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THE HISTORY OF KAZAKH MIGRATION TO IRAN: CAUSES, STAGES AND CONSEQUENCES

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Abstract. *Introduction.* This article explores the history of Kazakh migration to Iran. The migration was closely linked to political changes, military conflicts, economic hardships. The article describes the cultural characteristics of the Kazakhs in Iran, their adaptation to the local society, and efforts to preserve ethnic identity. The research is based on historical data and contemporary academic studies. *Objective.* The objective is to analyze the main causes, stages, and sociocultural consequences of Kazakh migration. *Materials and Methods.* Using a historical-chronological methodology the migration of Kazakhs in Iran, further development, the everyday life were systematized. A culturally-historical comparative method was applied to examine the adaptation. The migration of Kazakhs to Iran was analyzed through comparative analysis based on materials from foreign and domestic sources. *Results.* The analysis clarified the statistical size of the Kazakh diaspora in Iran. It revealed the history of the formation of Kazakhs in Iran within foreign communities. Information on the adaptation of Kazakhs to the socio-cultural environment in Iran was systematized. A range of data on religious beliefs, linguistic environment, and social conditions was also compiled. *Conclusion.* Today, about 5,000 Kazakhs live in Iran (in the cities Gorgan, Bandar Torkaman, and Gonbad-e Kavus). During century Kazakhs in Iran in a Shia-dominated environment have built their own mosques (six in total) and continue to adhere to the Sunni Hanafi madhhab. Although Persian is the official language for the entire population according to the Constitution of Iran, Kazakhs still speak their native language in everyday life. In further research, materials from Iranian and other archives will be analyzed, and data on the preservation of national traditions, national clothing, cuisine and other cultural characteristics of the Kazakhs in Iran will be updated.

Keywords: Diaspora, Kazakh migration, Kazakhs in Iran, resettlement, cultural adaptation, ethnic identity, social consequences

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ҚАЗАҚТАРДЫҢ ИРАНҒА ҚОНЫС АУДАРУ ТАРИХЫ: СЕБЕПТЕРІ, КЕЗЕҢДЕРІ ЖӘНЕ САЛДАРЫ

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Аңдатпа. *Кіріспе.* Бұл мақалада қазақтардың Иранға қоныс аудару тарихы қарастырылады. Қазақтардың Иранға көшу үдерісі көбіне саяси өзгерістермен, әскери қақтығыстармен және экономикалық қиындықтармен тығыз байланысты болғаны көрсетіледі. Сондай-ақ мақалада Иранға қоныстанған қазақтардың мәдени ерекшеліктері, жергілікті қоғамға бейімделу жолдары және этникалық бірегейлігін сақтап қалу әрекеттері сипатталады. Зерттеу тарихи деректер мен заманауи ғылыми еңбектерге негізделген. *Мақсаты.* Зерттеу барысында қазақ миграциясының негізгі себептері, кезеңдері және оның әлеуметтік-мәдени салдарларын талдау. *Материалдар мен әдістер.* Мақаланы жазу барысында тарихи-хронологиялық әдіснама көмегімен Иран қазақтарының көшіп қонуы және оның әрі қарай дамуы, халықтардың тұрмыс тіршілігі мен оның даму заңдылықтары жүйеленді. Мәдени, тарихи сипатта, бейімделу процесін салыстыру әдісі қолданылды. Шетелдік және отандық дереккөздердің материалдары негізінде салыстырмалы талдау арқылы көші-қон құбылысы қарастырылды. *Нәтижелер.* Талдау барысында Ирандағы қазақ диаспорасының статистикалық халық саны нақтыланды. Иран қазақтарының қалыптасу тарихы шетелдегі қазақтардың құрған қауымдастықтары туралы мәлімет айқындалды. Ирандағы қазақтардың әлеуметтік-мәдени ортаға бейімделуі жайлы ақпараттар жүйеленді. Мәселен, діни сенімі, тілдік ортасы, әлеуметтік жағдайлары жайлы бірқатар мәліметтер жүйеленіп берілді. *Қорытынды.* Бүгінгі күні Иранда (негізгі бөлігі Горган, Бандар Түріамен, Күмбед Кавус қалаларында) шамамен 5 000 адам тұрады. Иран қазақтары шейіттік ортада бір ғасырға жуық өмір сүрсе де, өздерінің (алты) мешітін салып, әлі күнге дейін сүннеттік мәзһәбты ұстанады. Иранның конституциясына сәйкес тұтас халық үшін ресми тіл парсы тілі болғанымен, өзара және отбасы ішінде қазақ тілінде сөйлеседі. Алдағы зерттеулерімізде Қазақстан мен шетел архивтеріндегі материалдарды саралай отырып, осы мақалада берілген мәліметтерді тереңдете түсу, сондай-ақ Иран қазақтарының ұлттық салт-дәстүрлерінің сақталуы, ұлттық киімдері, тағамдары және басқа да мәдени ерекшеліктері бойынша қазақ диаспорасына қатысты деректерді толықтыруды мақсат етеміз.

