

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON MIGRATION IN UZBEKISTAN¹

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Introduction. On October 17, 2022, Tashkent became the first in the list of the most polluted cities in the world, when the composition of particles in the air of our city exceeded the normative values by 1.5 times [1]. In this regard, the state asked residents and guests of Tashkent, if possible, not to leave their homes, to move around the streets in masks, which were recommended to be changed every hour. I think that the above is a clear and empirical indicator of the relevance of considering the social consequences of climate change.

Methodology. The migration of people in search of a better life is a historical phenomenon. According to the World Health Organization, today in the world there is approximately 1 migrant for every 7 inhabitants of the planet [2]. One of the reasons for migration is increasingly becoming climate change.

Climatic migration is the migration of people who leave their homes due to a sudden or long-term change in the environment [3]. These changes are detrimental to their well-being and daily life, including droughts and desertification, which are common in our region. In this regard, we note that, on the one hand, the increase in air temperature and climate change, having caused drought, turns into the destruction of agricultural products, increasing poverty and hunger. On the other hand, the displacement of masses of people will also cause problems in the host countries, causing a demographic burden on the economy.

There are two main directions of climate migration: within the country and cross-border, occurring due to increased risks provoked by climate change (increase in poverty, hunger, inequality, etc.). In both cases, migration occurs

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involuntarily, however, climate migrants are not yet recognized as refugees, therefore, they are not provided with appropriate support.

Main part.

It can already be predicted that climate change is a powerful driver of internal migration, as this process affects the sources of income of the population and sharply worsens the quality of life in areas most affected by it.

Now, most likely, people will look for zones with a comfortable climate, where there is plenty of food, drinking water and space for growing food, moreover, they will migrate both within their own countries and to other states. Most likely, only the poorest and the richest will leave their countries. The middle class will move from completely uninhabitable areas to slightly better ones, but will remain in their own country.

In our opinion, climate migration will overlap and intensify labor migration from Uzbekistan to the Russian Federation. Already today, according to the official data of the Russian Federation, from January to September 2022, most labor migrants arrived in Russia from Uzbekistan (4.465.692 people), Tajikistan (2.714.331 people) and Kyrgyzstan (675.968 people) [4].

Most likely, this will not affect Kazakhstan so much, since climate change that will affect Uzbekistan will negatively affect this country as well. That is, now people from the respective regions of Uzbekistan are migrating to Russia for economic reasons, and climatic ones will soon be added to them.

The figures at the top of the World Bank's pessimistic baseline scenario that up to 2.4 million "climate" migrants may appear in Central Asia by 2050 have received wide resonance [5]. Regarding Uzbekistan, it is predicted that the Fergana Valley and the lands around the city of Tashkent will become zones of influx of "climatic" migrants. This is due to the availability of water, and therefore crop yields in these parts of our country.

According to various sources, about 70 percent of the territory of Uzbekistan is already occupied by desert [6]. This is superimposed on the fact that the climate is very arid and the lack of water resources. Moreover, one of the factors leading to desertification is not rational organization of agriculture. As an alternative, the population is left with agricultural livestock grazing, which is becoming

uncontrolled. At the same time, animals eat all the growing grass and this accelerates the process of land degradation. That is, a vicious circle.

In a desert area, the land loses its fertility. It cannot be used for any purpose, which means it will be unsuitable for the purposes of agriculture and animal husbandry. Plants such as camelthorn and saxaul still grow in such areas, but not plants suitable for consumption. If the current trend continues, desertification will accelerate directly in the dry part of the Aral Sea in the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

It is here that we can see a classic example of the fact that the cost of physical labor to obtain the final product significantly exceeds in other regions of the country. At least this is reflected in the cost of production. As a maximum on the self-development of the local population, which does not have time for this.

