sufi schools of Yasawiya, Kubrawiyya, Naqshbandiya and Qadiriya became the key ones. The teachings were characterized by elitism, education and piety. Of course, there were “golden” periods, and there was also stagnation. Despite this, Sufism, being a complex and subtle instrument of influencing the consciousness of believers, made a great contribution to the formation of the Kazakh people’s own culture.

The colonial political course in every possible way opposed the activities of anti-Soviet organizations (Muslim communities, Sufi circles, etc.). Posters and slogans discrediting sheikhs and ishans were printed.

Despite this, Sufism has survived and continues into modern times. However, Sufi teaching is changing, supplemented and transformed. Thus, some groups claim to follow the historical chain of succession (sil-sila), while others adhere to Sufi culture or follow some aspect of the teaching.

As foreign authors who are engaged in the study of Turkish jamaats, we can note R. Sulemyanov, O. Yarosh, J. Shmoller, V.V. Ivanov, S.V. Moiseev and others. The scientific works of these authors are based on field data.

In Kazakhstan, the following scientists are engaged in the study of Turkish religious communi-

ties: A.K. Muminov, A.K. Izbaïrov, M. Isakhan, Zh. Khumarkhan, Y. Pak and others. The scientists' works are based not only on theoretical material, but also on the author's subsequent research in Turkish religious communities in Kazakhstan (interviews with leaders, followers, participant observation within groups).

In this regard, this article will examine the leaders and vectors of the activities of Turkish religious groups in modern Kazakhstan.

Justification of the choice of articles and goals and objectives

Turkish religious groups (jamaats) are organized communities or groups within Turkish society that are based on Islam and are often associated with Islamic movements. In this regard, this article will examine the activities of Turkish religious groups (jamaats) through the prism of leaders and areas of work in modern Kazakhstan.

Within the framework of this article, the most common Turkish religious communities (jamaats) will be considered: Nurdjular, Hizmet Movement (Gülenşhiler), Suleymenşhiler, Mahmudshular (Ismail Agha), Topbashilar (Erenköy Cemaati), Ykhlasshilar, Menzil (Menzil Cemaati. Jamaat Adiyaman Menzil).

Scientific Research Methodology is based on interdisciplinary, anthropological, phenomenological, historical approaches. Qualitative methods were used as methodological tools to achieve the goal and assigned tasks: analysis of domestic and foreign works on Sufism, information from open source, interviews with representatives of Sufism in Kazakhstan, a survey of representatives of regional authorized bodies in the field of religion, participant observation in Sufi communities in the country and abroad.

Brief history of Turkish jamaats in Kazakhstan

The emergence of Turkish religious communities in Kazakhstan dates back to the end of the 20th century. With the collapse of the USSR, religious restrictions were lifted, leading to a revival of religious activity in the region. Various religious groups, including Turkish jamaats, took advantage of the newfound freedom of religion and began to spread their activities in Kazakhstan (Muminov, 2008: 17). The influx of Turkish entrepreneurs, educators and humanitarian workers has contributed to

the expansion of these jamaats, further strengthening their presence in the country.

Turkish jamaats opened schools, cultural centers, and charitable organizations in Kazakhstan, seeking to provide educational, social, and religious services in the newly independent country. These services were relevant due to the economic system under construction and the insufficient range of government support for socially vulnerable segments of the population.

It is important to recognize that the presence of Turkish religious groups in Kazakhstan has caused mixed reactions. On the one hand, their efforts in education were well received as they filled an important gap in the provision of educational opportunities in the post-Soviet era. The moderate nature of their religious teachings also contributed to their acceptance by various religious communities and facilitated their integration into Kazakh society. On the other hand, their activities have come under scrutiny, and concerns have been raised about potential threats and risks. Interdepartmental commissions were created and their activities were inspected (Jibek joly, 2023).

Leaders of Turkish jamaats abroad and in Kazakhstan

Religious leadership is a fundamental aspect of many religious communities and cultural practices. The concept of religious leadership includes a wide range of components: mentoring, inspiring, leading members of community (Temirbayev, Temirbayeva, 2023: 11). As part of their leadership, they impart spiritual experience, religious knowledge, and generally serve as an "authority". It is important to note the opinion of O.A. Yarosh, that we understand "Muslim authority" as a force that determines what belongs to the Islamic tradition and what does not. Islamic power is always socially organized and distributed among Muslim communities, starting with the simplest and most elementary forms of power and ending with the most educated authority – the Ulema (Yarosh, Brylov, 2011: 253).

