

## **DELIMITATION OF THE STATE BORDER OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN AND THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION: PROBLEMS AND WAYS OF SOLUTION**

\*Shukyzhanova A.N.<sup>1</sup>, Mukasheva A.D.<sup>2</sup>, Abdrakhmanov K.A.<sup>3</sup>

\*<sup>1</sup>Doctor of Philosophy, associate professor, The Kazakh Ablai Khan  
University of International Relations and World Languages Almaty, Kazakhstan

e-mail: [aiym.shukizhanova@gmail.com](mailto:aiym.shukizhanova@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Manager, International Scientific Complex "Astana", Astana, Kazakhstan

e-mail: [mukasheva.ad@gmail.com](mailto:mukasheva.ad@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>Director of International Science Complex "Astana", Astana, Kazakhstan

e-mail: [abdrakhmanov@isca.kz](mailto:abdrakhmanov@isca.kz)

*The article is published under the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of  
Kazakhstan's grant project No. BR 10965282 "Kazakhstan-Russia border: Historical context  
and new geopolitical reality."*

**Abstract.** The border between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation is the longest land border in the world and is 7,400 kilometers long. When establishing diplomatic relations, Kazakhstan and Russia left the borders inherited from the USSR unchanged. They declared the absence of territorial disputes, the inviolability of territorial integrity and the recognition of each other's sovereignty.

Negotiations on the delimitation of the border began at the end of 1999 and lasted five and a half years. The rich natural resources of the border area, as well as the construction of railways, roads, settlements and industrial centers in the border areas without taking into account the administrative border in Soviet times, the display of the border between the Kazakh SSR and the RSFSR only on duty maps of adjacent regions without approval by the supreme authorities of the Soviet Union complicated the processes distinctions and required painstaking work. To resolve these issues without infringing on the territorial integrity of states, government delegations and working groups of the sides held a total of 50 negotiations. In January 2005, they signed an agreement on the state border of Kazakhstan and Russia.

The article deals with the international legal formalization processes of the Kazakh-Russian state border. The authors extensively analyzed the problems that arose during the delimitation process and their solutions, as well as considered the impact of the geopolitical situation on the border demarcation at that time and the territorial integrity policy of the states.

**Keywords:** border, delimitation, demarcation, Republic of Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, negotiations on delimitation, government delegation, disputed lands, Kazakh SSR, RSFSR

### **Introduction**

State borders are an essential attribute of sovereignty. After gaining independence, the Republic of Kazakhstan attached strategic importance to clarifying its borders with neighboring states under international requirements. The delimitation and demarcation of the state border of the Republic of Kazakhstan consist of two stages: the determination of the common border with the PRC and the second with the Russian Federation and three Central Asian republics.

The border between Kazakhstan and Russia is the longest land border in the world, about 7,400 km long. Atyrau, West Kazakhstan, Aktobe, Kostanay, North Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, East Kazakhstan, and Abai regions of our republic connect with twelve subjects of Russia (Astrakhan, Volgograd, Saratov, Samar, Orynbor, Chelyabinsk, Kurgan, Tumen, Ombi, Novosibirsk, Altai Territory and Altai Republic) [1, c.56].

### **Research methods**

Considering the historiographical nature of this research, we used historical and comparative methods. In the article, we covered the publications of domestic and foreign specialists who researched determining the common border with the Russian Federation after the Republic of Kazakhstan gained independence and the information base on online resources. Analyzing and researching these studies provided an excellent opportunity to understand the legal features of solving territorial issues, the course and structure of the negotiations on defining the border, and the historical and international significance of the delimitation and demarcation of the state border of our republic.

### **Research outcomes**

As soon as the USSR collapsed, Kazakhstan and Russia were in no hurry to define common borders between the two countries. There are several reasons for this. Due to the consequences of the economic crisis in the 1990s, states often considered political, economic, and social issues in bilateral relations [2, 6.114]. However, the consequences of the civil war in Tajikistan, the inability of the Central Asian states to control the illegal transport of drugs from Afghanistan at the required level, the terrorist acts organized by the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in Tashkent, and other geopolitical factors demanded attention to the border issue [3, p.557-558]. For example, in 2000, 680 foreign citizens who tried to cross illegally from Kazakhstan to Russia were detained. From 2000 to 2004, the border service of Russia seized more than 2250 kilograms of drugs and 162 million rubles of contraband goods in the Kazakh part of the border in 2004 [4, c.139].

