

# Gushorg Mountain Trek

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A requirement arose to acquire an unused UN repeater and antenna system located at the top of Gushorg Mountain, on the outskirts of Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Ryan and I decided, as the current weather conditions in Dushanbe were good, that a trek up to the mountain was to occur as soon as possible to collect the equipment.

Investigations revealed that a tractor was available to carry most of the necessary equipment to dismantle the repeater and antenna, and also to carry the necessary safety gear (food, water, warm clothing, torches, radio, mobiles etc) to a point approximately half way up the mountain. Naim Jabborov (WFP Technician) and Zarif Rajabov (UNDSS Technician) decided to join us in the adventure and the trek was organized.

At 5:30 am, the four pioneers and one WFP driver headed to the base of the mountain to meet with the tractor driver. Upon arrival we had a surprise: the tractor was not working and had not been working for quite a long time!  
...but FITTEST guys always know how to manage: *Plan B – Donkeys’*.

Quite a local interest had developed around our plight and so it was decided that whoever had two donkeys’ for hire, would be our companions to the top of the mountain. Two boys were identified as drivers, and after discussions about the hire costs, we loaded up the beasts and commenced the 9km journey to the top by foot.

We were told the trek up takes at least four hours for those who work there, longer for those who do not. Most visitors who travel up the mountain stay overnight and do not contemplate undertaking the trek in one day!!

The first hour was quite easy, stopping occasionally for a drink, breather and to take some pictures of the fabulous views available. The second hour became a little more difficult as the track became littered with loose rocks and steeper. Entering into the third hour we reached snow and ice. By this time Ryan and I had opened up quite a bit of distance from Naim, Zarif and the two drivers, mainly due to observing the weather conditions had deteriorated to the east, and possibly a little fitter than they (well, we are known as FITTEST!).

We took some shortcuts in an attempt not to have to trek through a lot of snow and ice too early in the day and have our feet cold and wet later. Unfortunately not all ‘short cuts’ were short, and at times we did get stuck between a rock and a hard

place!!...nevertheless we reached the summit in two hours and 58 minutes and waited for the others to arrive.

Ryan immediately sourced out where the equipment to be removed was and as soon as Zarif and Naim arrived, they began to dismantle the required equipment. On completion of the work, lunch was shared with the mountain incumbents who live there for about a month. This means one team of 3 or 4 electricians are on the mountain for a month and then the second team replaces them for another month. During lunch Mick attempted to 'procure' an instrument which would assist in ferrying the 35kg repeater down to where the donkeys' had been tethered. Unfortunately no sum of money could buy a sheet of old scrap tin, pieces of timber or any form of apparatus which could be used as a sled.

One of the incumbents offered to carry the 35kg repeater down to the donkey's, which suited everyone involved. A fee was agreed upon and he undertook the task in no time. Living conditions on the top of the mountain for these electricians are quite basic; however, they did appear to be warm and comfortable. All left over food, except energy bars for the trip down the mountain, were donated to the electricians remaining.

Ryan and I commenced carrying the antenna across the top of the mountain, at times knee deep in snow. Paybacks for the short cuts which had turned into mountain climbing exercises suddenly appeared with Mick landing flat on his back on more than one occasion, allowing Ryan to gleefully take pictures of these 'mishaps'!

Zarif and Naim took over the carrying of the antenna approximately half way down the mountain until the base was reached at approximately 1600.

The 18km trek took approximately 6 hours, and the whole experience was enjoyed by all, thanks also to the breathtaking view of Dushanbe! Highly recommended activity for all visitors to Dushanbe!!!

**PS:** to see what I am talking about, look at the photo gallery 'Gushorg Mountain Trek' under the Image Gallery.

*Cheers*

*Mick*