Researcher of Sufism – A.D. Knysh also notes that the development of Sufi groups depends, among other things, on the leader (sheikh). The scientist gives historical examples of some Sufi tariqas through the prism of leadership (Knysh, 2004: 82).

Religious leaders also provide moral guidance to members of the religious community, offering guidance and example on ethics, social justice, compassion, and responsibility to believers.

It is important to note that Turkish religious communities are based on Sufi Islam. Some lead a legitimate chain of succession, while others only adhere to some elements of Sufism (hierarchical structure, strict subordination and adherence to the sheikh/leader, religious practice).

According to information from open sources, the following affiliation occurs:

1. Gülenşiler/Fethullacılar – Fethullah Gülen, born in 1941.
2. Topbashcılar – Osman Nuri Topbash, born in 1942.
3. Suleymancılar – Suleyman Hilmi Tunahan, (1888-1959).
4. Nurcılar – Said Nursi, (1877-1960).
5. Ykhlasshilar – Abdulhakim Arbasi, (1865-1943).
6. Mahmudchular – Mahmud Ustaosmanoglu al-Ufi (1929-2022) his successor Hasan Kilych, born in 1930.
7. Menzil – Abdulhakim Erol (1902-1972), currently Abdalbaki Erol.

Nurcular. The founder and leader of the jamaat until his death was Said Nursi (1876-1960). After the death of the founder, his direct followers organized courses in various cities of Turkey to study the collection of his works called “Risale-i Nur”. Several structurally independent groups were formed within Nurcular, organized on a network basis and led by students of Said Nursi, such as Ahmet Khusrev Altynbashak (leader of the Yazızılar group), Zübeir Gündüzalp, Bayram Yuksel, Mustafa Sungur, Ahmed Aytimur, Abdullah Engin, Said Ozdemir (leaders Okuyujular group), Osman Demirci, Muzaffer Arslan, Abdurrahman Aras (leader of the Meshveret group), Mehmet Nuri Gülech, Mehmet Emin Birinci (leaders of the Nesil group), Mehmet Kutlular (leader of the Yeni Asia group), etc.

During a visit to a religious community in October 2023 in Istanbul, Turkey, it was noted that among the followers one can meet representatives of different nationalities. For anyone interested, the literature of this community has been translated into many languages.

Due to the conspiratorial nature of the jamaat’s activities, the current leaders of these groups are unknown in Kazakhstan. In addition, it is worth noting that the activities of this group are prohibited in Russia (Izvestiya, 2008).

Hizmet Movement (Gülenşiler, Gülen Movement, Gülenists, Fethulahçılar, FETO). The founder and leader of the Hizmet movement is Muhammad Fethullah Gülen. Today he resides in Saylorsburg,

Pennsylvania, USA (Bekmagambetov, 2016). On the territory of Kazakhstan, the Hizmet movement carries out its activities through the international public foundations “Bilim-Orda”, headed by the rector of the university Suleyman Demirel – Igenbaev Alimzhan Bekezhanovich and “Bilim-Innovation” headed by Ote Darkhan Ermakhanuly.

Suleimenshiler. The founder and permanent spiritual leader of the jamaat is Suleiman Hilmi Tunahan (1888-1959). Even after the Sheikh's death in 1959, followers maintain a spiritual connection with their Sheikh. After Tunahan's death, his son-in-law Kemal Kacar succeeded him as head of the community. However, Kemal Kachar and subsequent successors perform only the role of a manager, yielding spiritual leadership to Tunahan. Currently, the head of the jamaat is Tunah's grandson, Alikhan Kurish.

In Kazakhstan, the jamaat carries out its activities through the Association of Charitable Institutions “Zhibek Zholy”, the head of which is Omarov Akhmetzhan Olzhabaiuly. It is important to note that each boarding house has its own director.