Түйін сөздер: Диаспора, қазақ миграциясы, Иран қазақтары, қоныс аудару, мәдени бейімделу, этникалық бірегейлік, әлеуметтік салдар

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ИСТОРИЯ МИГРАЦИИ КАЗАХОВ В ИРАН: ПРИЧИНЫ, ЭТАПЫ И ПОСЛЕДСТВИЯ

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Аннотация. *Введение.* В этой статье рассматривается история миграции казахов в Иран. Процесс миграции казахов в Иран был тесно связан с политическими изменениями, военными конфликтами и экономическими трудностями. В статье также описаны культурные особенности казахов, поселившихся в Иране, пути адаптации к местному населению и попытки сохранить свою этническую идентичность. Исследование основано на исторических данных и современных научных работах. *Цель.* Цель статьи – анализ основных причин, стадий казахской миграции и ее социокультурных последствий в ходе исследования. *Материалы и методы.* В ходе написания статьи с помощью историко-хронологической методологии были систематизированы миграция иранских казахов и ее дальнейшее развитие, быт народа и закономерности его развития. Применялся метод сравнения культурно-исторического характера, процесса адаптации. Феномен миграции рассматривался путем сравнительного анализа на основе материалов зарубежных и отечественных источников. *Результаты.* В ходе анализа была уточнена статистическая численность населения казахской диаспоры в Иране. Раскрыта история становления иранских казахов в зарубежных сообществах. Систематизирована информация об адаптации казахов к социально-культурной среде Ирана. Был систематизирован ряд сведений о религиозных убеждениях, языковой среде, социальных условиях. *Заключение.* Сегодня в Иране (основная часть – в городах Горган, Бендер Туркман, Кумбед Кавус) проживает около 5 000 человек. Несмотря на то, что почти век иранские казахи проживали в шиитской среде, они построили свои (шесть) мечети и до сих пор придерживаются суннитского мазхаба. Хотя по Конституции Ирана официальным языком для всего народа является персидский, на бытовом уровне они разговаривали на казахском языке. В дальнейших исследованиях будут проанализированы материалы казахстанских и зарубежных архивов, и пополнены данные, касающиеся сохранения национальных традиций, национальной одежды, кухни и других культурных особенностей иранских казахов.

Ключевые слова: Диаспора, миграция казахов, Иранские казахи, переселение, культурная адаптация, этническая идентичность, социальные последствия

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Introduction. Western scholars, such as D. Armstrong, R. Brubaker, M. Dabag, J. Clifford, W. Conner, R. Cohen, W. Safran, G. Sheffer, M. Esman, Kim D. Butler, and others have different views in the theoretical explanation of the diaspora phenomenon. According to Safran W., a diaspora is an ethnic group that has been forcibly displaced from its historical homeland, preserves a collective historical memory of that homeland, connects its future with it, has not fully assimilated into the host country, and strives to maintain its ethnic identity and sustain ties with its homeland [Safran, 1991]. Sheffer G. writes: “A diaspora is a segment of an ethnic community that lives outside its historical homeland. It maintains its ethnic identity, shows interest in the affairs of its homeland, and continues to develop its own institutions and structures in the host country while sustaining ties with the homeland” [Sheffer, 2003]. Similarly, Cohen R. defines a diaspora as a community that preserves myths and memories of the homeland, supports the idea of eventual return, fosters group solidarity and cohesion, maintains an active cultural life in the host country, and sustains political, economic, and cultural connections with the homeland [Cohen, 2008]. According to Butler K., a diaspora is not limited to mere relocation; it refers to a community that lives permanently away from its historical homeland, preserves cultural distinctiveness and collective memory, and possesses social organization and a shared identity [Butler, 2001].