The processes of border delimitation between the two states begin with the joint statement of the presidents adopted on July 6, 1998, in which the leaders of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation emphasized the importance of regulating the border regime to ensure the necessary level of border, customs, migration, sanitary and other accepted types of control. The heads of states emphasized that the determination of the Kazakh-Russian border is carried out gradually and declared that the border is a border of friendship, good neighborliness, and cooperation [5, c.171].

Border delimitation is a long, large-scale process that requires considering political, economic, legal, geographical, historical, cultural, national and other aspects. According to the October 1998 Protocol on State Border Delimitation, the governments of Kazakhstan and Russia should establish a delegation for border delimitation and preparation of an interstate agreement. Therefore, in September 1999, a Kazakh delegation was formed under M. Atanov, the ambassador for

particular tasks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The delegation included several ministries, heads of departments, and many specialists in various fields in neighboring regions [4, c.142]. The experience of the Kazakh delegation in determining the border with China and the Central Asian states was beneficial.

The first negotiations on delimitation began in September 1999. A year later, the document on the organization of negotiations on the delimitation of the state border between the republics was adopted. The delimitation of the state border between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation was considered based on the agreement that it would stand based on the administrative-territorial border of the Kazakh SSR and the RSFSR and their legislative acts on administrative-territorial delimitation. At the same time, the sides took into account documents regulating the borderline and cartographic materials.

During the negotiations, the sides discovered that while the Kazakh-Russian administrative-territorial border was defined on the geographical and other maps, it was not legally approved as required by the Constitution and legislation of the Kazakh SSR and the RSFSR before the collapse of the USSR. It means the borderline was established and not approved by the USSR Supreme State authorities. At that time, they relied only on the agreed duty maps of the adjacent regions of the two republics and materials on conflicting land and forest settlements. As a result, in some border areas, economic disputes needed to be settled, although not often. For example, one plot of land was registered in the land management or forest department of adjacent regions of two republics. The exact plot of land is registered in both republics [5, c.170-172]. Compared to other neighboring states, it should be noted that the entire part of the border between the Kazakh SSR and the Uzbek SSR, including its description, was approved by the resolutions of the Supreme Soviets of the two republics. At the same time, the border of the Kazakh SSR with the Kyrgyz SSR and the Turkmen SSR was specified in a generalized description in the resolutions of the Central Committee of the Kazakh SSR in 1930 and 1932. The border between the Kazakh SSR and the RSFSR was the only part with no description [6].

Since the border between the Kazakh SSR and the RSFSR was the most poorly regulated border on a legal basis compared to the borders of Kazakhstan with other neighboring states, it was necessary to develop standard methods and methods of delimitation, to determine the list and hierarchy of documents, the scale of delimitation maps, in case of disagreements in the first part of the negotiations and to be used as a basis for defining the border [5, c.170-172].

At the same time, since only two parts of the administrative-territorial border of the Kazakh SSR and the RSFSR were defined by the relevant legislative acts, the delegates agreed that while delimiting the state border, they would use the agreed 1:100,000 duty map between the neighboring regions of Kazakhstan and Russia and, if necessary, the land and forest management documents [5, c.173].

In order to further implement these agreed measures, the parties had to take the state border as a basis without doubting the legitimacy of the established administrative-territorial border. It is because the member states of the CIS agreed

to recognize the inviolability of the border between the republics of the former union formed at the time of the collapse of the USSR. The Minsk Declaration of December 8, 1991, the Alma-Ata Declaration of December 21, 1991, and the CIS Charter adopted on June 22, 1992, called on the organization's member states to maintain the established status quo. It was indicated that border issues between emerged sovereign states should not be brought to political disputes and border conflicts [7, p.15]. Such an approach to territorial delimitation helped to prevent conflicts and instability in the territory of the former USSR and to avoid disagreements related to border delimitation.

The delimitation of the Kazakh-Russian state border was carried out from West to East and ended at the meeting point of the state borders of Kazakhstan, Russia, and China. On May 5, 1999, the Agreement on the intersection of the state border between the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, and the People's Republic of China was signed [5, c.179-180].

### **Discussions of the outcomes**

Let us focus on the areas that require the most research and discussion in delimitation negotiations:

- Imash liquefied gas field located on the Caspian shelf separating Astrakhan and Atyrau regions. It is the republic's second most significant field of mineral resources after Karachiganak. The negotiations determining which country would take the field continued with interruptions for several years and were completed only by the end of 2004. The main point of dispute was not about the territory but its resources. Ultimately, the right to use resources has been divided equally [4, c. 141]. The wintering places of the shepherds in the region moved to Russia [8, c.82].

