



Tirich Mir, West Face, Significant New Variation

Pakistan, Hindu Kush

The upper west face of Tirich Mir (7,708m). (1) The normal route (1967); several different lines have been followed above the 7,200-meter col. (2) The approximate line climbed in 2025.

The year 2025 marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the first ascent of Tirich Mir (7,708m), and the local government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, in which Tirich Mir lies, announced they would waive the permit fee for 2025 and 2026. However, the only two teams that were allowed into the area were comprised solely of Pakistan climbers. A Slovenian expedition with a permit for Tirich Mir was partway through the approach trek when the climbers were turned back by police citing "safety concerns."

The first team to climb was from Shimshal village and comprised Nisar Ahmed, Abdul Joshi, Faryad Karim, Mansoor Karim, and Hameed Ullah, who initially followed the normal route from the north (Czechoslovakian, 1967). They established base camp higher than usual, around the site generally used for Camp 1, and then, using a temporary intermediate camp, established Camp 3 on the Upper Tirich Glacier at 6,530 meters.

At around 6,700 meters, the normal route enters a steep couloir that rises to the 7,200-meter col on the northwest ridge between the main summit and Tirich West I. A little way up this couloir, another couloir branches to the right and climbs the left side of the west face. This was the route chosen by the Pakistani climbers.

The team found a taxing 150 meters of ice in this couloir, but the crux came where it terminates in a rocky area at around 7,450 meters. Difficult rock and mixed had to be overcome before the summit slopes at 7,600 meters. The team fixed 1,200 meters of rope.

They left their Camp 3 (6,530m) for a summit push at 3 a.m. on August 1 and claim to have reached the top at 6:30 p.m. in windy conditions. Camp was regained at 11 p.m., and all rope was left in place. Following the expedition, considerable controversy arose over whether these climbers reached the top, as one anonymous team member later said they turned back at approximately 7,600 meters.

A little later in the month, the new variation was repeated by an expedition led by Sirbaz Khan, the only Pakistani climber to have summited all the 8,000-meter peaks without supplemental oxygen. He and Abid Baig (who has summited 8,000ers) used the earlier team's fixed rope to approximately 7,550 meters. From there, they climbed mostly unroped to the summit. These two have video footage proving they reached the top.

—Lindsay Griffin, AAJ

Images



The west face of Tirich Mir above the head of the Upper Tirich Glacier. The left dashed line is the couloir followed on the normal route (1967), entirely hidden in this photo. The right-hand line is the approximate route followed in 2025.



The upper west face of Tirich Mir (7,708m). (1) The normal route (1967); several different lines have been followed above the 7,200-meter col. (2) The approximate line climbed in 2025.

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