The Kazakh diaspora was formed in both distant and neighboring foreign countries due to various political circumstances. In terms of population size, the countries with the largest Kazakh communities in Central Asia include China, Uzbekistan, and Russia. Kazakh diasporas also exist in other countries around

the world, including Mongolia, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Iran, Tajikistan, and several Western European nations.

The scattered settlement of the Kazakh diaspora across the world is not accidental. The migration of Kazakhs from their homeland was driven by political circumstances and social factors.

The conditions, challenges, and living standards of Kazakhs abroad vary greatly, depending primarily on the country in which they reside. Kazakh communities in different parts of the world differ in their political and economic status, as well as in their social and cultural environment. These differences are often linked to the history of the diaspora's formation and the host country's policy and attitude toward Kazakhs. However, there is a common pressing issue that unites all Kazakhs living abroad — the need to preserve and develop their native language, national culture, traditional customs, and education system.

The example of Kazakh diasporas can be observed to preserve ethnic identity among other ethnic groups. It is a tendency to maintain one's identity, not to assimilate with other peoples. Each country has its own characteristics of the development of the Kazakh diaspora. For example, in the eastern countries the Kazakhs prefer to live close to each other. In Iran and Turkey, the Kazakhs are concentrated in the same area and support each other. And in the countries of Western Europe this trend is not observed, because there is a different policy towards the Kazakh diaspora.

The distinctive feature of the Kazakh diaspora is its ability to successfully adapt to any region of the world, thanks to the genetic traits of nomadic civilization. Nevertheless, they consistently remain ethnic minorities, meaning they do not possess real political influence in the countries where they reside. According to some foreign researchers [Seysen, 2016: 265], the core value of the Kazakhs is an ideology based on ancestral origin and belonging to clan groups. Kazakhs can preserve themselves as an isolated subculture only if they adhere to the concept of belonging to their clans and special clan groups.

The Kazakh diaspora is settled in a number of countries around the world. For example, there is also Kazakh diaspora living in Iran. According to the 1996 census, Kazakhs made up 510 families [Kiai, 2012: 12-14]. According to the state program for the return of compatriots to their historical homeland, many people return to our country and live mainly in the western regions, in the south, in Almaty.

Now, about 5000 Kazakhs live in Iran [Source: Cultural center]. They are mainly concentrated in three cities: Gorgan, Gonved Kavus (Kumbed-Kavus), Bender Turkmen.

Materials and methods. Using a historical-chronological methodology, the migration of Kazakhs in Iran and its subsequent development, the everyday life of the people, and the patterns of its evolution were systematized. Statistical data were provided. A comparative method was applied in the historical and cultural description and the adaptation process. The evolution of a specific population in a foreign country was studied thoroughly through detailed analysis. The migration phenomenon was examined through comparative analysis based on materials from both foreign and domestic sources.

Among the earliest published works on Kazakhs in Iran is the article by doctor of historical sciences, professor Rajabi P. "Getting to know the Kazakhs" published in 1976 (1396 Hijri year) in the journal "Tamasha". In his article, he described the appearance of the Kazakhs, provided information on the population size of Kazakhs in Iran, their occupations, and discussed their role in preserving family ties, traditions, and customs.

The next significant work was the book by Iranian ethnographer Kiay M., "Traditions and Customs of the Kazakhs of Iran", published between 1977 and 1983 as a result of ethnographic research on the Kazakhs [Kiai, 2012].

The scholar Zhemenev I., a former representative of the Kazakh diaspora in Iran, also wrote on this topic. His works include the books "Kazakhs in Iran" [Zhemenev, 2007], "Iran and the Kazakhs in Iran" [Zhemenev, 2012], as well as extensive memoirs titled "Ansau", published in six issues of the journal "Aqiqat" [Zhemenev, 2022a: 78-88; Zhemenev, 2022b: 72-83].

