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Russian Surnames Officially Banned In Tajikistan

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People carry a giant national flag during an Independence Day celebration in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Authorities in Tajikistan have officially banned patronymics and surnames with "Russian" endings, such as "-ov," "-ev," "-ovich" and "-ovna," the RBC news website reported Friday.

In an interview aired on Tajikistan's Radio Svoboda service, deputy head of the state registry office Dzhaloliddin Rakhimov said the law was signed by President Emomali Rahmon in March.

Rakhimov said that many citizens want to keep the Russian versions of their children's names.

However, he said the authorities are making an effort to explain to the public that the main goal of the new law to is to make sure that all surnames in the country are written in Tajik in order to avoid having children "separate in two groups, one of which will be proud of their Tajik names while the other will have to carry foreign ones."

“In Tajikistan, names and the way they are written is done in accordance with culture, national traditions and the Registry of Tajik national names, approved by the government,” he said.

The new law states that all patronymics and surnames will now be formed — and written in official and personal documents — using the Tajik language, using endings such as “-zod,” “-zoda,” “-y,” “-yon,” “-far” and “-pur.”

Traditional Russian patronymic “Ivanovich” must now be written as “Ivanfar” or “Ivanzod,” or “Ivan.”

Tajikistan's long-time president suggested the ban on Russian endings in names in 2007 and has changed his name from Emomali Sharifovich Rakhmonov to Emomali Rakhmon.

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