

# PROFILE: UZBEKISTAN

**Uzbekistan, on the ancient Silk Road from Europe to Asia, was part of the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991. It has the largest population of all the Central Asian states and has enviable reserves of natural gas.**

However, there is widespread unemployment, and more than 70 per cent of people work in state industries or agriculture, where wages are low. The situation is aggravated by widespread corruption and the post-Soviet mentality, which leads people still to expect the state to look after them.

Both church and society in the region are still affected by the Soviet mindset and its culture of dependence and passivity. People lack initiative and self-motivation, and responsibility both in work and in family life. Political illiteracy and an information vacuum leave people feeling unable to change their circumstances.

Conflict and political instability have left a lack of trust between people. There is widespread weariness and disillusionment with change, and high rates of hopelessness, depression, mental illness and suicide. The community in general is suffering from a loss of values, as the breakdown of society leaves people without an established moral framework, and traditional personal, social and communal values are rejected.

Uzbekistan, like Russia and Eastern Europe, has experienced a dramatic increase in HIV and AIDS diagnoses. The spread of the virus has been blamed primarily on intravenous drug use and commercial sex, although sexual transmission is now taking HIV into the general population.

## TEARFUND'S WORK IN UZBEKISTAN

Tearfund has worked in Uzbekistan since the 1990s. Our work focuses on mobilising churches to take action on behalf of the poorest people in their communities. In particular, we are encouraging churches and Christians to defend the rights of the poor among them through advocacy.

Projects tackle the large-scale unemployment in Uzbekistan, as well as supporting people living with HIV. Other work supports people through family breakdown and low income.

- **Pray for people living in poverty in Uzbekistan.**
- **Please pray for our partners as they seek to help others.**
- **And pray for the country of Uzbekistan, for justice, peace, good health and hope for everyone.**