

JUHURI

FACT SHEET

Dialects and Multilingualism

Juhuri, also known as Judeo-Tat, is a Persian language spoken in the Jewish community of the Eastern Caucasus, often referred to as Kavkazi or Mountain Jews.

There are four dialects of Juhuri:

1. Qaitoqi dialect, spoken in Northern Daghestan and some regions of the Northern Caucasus.
2. Derbendi dialect, spoken in Derbent and neighboring villages.
3. Qubei dialect, spoken in Quba in Northern Azerbaijan.
4. Shirvoni dialect, spoken in Vartashen, Ganja, and Shamakhy.

Alphabets and Competition

There are four alphabets used in Juhuri:

1. Hebrew, the original alphabet used.
2. Latinized script, adopted in 1929.
3. Cyrillic, adopted in 1938.
4. Azerbaijani Cyrillic, unofficially adopted in Azerbaijan.

As Russian grew in prominence, from the 1920s onwards, Juhuri was unable to compete with the prominence of both Russian and Azerbaijani, especially in areas where Jews were an ethnic minority.

Emigration complicated the situation further, as new languages like Hebrew, English, and German eroded the role of Juhuri.

Names of Language

Juhuri, Judeo-Tat, zuhun ḏzuhur, язык горских евреев, ליידיש קאוקאזיש.

Territories Spoken

Originated: Northern Azerbaijan, Daghestan

Today: Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Stavropol Krai; immigrant communities in Israel, US, Canada, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Australia.

Vitality and Endangerment

Currently, there are an estimated 30,000–40,000 speakers of Juhuri, and the language is classified as endangered. While most descendants of speakers have shifted to other languages, it is still transmitted to children in one location in Azerbaijan: Qırmızı Qəsəbə, an all-Jewish town also known as Red Village.

While the number of speakers is between 30,000–40,000, this should not be confused with the number of those who identify as Mountain Jews, which is between 200,000–250,000 people.

Ways to Learn Juhuri

Given Judeo-Tat's important role in community building, there have been efforts to continue its usage.

- Language lessons, theater performances, and songs, are hosted on platforms like Youtube.
- The Oxford School of Rare Jewish Languages offers [Juhuri classes](#).

To learn more about Juhuri, check out jewishlanguages.org/judeo-tat-juhuri, or head to the Jewish Language Project on YouTube, Instagram, or Facebook.