Mahmudshular (Ismail aga). The founder and spiritual leader of the jamaat until 2022 was Sheikh Mahmud Ustaosmanoglu. After the death of Mahmud Ustaosmanoğlu, Hasan Kılıç (Hasan Efendi) became the new leader. One of the most famous representatives of the “Ismail Agha” jamaat at present is Jubbeli Ahmed (real name – Akhmet Mahmut Unlu). In the past, he had a criminal record for religious fanaticism, but now acts as a public speaker for the jamaat. Dzhubbeli actively participates in television programs, including even secular television channels, travels to different countries and actively popularizes the Islamic lifestyle (Suleymanov, 2020: 41). So, in March 2015, Dzhubbeli visited Kazakhstan. As part of his visit, he met with members of the jamaat in Kazakhstan, held a sermon and visited the grave of Arystanbab in the Turkestan region.

Topbashcılar. The current Sufi sheikh is Osman Nuri Topbash, a Turkish scholar of the Hanafi madhhab, spiritual mentor and theologian. He is the 36th spiritual link in the golden chain of succession of the sheikhs of the Naqshbandiya-Mujadidiyya tariqa, the Khalidiyya branch. In 1953, he entered the Imam-Khatib Lyceum in Istanbul. After completing his studies at the Imam-Khatib Lyceum, for many years he privately received religious education from scientists and theologians: M. Dzhalaletjin Oktena, Mahira Iz, Nureddin Topchu and others. His father had the unquestioned authority of a spiritual mentor due to his moral qualities and deep knowledge of

religion. In 1962 he served in the Turkish army. In 1990 he began his writing career. His books have been translated into many languages of the world, including Russian. There is an official channel on the YouTube video hosting platform Osman Nuri Topbaş in Russian, where Osman Nuri Topbaş regularly broadcasts. The channel was registered in 2012, the audio is accompanied by subtitles in Russian. Note that, according to statistics as of July 31, 2023, the channel has almost 17 million views.

Ykhlashshilar. Ikhlasists, who are Turkish Sufi jamaats, work within the framework of the Ikhlash Holding company. There are 95 branches of Ikhlash Holding around the world. Ikhlash Holding currently operates in parallel in the fields of media, marketing, construction, healthcare, education, insurance and real estate financing. There are 145 offices in Turkey and abroad, equipped with the latest technology. The Ikhlasists have been targeting foreign audiences since 1996 and began reporting news in Arabic and English. Currently, it ranks among the most influential news outlets spread across 5 continents in 35 countries. The Jamaat's audience is mainly targeted at intellectuals, business representatives. Activities in Kazakhstan are associated with such organizations as "Aura-Kazakhstan" ("Aura-Roboclean"), "Sybilon." "Aura-Kazakhstan" or "Aura-Roboclean" is a trading company registered in Turkey. They sell household goods made in Turkey. The company began its activities in 1996. Currently served in 33 countries (Isakhan, 2023).

Menzil (MENZIL CEMAATI. Jamaat Adiyaman Menzil). Founder Abdulhakim Erol (1902-1972). After his death, the jamaat was headed by his son, Muhammad Rashid Erol (1930-1993). After the death of Muhammad Rashid Erol, his place was taken by his brother Sheikh Abdulbaki Erol, also called Abdulbaki Bilvanisy and Gavs-i Sani (1949-2023); Gavs means a person who is consulted on certain matters and who is at the level of auliya and scholar. Tens of thousands of people from different parts of Turkey came to the funeral in Adiyaman. Participants in the funeral ceremony formed long lines of vehicles. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan posted a message of condolences on social media. Future Party Chairman Ahmet Davutoğlu, DEVA Party Leader Ali Babacan and Happiness Party Chairman Temel Karamollaoğlu published separate messages of condolences (Hamsici, 2023).

In the 2000s, the Menzil group split into two parts. This second group, also known as the Bukhara group, is led by Sheikh Fevzeddin Erol al-Husayni, one of the sons of Muhammad Rashid Erol, who left

the main branch. The center of this group is the village of Bukhara in the Sivrihisar district of Eskisehir in Turkey. He also heads the jamaat in Ankara and Mount Athos. The leader in Kazakhstan is unknown.

Let us note that the Sufi sheikhs of the Turkish jamaats, who have a legitimate chain of succession (sil-sila), openly carry out their activities, information about them is available in open sources. They are engaged in journalistic, charitable, and social activities. At the same time, the leaders of the Sufi Turkish jamaats are difficult to identify. It is important to note that within the Turkish jamaats, regardless of tradition and legitimacy, there is a hierarchical structure. An analysis of the social portraits of the leaders of Turkish jamaats allows us to draw the following conclusions: not all leaders have a religious education; the majority are engaged in business and have entrepreneurial and management skills; the majority have publishing institutions, waqfs and foundations.