Materials were also taken from the collection of studies on Kazakhs in Iran titled "Kazakhs in Iran... those who suffered from hard times," written by Tobyshev N., a Kazakh who migrated from Iran [Iran qazaqtary..., 2024].

Another important and recent study on the Kazakh diaspora in Iran is the joint article by Mustafa Nouri, Zhenis Zhomart, and Alizade titled "The resettlement of Kazakhs from the Mangistau region to Iran in the 1930s from the time of Reza Shah to the present day [Nouri, 2024]"

The informational basis of the article includes materials from social media, including YouTube videos: "Kazakhs in Iran" by Kanat Beysekeyev; a video on Temirlan Mukashev's channel "Kazakhs in Iran: Are they Shiites? Have they forgotten their language? Kazakhs raised between palm trees and mandarins;" a video on the "Zhalgys zholashy" channel "We gave our daughter for a piece of bread / Kazakh weddings in

Iran;" as well as photo and video materials from Jafar Shadkam's Facebook page and two podcasts by Niyaz Tobysh.

Additionally, materials were collected through interviews with Kazakhs living in Iran and those who relocated to Kazakhstan, along with data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan and archival documents.

Discussion. Kazakh people who migrated to neighboring countries during the famine of the 1920s-1930s were referred to as "otkochevniki" in Soviet-era documents. However, as S. Cameron pointed out, instead of calling the Kazakhs forced to migrate due to famine between 1929 and 1933 "refugees", the Soviet government used the term "otkochevniki", meaning "nomads who move and settle" [Cameron, 2010].

"Refugees" are people who are forced to move from their own country to another due to their inability to resist or endure pressure from certain forces in society — such as political, economic, or ethnic oppression, war, or natural disasters. The term "otkochevat" (meaning "to move to another place, to leave") was used in the 1920s–1930s by the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), the OGPU, and other Soviet institutions. To dispel the misconceptions that developed among the population, it is important to emphasize that this migration of Kazakhs — especially the wealthier ones — was forced. Due to the large-scale repressions carried out by the Soviet regime, our ancestors were compelled to relocate in order to save their lives. The history of Kazakhs who migrated from Kazakhstan during the years of famine is today a pressing topic in Kazakhstani historical scholarship. This article focuses on the experiences of Kazakhs who migrated and sought refuge in Iran during those difficult famine years.

Between 1928 and 1933, the Soviet Union aggressively implemented policies of rapid industrialization and forced collectivization of agriculture. As part of this campaign, Kazakhstan saw the confiscation of wealthy households in 1928 and the targeted elimination of prosperous peasants and kulaks as a social class.

In Western Kazakhstan, these policies took on unique characteristics. For example, in 1927, the total livestock population in the Aday district was 731,000, which averaged 78 heads of livestock per household. The livestock composition included: sheep — 69.5%, camels — 12%, goats — 7.5%, horses — 7%, and cattle — 4% [CSA RK. F.30. 248-249].

Unable to endure unjust persecution and increasing taxes, the Aday clans residing in Mangystau migrated from the region between 1928 and 1933, passing through Turkmenistan and along the Caspian Sea coast into the territory of Iran. In his article "Ansau", doctor of philology, professor, and scholar Islam Zhemenev describes the recollections of his close relative Turash, who lives in the village of Kuryk, located in the Karakiya district of Mangystau region. According to these memories, on their way to Karakalpakstan, Turkmenistan, and Iran, the migrants would gather near the Aqqyys Shozhik spring and well, located not far from the Beket Ata mausoleum in Oghlandy. There, they would rest and decide on their further route. Continuing toward Turkmenistan and Iran, they stopped at the Sümbe Töbel spring, then descended from the mountains to the Myngsu Almas spring. After this, they crossed the border and reached a Turkmen village called Aqqy Yerikti. Some of the migrants remained in Turkmenistan. Others continued on to Iran, passing beyond Nebitdag and reaching another water source. From there, they traveled along the Caspian coast and eventually entered Iranian territory, reaching the province of Mazandaran [Zhemenev, 2022a: 80-81].