- Sandy, the deserted island of Ukatny, which occupies 1200 square kilometers at the mouth of the Volga River, on the border of Astrakhan and Atyrau regions, and Zhestkiy island, which is close to Ukatny. The presence of 600 million tons of oil reserves in Ukatny increased the island's importance. The modification of the middle line separating the bottom of the Caspian Sea depended on the affiliation of those two islands. The closest study of cartography and archival documents determined that the islands are part of Russia [9, c.218].

- Komsomol station on the Privolzh railway divides West Kazakhstan and Volgograd regions. The problem arose because the railway crossed the border several times, which was done on purpose during its construction to stimulate the development of settlements near the border. However, when the administrative border had changed to an interstate one, difficulties arose when delimiting and determining the border regime. Before the delimitation process started, the railway crossing was divided equally. As a result, one part of the trains that stopped at the station remained in Russia, and the other part remained in Kazakhstan. Furthermore, the people living on this land were Russian citizens. To solve that problem, the Komsomol district was given to Russia, and similar land was given to Kazakhstan from the same area [8, c.82].

- According to the agreed map of 1982, the former administrative-territorial border divided Prigornoe village into two parts: one was in the Aktobe region, and

the other part was in the Orynbor region. The village's inhabitants were citizens of Russia, and Russia rented the land of the village, which remained on the territory of Kazakhstan, paying five thousand dollars a year. The Russian side provided the communication and socio-economic needs of the country. At the same time, the treatment facilities of Novotroitsk city were located in the village territory [9, c.221-222].

After the administrative border between the two countries became an interstate border, it became difficult for the inhabitants of the village of Prigornoe to move. In an emergency, the danger that the factory's wastewater would flow into the Ural River and harm the environment arose. From the economic perspective and for the convenience of residents, the Russian side offered to leave this village with a territory of 1200 hectares to the Russian side and exchange it for a land plot corresponding in size and importance to Kazakhstan. The delegation of Kazakhstan stated the readiness to consider that proposal in a case of a positive attitude to the counter-proposals determining the state belongs to the disputed land plots as Aiteke bi district of Aktobe region and Yasny district of Orynbor region, adjacent to the Soyuznaya railway station and the village of Ushkatty [5, c.170-172].

- Soyuznaya railway station between Aktobe and Orinbor regions. The central part of the station was in Kazakhstan, and the railway line and platform were in Russia. Citizens of Kazakhstan living near the station had to cross the border to visit the graves of their relatives who remained in Russian territory. As a result of the negotiations, the Russian part of the station and the plot of land where the cemeteries are located was transferred to Kazakhstan, and the same plot of land was given to Russia [9, c.219].

- Arboretum (forest station) between the West Kazakhstan and Volgograd regions. The Academy of Sciences established the Arboretum in 1933. To which state belongs that Arboretum required a long and comprehensive discussion. The station's founders planted many trees from other parts of the world on about 500 hectares of desert lands and fought against desertification trends. Two hundred hectares of this station were under the Aktobe forestry station of the Institute of Forestry and Agrarian Forest Reclamation of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Arboretum in the territory of Kazakhstan was abandoned due to a lack of funds. The residents of Zhanibek village cut down rare trees, used them for firewood, and grazed cattle on that land. The Russian side offered to transfer these 200 hectares to Russia. However, since the Arboretum is located near the village of Zhanibek, if it is transferred to Russia, it will be separated from the territory of Kazakhstan. Because the problem of desertification is essential for our republic, the Kazakh delegation made every effort to take the station [4, c.141].

- Varfolomeyev Reservoir on the Little River between West Kazakhstan and Saratov Regions. Although the dam is located in the territory of Kazakhstan, the reservoir is located in the territory of Russia, and it was an important object that supplied water to the areas near the border. That is, the water supply system of the Saratov region's Algay district depended on the republic's neighboring districts. The Russian side claimed that when the dam was built, it was financed by the RKFSR

and offered to hand it over to them. As a result, the borderline passed through the middle of the Kishi river, and the dam remained in the territory of Western Kazakhstan.

- Troitsk NPP. The two countries shared border was hotly debated because it passed through the ash production site of the Troitsk Nuclear Power Plant. The production was located in the territory of Chelyabinsk, and the site was in the Kostanay region. However, in 1973, by order of the Council of Ministers of the KazKSR, it was transferred to the power plant. The production assets also belonged to NPP. That plot of land remained under the control of Kazakhstan and was leased to Russia.

- Ogneuporny village is located at the intersection of the Karabalik district of the Kostanay region and the Chesmen district of the Chelyabinsk region. One should cross the state border twice to reach that village from Kazakhstan. Ogneuporny was established during the USSR as a village for workers to develop a quarry of refractory clays needed by the Magnitogorsk metallurgical plant. About 700 Russian citizens lived there at that time. The Magnitogorsk metallurgical plant provided all infrastructure of the village.