Attempts to establish contacts with leaders and followers of Turkish communities in Kazakhstan were unsuccessful. This is probably due to the public outcry and the facts of illegal activities of suleimshiler in the country.

Vectors of global activities of Turkish religious groups

Social activity of religious groups is an important component of modern civilized society. Many religious structures act as a partner of the state in solving certain social problems. Such activity is one of the components of civil society (Adaspa, 2023). In general, social support has a positive effect on the development and dynamics of society.

The activities of Turkish religious groups are represented by a wide range of social activities:

Humanitarian assistance. Turkish religious groups are active in a wide range of charitable assistance: from assistance in the aftermath of natural disasters, earthquakes and targeted social assistance to socially vulnerable segments of the society. In this case, such initiatives correlate with Islamic values and principles of charity and compassion. In the Kazakh context, this activity is expressed in helping disadvantaged families, providing housing for students from remote areas, and financing various start-up projects.

Educational support. This initiative is expressed in helping children from remote villages obtain education (school, college, university). For this purpose, in the cities of the country there is a network of madrassas with dormitories. Children attend state

educational institutions and after classes return to the dormitories at the madrasah. Leisure activities are organized in the form of playing chess, reading, etc. According to information from open sources, tutors may be hired to further develop abilities. In addition, Turkish religious groups finance some scientific, cultural, and business projects.

Creation of companies. Establishment of commercial/non-profit organizations in various fields. For example: medical organizations, travel companies (including Hajj, Umrah), educational courses (study of the Turkish language, culture, madrasah), food organizations (halal industry), household appliances, charitable foundations, etc. (Pak, 2022: 266).

Religious activities. As part of the activities of madrasah hostels, religious propaganda is carried out. Thus, in Kazakhstan, many of these institutions were registered as religious associations, which means they legitimately carried out religious activities. In some madrasahs, educational and religious conversations (sokhbets) are held with children, and children are involved in religious practice. The subject matter and ideological component of the sokhbets are unknown. According to information from open sources, various Turkish religious groups pursue their own goals, some of them are aimed at reviving the ideas of pan-Turkism or the ideological consolidation of Central Asian Muslims. Such initiatives are at odds with the values of Kazakh society and can negatively affect the spiritual security of the citizens of Kazakhstan.

It is important to note that the activity of religious associations can cause negative reactions in society. Thus, some religious communities may face criticism for imposing their religious beliefs, discrimination or violation of rights. The extensive vectors of social activity of Turkish jamaats in Kazakhstan are perceived ambiguously by Kazakh society. A survey of some experts showed that there are concerns for the spiritual safety of citizens, sometimes minors, due to the possible propaganda of an ideology alien to our country. Whereas, a survey of students who studied in some madrassas in Kazakhstan showed a positive attitude and denial of any negative aspects.

In Kazakhstan they carry out their activities through charitable organizations, public associations and other forms of legal entities. Such facts create certain difficulties for their identification as Sufi religious associations. To the question of how strong a role does Sufism play in the life of Turkish jamaats, it can be noted that, as can be seen from the above,

some of them continue the legitimate Sufi tradition (strength-strength chain of succession), while others only adhere to Sufi culture, self-proclaiming themselves sheikhs with the goal achieving economic benefits, expanding business networks. Thus, some Sufi groups may have the ultimate goal of making a profit, an economic monopoly, increasing business structures, etc. and for this purpose, they first teach those who wish to do so in religious norms to prevent deception, theft, and the like in the future. In this case, Sufi concepts and the platform as a whole fit favorably into business strategies.

Relations between Turkish jamaats and government agencies and the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan (SAMK)

In Turkey, jamaats in most cases support the current government. For the ruling power, leaders and their jamaats are a potential electorate and an instrument of influence in the country and abroad. Let us note that Turkish jamaats in their homeland in Turkey may be in a state of conflict with the government, but their activities outside the country, especially in strengthening Turkey's influence, are assessed favorably by official Ankara.

In Kazakhstan, not all Turkish jamaats cooperate with the SAMK and government bodies. It is important to note that there is a negative dynamic in the cooperation of some Turkish jamaats with the SAMK, for example Suleimenshiler (Jibek joly, 2023). At the same time, it is worth taking into account the affiliation of the SAMK with Turkey.