The Kazakhs who moved to Iran settled in the villages of Gomishan and Sallak, a small town on Iran's northern border. All the residents of Gomishan and Sallak were Turkmens. However, the Kazakhs could not immediately adapt to these new settlements. For some, the climate was a challenge; for others, there was a lack of pastureland for their livestock. Accustomed to a nomadic lifestyle and livestock herding, the Kazakhs were not inclined toward farming or agriculture and found it difficult to embrace a sedentary way of life. As a result, they had to move frequently in search of more suitable and comfortable living conditions. During those years, around five hundred families eventually settled along the banks of the Ziarat River in the city of Gorgan. The Kazakhs survived without begging, relying on their own labor. To earn daily wages, they worked as laborers on the construction of roads and railways between the cities of Behshahar and Bandarshah (known as Bandar Torkaman after the Islamic Revolution of 1979). In this way, the Kazakhs settled in three cities of Iran's Mazandaran Province — Gorgan, Gonbad-e Kavus, and Bandar Torkaman — and in two villages within each city. Today, these three cities have been separated from Mazandaran and now belong to the newly established Golestan province, with Gorgan as its capital [Zhemenev, 2012: 22-24].

According to the 1996 census, the number of Kazakh families living in urban areas of Iran was 510. Currently, according to information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the total Kazakh population in Iran is around 5,000 people. The majority of them are concentrated in Golestan Province — 4,550 individuals. Among them, approximately 3,150 reside in Gorgan, 1,000 in Bandar

Torkaman, and 400 in Gonbad-e Kavus. Additionally, some families and individuals have moved to other cities for various reasons, including changes in occupation, education, or other purpose (such as Mashhad, Tehran, Sari, and others – altogether about 450 Kazakhs).

The Kazakhs who settled in Iran initially focused on learning the language and laws of the country, adapting to the local geographical, social, cultural, and linguistic characteristics. Due to the lack of citizenship, the Iranian government did not allow Kazakh children to attend school.

The process of obtaining citizenship for Kazakhs in Iran was significantly aided by a citizen named Korpe Tagan Daribajuly. In 1955, Tagan Daribajuly, who was among the first to attend school, studied in the Persian language. Kazakh boys began receiving education in Iran starting from 1955, and Kazakh girls started attending school from 1970.

At the age of sixteen, Tagan Daribajuly submitted an application for citizenship and sent a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran. A representative of the Ministry visited the mosque and met with the Kazakh community. During the meeting, Tagan acted as an interpreter between the representative and the Kazakhs. As a result of this meeting, the necessary documents were completed, and in 1958, a decree was issued granting Iranian citizenship to the Kazakhs. By 1961–1962, almost all Kazakhs had received Iranian citizenship [Daribajuly, 2020: 270].

The scholar Islam Zhemenei noted in his memoirs that when obtaining citizenship, in order to preserve their identity, Kazakhs in Iran had to specify their surnames and used clan names such as “Qazaq”, “Aday”, “Zhemenei”, “Kedey”, “Baybishe”, “Kunanorys”, “Eskeldy”, “Korpe”, “Tobysh”, “Babyk”, “Zhary”, “Bali” and others [Zhemenei, 2022a: 82].

In 1968, during the visit of then Shah of Iran Mohammad Reza Pahlavi to Soviet Kazakhstan, a meeting took place in Almaty with the first head of the republic, Dinmukhamed Kunayev. Pleased with the hospitality, the Shah invited Kunayev to visit his country as a guest. However, Kunayev, considering that at that time the authority over visits to Iran was controlled by Moscow, inquired about the condition of the Kazakhs in Iran. The Shah, unaware of any details, promised to find out about their situation. Kunayev sent his greetings and asked the Shah to take care of them. Upon returning to Iran, the Shah immediately ordered to locate the addresses of the Kazakhs. Articles about the meeting between Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and Kunayev were published in the press, and the elders (aksakals) received invitations to the royal palace.

As a result of this meeting, two Kazakh children were granted referrals for free medical treatment. Additionally, the cases of those who had not yet obtained citizenship were expedited. Land was allocated to the Kazakhs, giving them the opportunity to engage in agriculture. In 1970, Turkmen Radio in Gorgan began broadcasting Kazakh melodies for half an hour each day [Zhemenei, 2007: 8-9].