Outflow zones, in our opinion, will be the North-West and South of Uzbekistan (along and in the lower reaches of the Amudarya River), where a decrease in the availability of both drinking and irrigation water is expected, and hence crop yields. According to preliminary data as of July 1, 2022, the number of permanent residents in these areas of the country is:

Republic of Karakalpakstan - 1 million 962 400 people;

Khorezm region - 1 million 936 600 people;

Surkhandarya region - 2 million 771 100 people.

Or 6 million 670 thousand 100 people make up the potential base of climate migrants [7].

It can be predicted that Uzbekistan will not be able to resettle them on its own. So, as of January 1, 2022, there were an average of 78.6 people per square kilometer. This is 1.6 people more than in the same period last year (77 people per 1 sq. km in 2021) [8].

In terms of regions, the highest population density was noted in Tashkent (8035.1 people), Fergana (576.4 people) and Andijan (756.6 people) regions, and the lowest in Navoi region (9.3 people), Republic of Karakalpakstan (11.7 people) and Bukhara region (49.1 people). That is, the regions of Uzbekistan, where there is relatively free access to water, are already relatively overloaded.

It turns out that traveling abroad will be of the greatest interest. According to a number of sociological calculations [9], 16% more migrants are ready to go to countries where Uzbekistan has diplomatic missions. A 1% increase in the price of air tickets reduces the migration flow by 1.35%, so air accessibility plays a role. And most importantly, the requirement of knowledge of English demotivates 55% of migrants to go to this country.

Thus, external climate migrants can be predicted to be oriented towards the post-Soviet countries, primarily the Russian Federation. For its part, Russia expressed readiness for this.

In 2021, Russian Deputy Prime Minister V. Abramchenko already stated that the influx of migrants to Russia in the near future may be caused, among other things, by the fact that the climate in other states will become too hot [10]. Thus, due to the large territory of Russia, this country has a high potential for adaptation to climate change. The head of the Main Geophysical Laboratory of the Russian Federation, V. Kattsov, noted that the main countries from which climate migrants are possible in Russia are the nearest Central Asian states, such as Uzbekistan [11].

In general, according to various estimates, the Russian economy needs an influx of about 1 million migrants per year to maintain its own GDP [12]. That is, Russia itself is interested in new migrants. Despite tough sanctions, the Russian economy is demonstrating viability, which means that Russia will retain itself as a potential recipient country for the time being.

Also, today the issue of leasing Russian lands is being discussed, according to various sources, about 1 million hectares, for the cultivation of agricultural plants from Uzbekistan [13]. It is obvious that the bulk of farmers and peasants will be just residents from areas with a high risk of farming.

However, from a sociological point of view, it is important to note a very interesting point here.

At present, the main reason for migration from Uzbekistan is employment problems, such as unemployment, low qualifications of those leaving and the lack of decently paid work within the country. At the same time, migrants are those who leave their place of origin in order to find better conditions for education, career, family, but at the same time can return back without risk to their lives.

Such movements can be long-term or short-term, for example, associated with seasonal employment in other countries.

At the same time, according to the UN version, there are six main reasons for migration associated with changes in the environment [14]:

- land degradation, desertification and drought;
- natural disasters and extreme weather events;
- sea level rise and flooding;
- industrial accidents and environmental pollution by anthropogenic emissions;
- urbanization and construction of infrastructure (dams, roads, etc.);
- conflicts related to the struggle for natural resources.

Various sociological surveys show that for the most part, labor migrants from Uzbekistan do not plan to stay in the recipient country, considering staying there as a forced measure. However, in the context of climate migrants, the situation is different, since returning, for example, to the desert zone is not seen as an appropriate step. In fact, it turns out that external migration, upon return, will stimulate internal processes, since migrants will have material resources for moving. This, in turn, will intensify the processes of urbanization of the population of Uzbekistan.

Conclusion. In conclusion, we note that at present, climate migration has not yet been fully studied by the country's sociologists, since it is a little in the shadow of labor migration. However, it can be predicted that if the current trends in climate change continue, then the relevance of the sociological analysis of this topic will increase significantly, in particular, the acceleration of urbanization processes in the country.

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