

## **Islamic Fundamentalist Group Banned**

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The Supreme Court of Tajikistan has outlawed the Salafi movement, a fundamentalist strand of Islam that is growing in popularity among young people in urban areas of Tajikistan.

The court outlawed the group at the request of the prosecution service, which says the Salafis are a threat to national security

“The Salafis conduct propaganda that would be a danger to any state, and all the more so to Tajikistan,” said chief prosecutor Muhammadjon Khayrulloev. “Salafis, Wahabbis and Hizb ut-Tahrir all have the exactly same policies, the same orientation.”

Reporter Khalil Qoimzoda says it is now common to see bearded young men accosting people in the streets of the Tajik capital Dushanbe, trying to win them over.

The group’s doctrine is hostile to Shia Islam, but also to the main “mazhabs” or schools of Sunni Islam. The bulk of Tajiks are Sunnis of the Hanafi school; a minority are Ismailis.

There are suspicions the Salafis are receiving funding from sources in Saudi Arabia.

A Salafi representative says they do nothing harmful or illegal, and the ban is politically motivated.

The Council of Clerics, part of the mainstream (and therefore Hanafi) Muslim clerical establishment, supports the ban, arguing that the Salafis are a divisive force within the faith.

Religious affairs expert Abdullo Rahnoma says the Salafis are now likely to fade from public view. Some may leave the country and others will continue operating covertly, he says, but the majority will move back into the Hanafi fold, perhaps becoming supporters of the Islamic Rebirth Party, an entirely legal political group.

**Location:** [Tajikistan](#)

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