Delegates from both sides visited the place, met with the village administration and leaders of the Magnitogorsk and Kostanay region, and held discussions. As a result of the negotiations within the Border Commission, the village of Ogneuporny was transferred to Russia in 2002. Instead of this plot of land, 293 arable plots of the Chesmen district of the Chelyabinsk region were given to Kazakhstan. The Buskul quarry remained in Kazakhstan, and the Magnitogorsk combine leased the quarry [8, c.83].

As discussed above, in the course of delimitation, other disputed territories were resolved by exchanging equal territories, considering the interests and needs of the people living near the border. They are Kommunisticheskiy station located north of Zhanibek district of Western Kazakhstan, the border line at the Alimbetov customs post on the Aktobe-Orsk highway, Zatonnoe village located between Ushkatty village of Aktobe region and Soyuznaya railway station of Orynbor region, Kurskoe village between Kostanay and Chelyabinsk regions, Muslim cemeteries in Burkotovo village of East Kazakhstan region, Zharsuat, Ilek, Shokhtibai, Ozerki, Ulguli, Burannoe villages in West Kazakhstan and Orinbor regions. Moreover, the plot of land on the Shybindy River, which separates the Shingyrlau district of Western Kazakhstan and the Sol-Iletsk district of the Orinbor region, was resolved by a compromise [4, c.142].

In international practice, there are many cases where border issues were resolved by exchanging land between neighboring states. For example, India and Bangladesh exchanged territories in 2011 to ensure security between the two countries and to stop migration from Bangladesh [10, c.252-253].

In general, negotiations on delimitation between the two states lasted for five and a half years. During this period, there were 50 meetings, 26 of which were joint meetings, 11 were meetings of delegation leaders, and 13 were meetings of working groups of the parties. The negotiations ended with the Agreement on the state border between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation signed by the two

countries' leaders on January 18, 2005 [11, б.141]. On December 5 of the same year, the two countries ratified the Agreement, which entered into force. The Agreement has a 1:100,000 scale topographic map of 206 pages included in a particular album map of the state border [5, с.221].

Articles 6 and 7 of the Agreement on the State Border indicate that questions related to the development of mineral deposits crossing or located along the state border, the use of engineering structures and other infrastructure facilities, the use of biological resources, and the protection of the natural environment are regulated by separate agreements [5, с.223].

After the delimitation work was completed, the parties formed a joint commission and started negotiations on demarcation in July 2007. During negotiations, shared documents and organizational measures regulating the demarcation of the Kazakh-Russian border were determined [12, p.32].

Today, demarcation works have been completed in the border areas of Atyrau, West Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, Aktobe, Kostanay, North Kazakhstan and Abai regions. Since the East Kazakhstan region is mountainous, demarcation works are carried out only in the summer, and erecting of columns continues [13]. According to the statement of M. Tleuberdy, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, demarcation works with Russia may last 2-3 years [14].

## **Conclusion**

Adequate border, customs, sanitary and other issues will be sufficient only when a specific international legal regime is established at the state border. Types of controls are carried out, which in turn helps to fight problems such as smuggling, illegal weapons and drug trafficking. Today it is known that no state can solve cross-border problems on its own. That is why the Agreement on the state border between the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation will further strengthen bilateral relations and significantly contribute to maintaining stability, friendship, and good neighborliness, security along the border.

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## **ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫ МЕН РЕСЕЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИЯСЫНЫҢ МЕМЛЕКЕТТІК ШЕКАРАСЫНЫҢ ДЕЛИМИТАЦИЯЛАНУЫ: МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ МЕН ШЕШУ ЖОЛДАРЫ**

\*Шұқыжанова А.Н.<sup>1</sup>, Мұқашева А.Д.<sup>2</sup>, Абдрахманов Қ.А.<sup>3</sup>

\*<sup>1</sup>PhD, қауымдастырылған профессор, Абылай хан атындағы Қазақ халықаралық қатынастар және әлем тілдері университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан, e-mail: [aiym.shukizhanova@gmail.com](mailto:aiym.shukizhanova@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> «Астана» халықаралық ғылыми кешенінің қызметкері, Астана, Қазақстан, e-mail: [mukasheva.ad@gmail.com](mailto:mukasheva.ad@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>«Астана» халықаралық ғылыми кешенінің директоры, Астана, Қазақстан, e-mail: [abdrakhmanov@isca.kz](mailto:abdrakhmanov@isca.kz)

**Аңдатпа.** Қазақстан Республикасы мен Ресей Федерациясы арасындағы шекара шамамен 7400 шақырымды құрайтын дүниежүзіндегі ең ұзын құрлықтық шекара болып табылады. Қазақстан мен Ресей дипломатиялық қатынастарын орнатқан кезде КСРО-дан мұраға қалған шекараларын өзгеріссіз қалдырып, бір-біріне территориялық дауларының жоқтығын, территориялық тұтастықтарына қол сұқпайтындықтарын, егемендіктерін мойындайтындықтарын мәлімдеген.