Since the 1980s, Kazakh scholars living in Iran also began working in the fields of culture and literature, forming an informal “Kazakh Cultural Society”. In the same year, Islam Zhemenei was elected as the first chairman of this society. To familiarize people with Kazakh art and customs, many documentary films about Kazakhstan from the former Soviet “Cultural center” located in Tehran were shown, and clubs and classes for learning the Kazakh language were opened. The “Kazakh Cultural Society” was never officially registered. Nevertheless, over four years, with the support of Kazakh scholars and elders, many cultural events were held. One of these was a small phrasebook titled “Let's learn the Kazakh language”, based on Arabic script, Cyrillic, and the Persian language (Fig.1.).

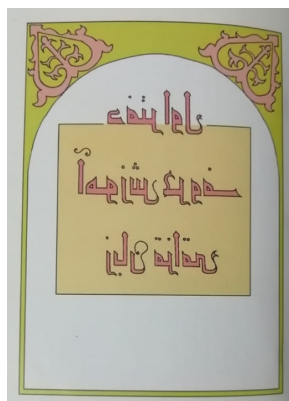


Fig.1. “Let’s learn the Kazakh language” phrasebook.
From Islam Zhemenei's personal archive

The founding members of the society actively contributed to the revival of national consciousness and traditions among the youth at various levels. Later, with the support of local authorities, the society officially continued its work under the name “Islamic Council Society.” Zhemenev I. was elected as its first chairman. From 1980 to 1988, during the Iran-Iraq war, the society’s activities evolved into broader community service efforts [Zhemenev, 2012: 42-43, 89].

Since Iranians followed Shia Islam, Kazakhs in Iran were in need of Sunni mosques of the Hanafi madhhab. Of course, it was not possible to build the first mosque immediately, but over time, Kazakh mosques of the Hanafi school began to open. The first mosque built by Kazakhs in Iran was the Samarkand Akhund Mosque in the South Kazakh village of Bandar-Turkmen. In the following years, it underwent major renovations. The Abu Hanifa Mosque in Gorgan, and the second mosque in the village of Hamatabat – named Khoja Ahmed Yasawi Mosque – remain places of worship not only for Kazakhs but also for Turkmen, Baloch, Kurds, and Arabs.

There are the Imam A'zam and the Muhammad Rasul mosques that are built by Kazakhs in the village of Chay Boyi (also known as Say Boyi) in Gonbad-e Kavus (formerly Kupol-e Kavus). In the city of Bandar-Turkmen, there are the Samarkand Akhund and Muayyad Mosque in the South Kazakh village, and the Baharai and Muayyad Mosques in the North Kazakh village. The Muayyad Mosques share the same name.



Fig. 2. Kazakhs gathered for Eid prayer. Gorgan, 2025.
From Jafar Shadkam's personal Facebook page

Kazakhs have made efforts to preserve their native language. According to Article 15 of Chapter Two of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran: “Persian is the official and common language of the people of Iran, and the Persian script is the official writing system. Government documents, official texts, administrative correspondence, and educational textbooks must be in this language and script. However, the use of the languages of local ethnic groups, in addition to Persian, is permitted in the press and mass media, and may also be used for teaching their literature in schools”. Despite this, after resettling in Iran, speaking their native language remained a vital priority for Kazakhs. Elders did not allow any Kazakh child to speak another language within their household. This tradition has continued to the present day [Zhemenev, 2022a: 84]. For Kazakhs living abroad, the lack of schools in their native language, as well as the absence of publications, radio, and television programs in Kazakh, posed a significant obstacle to the development of their language. However, this situation did not prevent Kazakhs from preserving their native language in daily and communal life. They used only the Kazakh language in everyday interactions, within their families, and in the community. In such conditions, as the younger generation's level of education increased and their worldview expanded, the vocabulary of the Kazakh language began to seem insufficient. As a result, they were compelled to use vocabulary borrowed from the Persian language when necessary. Over time, this phenomenon became more widespread among the youth, and as their linguistic awareness developed, it created the impression that the Kazakh language lacked cognitive potential. Kazakhs living in the homeland played an important role in maintaining the purity of the native language. This was closely linked to the activities of elders well-versed in national traditions, and of *zhyrshy* – traditional storytellers who continued the *zhynrau* oral tradition. They possessed a rich linguistic repertoire and ensured the stable use of the language within traditional cultural settings [Zhemenev, 2022a: 84].