At the same time, it is worth taking into account the affiliation of the SAMK with Turkey. Thus, in Turkey, imams undergo training at Imam Hatip educational institutions, including advanced training. Moreover, Turkish education is becoming more accessible to Kazakh applicants thanks to various exchange programs and tuition prices. In the future, all these students and graduates are consolidated both by the Embassy and independently and are likely to be a loyal group in relation to Turkey.

For the authorized government body represented by the Committee on Religious Affairs, Turkish jamaats are "outside the law" due to the fact that they do not have official registration as a religious association. For government bodies related to the economic sector, these Turkish jamaats are participants in the financial market. In general, we see that, after the fact, Turkish jamaats are active actors in the socio-economic life of Kazakhstan; in this regard, it is important to use the positive potential and resources in cooperation with the authorized bodies.

Results and Discussion

There is no consensus regarding the activities of Turkish Sufi groups. Thus, some authors attribute their activities to the “soft power” factor, other authors see a positive, creative potential in this, while others appeal to facts of violation of the legislation of some countries (Vatan, 2011). Despite their positive contributions, Turkish religious groups also face challenges and contradictions in their global activities. They are sometimes accused of promoting a particular ideological agenda or seeking to exert undue influence in the countries where they operate. Moreover, geopolitical tensions and domestic political dynamics may affect the perception of Turkish religious groups abroad, complicating their efforts to build trust and authority.

In Kazakhstan, Turkish religious communities are represented by a number of organizations, including registered religious associations in the form of madrassas

Let us note that Turkish jamagats, having financial resources, open their representative offices in large cities of Kazakhstan. Some of them are part of transnational international networks. In the academic literature, some scientists (A.D. Knysh, O.A. Yarosh, M. Hermansen, J. Pak, J. Schmoller, U. Bigozhin) rely on the concept of communication networks in their studies of modern Sufi groups. These networks are primarily a way of exchanging and transmitting information between participants. Key ideas and interpretations continuously circulate in these networks, contributing to the maintenance and reproduction of the communities they form (Yarosh, Brylov, 2011: 252).

Thus, Turkish jamaats began their activities in the early years of Kazakhstan's independence, and created extensive networks throughout the country.

Sufism is being revived at the institutional level: circles are emerging, uniting around charismatic leaders. As scientist B. Babazhanov notes, “modern Sufism in the region is no longer the same as it was before, although it most of all shows a commitment to the spiritual tradition, established rituals and national culture” (Babadzhanov, 2022: 73). Also, foreign researcher A. Knysh noted that “modern Sufism is like a supermarket – you go and choose what you like” (Institute integracii znanii, 2021).

In modern times, we are dealing with a new generation of religious organizations that show high

adaptability to the social, political, and legislative conditions of the countries in whose territories they carry out a mission. The activities of such organizations are becoming more and more purposeful. Increasingly, law enforcement agencies are noticing the discovery of underground printing houses, the distribution of leaflets, videotapes, books, and brochures calling for a change in the socio-political system. They set themselves the goal of spreading their influence throughout Central Asia. This shows that religious organizations operating in this region of the world are being transformed into highly organized structures that have cells in almost all countries of the region and solid external sources of funding.

Conclusion

Thus, the activities of Turkish jamaats in our country originate from the first years of independence. During this period there was a positive trend. Some Turkish jamagats have formed their own business niches in the Kazakh economy. Investment cooperation is being strengthened. Over all the years of activity, only in 2023 there was a public outcry associated with the Turkish Jamaat (Suleimenshiler). Threats and risks are probably more evident in an economic setting than in a religious setting. At the same time, it is important to establish contacts with representatives of Turkish jamaats and monitor activities.

In conclusion, Turkish religious groups play a multifaceted role on the world stage, engaging in humanitarian, educational, religious and propaganda activities that reflect their diverse interests and goals. Although they have made significant contributions to international development, interfaith dialogue and cultural exchange, they also face challenges and contradictions that require careful approach and interaction. Moving forward, promoting greater transparency, accountability and dialogue will be essential for Turkish religious groups to continue their positive influence on the world stage.

Acknowledgements

This research is funded by the Committee of Science of the Ministry of Higher Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Grant AP14972866.

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Previously sent: November 13, 2023.

Re-registered: February 16, 2024.

Accepted: February 29, 2024.