Шекараны делимитациялауға байланысты келіссөздер 1999 жылдың аяғында басталып, бес жарым жылға созылды. Шекара бойындағы территорияларда табиғи ресурстардың болуы, КСРО кезінде темір және автомобиль жолдары, елдімекендер мен өндіріс орындарының әкімшілік шекараны ескерілмей салынуы, ҚазақКСР мен РКФСР арасындағы шекараның КСРО-ның жоғарғы билік органдарымен бекітілмей тек іргелес облыстардың кезекші карталарында ғана көрсетілуі делимитациялау үрдістерін қиындатып, қажырлы еңбекті талап етті. Мемлекеттің территориялық тұтастығына нұқсан келтірмейтіндей осындай күрделі мәселелерді шешу үшін тараптардың үкіметтік делегациясы мен жұмыс тобы 50 келіссөздер жүргізіп, 2005 жылы қаңтарда Қазақстан мен Ресейдің мемлекеттік шекарасы туралы келісімшартқа қол жеткізді.

Мақалада қазақ-орыс мемлекеттік шекарасының халықаралық-құқықтық рәсімделуі қарастырылады. Делимитация барысында туындаған мәселелер мен олардың шешілу жолдары, сол кездегі геосаяси жағдайдың шекараны шегендеуге тигізген әсері, мемлекеттердің территориялық тұтастық саясаты кеңінен талданған.

**Тірек сөздер:** шекара, делимитация, демаркация, Қазақстан Республикасы, Ресей Федерациясы, делимитация бойынша келіссөздер, үкіметтік делегация, даулы жер телімдері, ҚазақКСР-і, РКФСР

# ДЕЛИМИТАЦИЯ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЙ ГРАНИЦЫ РЕСПУБЛИКИ КАЗАХСТАН И РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ: ПРОБЛЕМЫ И ПУТИ РЕШЕНИЯ

\*Шукыжанова А.Н.<sup>1</sup>, Мукашева А.Д.<sup>2</sup>, Абдрахманов К.А.<sup>3</sup>

\*<sup>1</sup> PhD, ассоциированный профессор, Казахский университет международных отношений и мировых языков имени Абылай хана, Алматы, Казахстан, e-mail: [aiym.shukizhanova@gmail.com](mailto:aiym.shukizhanova@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> менеджер-сотрудник Международного научного комплекса «Астана», Астана, Казахстан, e-mail: [mukasheva.ad@gmail.com](mailto:mukasheva.ad@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> директор Международного научного комплекса «Астана», Астана, Казахстан, e-mail: [abdrakhmanov@isca.kz](mailto:abdrakhmanov@isca.kz)

**Аннотация.** Граница между Республикой Казахстан и Российской Федерацией является самой протяженной сухопутной границей в мире и составляет 7400 километров. При установлении дипломатических отношений, Казахстан и Россия оставили границы унаследованные от СССР без изменений и заявили об отсутствии территориальных споров, неприкосновенности территориальной целостности и признании суверенитета друг друга.

Переговоры относительно делимитации границы начались в конце 1999 года и длились пять с половиной лет. Богатые природные ресурсы приграничной территории, а также строительство железных, автомобильных дорог, населенных пунктов и производственных пунктов на приграничных территориях без учета административной границы во времена СССР, отображение границы между КазССР и РСФСР только на дежурных картах сопредельных областей без утверждения верховными властями Советского Союза усложняло процессы разграничения и требовало кропотливой работы. Для решения данных вопросов, не ущемляя территориальную целостность государств, правительственные делегации и рабочие группы сторон провели в общей сложности 50 переговоров и в январе 2005 года подписали договор о государственной границе Казахстана и России.

В статье рассматриваются вопросы международно-правового оформления казахстанско-российской государственной границы. Проанализированы проблемы, возникающие в ходе разграничения, рассмотрены пути их решения, а также влияние геополитической ситуации того времени на процессы разграничения границ.

**Ключевые слова:** граница, делимитация, демаркация, Республика Казахстан, Российская Федерация, переговоры о делимитации, правительственная делегация, спорные участки, Казахская ССР, РСФСР

*Статья поступила 10.11.2023*