However, the next generation needed to acquire new concepts influenced by modern education and science. As a result, there arose a necessity to introduce new lexical units into the Kazakh language. The implementation of this task became the responsibility of the intelligentsia and linguistic scholars.

One of the strategically important tasks at the present stage is to adapt the Kazakh language to the modern scientific and intellectual space while preserving its historical layers.

In the early years after the Kazakhs moved to Iran, their social status was very low. They worked as hired laborers. After settling down, they were granted land and engaged in agriculture. By selling surplus produce at the market, they gradually improved their economic well-being.

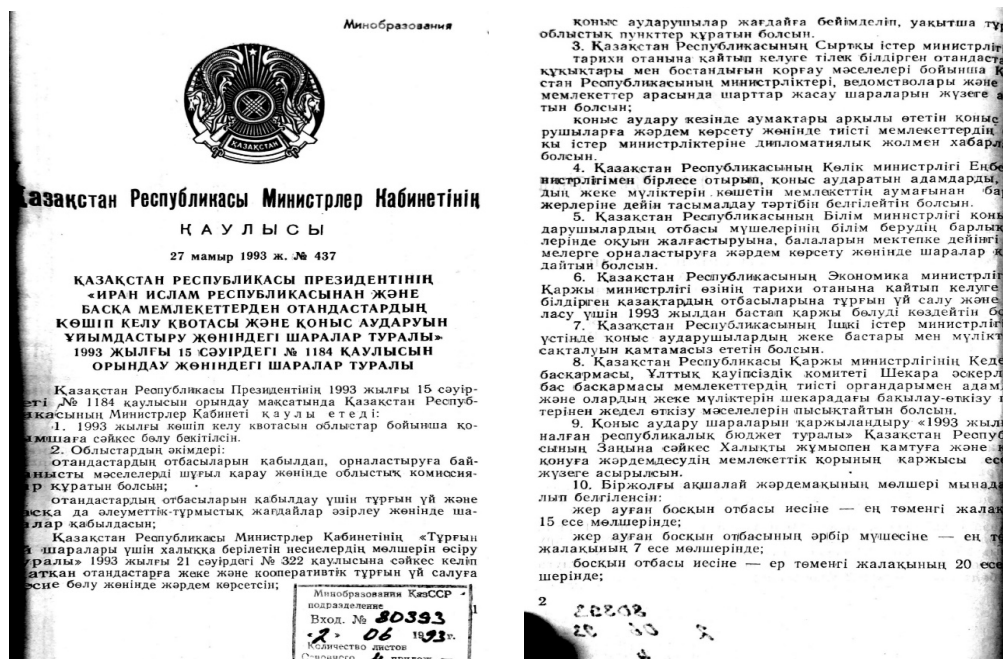
After times changed, young Kazakhs in Iran began purchasing trucks and working in the freight transportation industry. As the number of trucks increased, the first freight transport syndicate (a union of entrepreneurs) was established in Gorgan [Zhemenev, 2022b: 79]. Seeing the profitability of this field, Iranians also began to enter the freight business. A large number of Iranians gradually began to displace Kazakhs from the sector. In addition, the Iran-Iraq War also contributed to the Kazakhs' withdrawal from this line of work.

Khalifa Altay, in his memoirs, writes that Kazakhs in Iran were industrious people. They could drive any type of vehicle, melt metal, install electrical, water, and heating (steam) systems, and carried out various types of construction work. Women were engaged in carpet weaving. [Altay, 2000: 11-12].

The 1980s–1990s marked a new period of growth. In Iran's higher education institutions, hundreds of Kazakh boys and girls began studying various modern specialties, including mathematics, agriculture, economics, pedagogy, social sciences, management, marine engineering, literature, statistics, and technology. One generation rose to leadership positions in various sectors of the state.

After Kazakhstan gained independence in 1991, many of our compatriots in Iran expressed a strong desire to return to their homeland. In 1992, following an agreement between the First President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, and the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the repatriation of Kazakhs, a campaign began to resettle compatriots from Iran to Kazakhstan.

In accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated May 27, 1993, No. 437, "On Measures to Implement the Presidential Decree of April 15, 1993, No. 1184 "On the Immigration Quota and Measures for Organizing the Resettlement of Compatriots from the Islamic Republic of Iran and Other Countries", the immigration quota was distributed across regions. Regional commissions were established to promptly address issues related to the reception and settlement of compatriot families, ensuring they could lead a stable life after relocating to Kazakhstan. Regional governors (akims) were instructed to create all necessary conditions to improve their social well-being. This included providing loans for housing construction, ensuring access to continued education in educational institutions, placing children in preschools, granting one-time financial assistance, facilitating employment opportunities, and more.



Қазақстан Республикасының Министрлер Кабинетінің 1993 жылғы 27 мамырдағы № 437 қаулысымен БЕКІТІЛГЕН

1993 жылы көшіп келу квотасын облыстар бойынша

БӨЛУ

Облыстар	Мам- дан	Иран	Ресей	Түрік- стан	Бірік- кен	Түрік
Ақмола	200	—	200	—	—	—
Ақтөбе	250	250	100	—	50	—
Алматы	1000	250	50	50	50	—
Атырау	—	100	50	—	100	—
Батыс Қазақстан	—	200	300	—	—	—
Батыс	—	250	—	200	100	—
Жезқазған	200	—	100	50	50	—
Көкшетау	350	—	350	—	—	—
Қарағанды	400	—	200	—	—	—
Қостанай	200	—	300	—	—	—
Қызылорда	—	150	—	50	50	—
Маңғыстау	—	300	—	—	—	900
Оңтүстік Қазақстан	—	250	—	200	300	—
Павлодар	200	—	400	—	—	—
Семей	200	—	150	—	—	—
Солтүстік Қазақстан	200	—	250	—	—	—
Талдықорған	200	250	50	—	50	—
Торғай	150	—	200	—	—	—
Шығыс Қазақстан	350	—	200	—	—	—
Барлығы	3000	2000	2950	500	750	900

Fig. 3-6. The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated May 27, 1993.

"Since the return of Kazakhs from abroad to their historical homeland, the social, cultural, and educational differences between immigrants and the local population have increased [Kalşabaeva, Egizbaeva, 2025]. Kazakhs who returned from Iran to their historical homeland also faced social, economic, and a number of other challenges. We will address the issues of the repatriation of Kazakhs from Iran in more detail in our upcoming research".

Results. During the analysis, the statistical population of the Kazakh diaspora in Iran was clarified. The historical background of the Kazakh community formation in Iran and information about the associations established by Kazakhs abroad were identified. Data on the socio-cultural adaptation of Kazakhs in Iran was systematized. For example, information regarding their religious beliefs, linguistic environment, and social conditions was organized and presented.

Conclusion. Thus, a diaspora is a community that has been forcibly displaced from its historical homeland, preserves a collective historical memory of that homeland, aspires to return to it in the future, maintains political, economic, and cultural ties with it, actively participates in the life of the host country, while also striving to preserve its own language, religion, and culture.

Today, approximately 5,000 Kazakhs live in Iran, mainly in the cities of Gorgan, Bandar Torkaman, and Gonbad-e Kavus.

Although Kazakhs in Iran have lived in a Shia-dominated environment for nearly a century, they have built six of their own mosques and continue to follow the Sunni madhhab. In accordance with Iran's constitution, Persian is the official language for the entire population; however, Kazakhs continue to speak their native language within their families and among themselves.

Initially, due to the language barrier, they faced hardships and could only work as unskilled laborers. However, today many have received higher education and work as professionals in various fields.

In future research, we aim to deepen the information presented in this article by analyzing materials from archives in Kazakhstan and abroad, and to supplement data on the Kazakh diaspora by studying the preservation of national traditions among Kazakhs in Iran, including traditional clothing, cuisine, and other cultural features.

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NA RK – National Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan

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