

EP6RRC Shif island, AS-189

Written by Vasily V. Pinchuk R7AL

We landed in Tehran International airport at around 05-00 local time and after passing the visa formalities were meet by Mohammad EP2LMA and Ali EP2AK. Actually, there are very strict custom rules in Iran, but Mohammad made a really good and outstanding job before our arrival and we passed the custom without any troubles.



Warm meeting in Tehran airport

The distance from Tehran to Shif island more than one thousand km. We rented a big van with the driver and a second car to use it on the island to go for a food to Buhehr and any other emergency reasons. The road trip across the country from the north to the Persian Gulf lasted for more than 15 hours and was really interesting and exotic.



Tasting national dishes in restaurant

It was already a midnight when we arrived to our QTH on Shif island. It's the traditional Persian fisherman's settlement, consisting of a few hundred of houses with the flat roofs, staying close to each other. Off course, it's absolutely no any accommodation for rent, so we settled in the house of local fisherman, where he lives with his wife and three children.

It was four rooms and the kitchen in our house, we occupied three of them. The whole team was very tired but, nevertheless, immediately set up the first station and began to install the quarter-wave vertical for 40 meters band. It was very dark and no any external lighting in the garden and we were using just a flashlight of our mobile phones.

Our first QSO from AS-189NEW was made 16-th of November at 22-57 UTC with the Belgian station ON4AMC. Well done!! We were keeping this station running all the night, making the first few hundred stations happy with their new IOTA!

Early in the morning, with the first rays of the sun, we started to build the antennas. Sadly, our house was located inside the village, surrounded by other buildings, very far from the beach and it's not enough space to set up all our antennas. It took some time to find a best solution and place all the antennas for 160 to 15 meter bands.



Antennas set up

First ones became the 2 element VDAs, so we have soon started to QRV with two high-power stations on 15 and 17 meter bands respectively. The most difficult was is to set up the LF vertical antenna and put the long radials. Also we removed the 40 meter vertical and put it into a salt water.



EP6RRC antenna field

Since the propagation on HF bands to Europe and Asia was good all the day long, we were experiencing some difficulties to work stateside stations. Most common bands to NA was 20 and 40 meters, with some good openings on 17 meters also. We were calling "NA only" every time according the best predictions for stateside!

Shortly we discovered a very unpleasant surprise – every few hours a terrible S-9 QRN covered all the bands and it's lasts from half an hour to 2-3 hours.

Looking ahead to say that this problem haunted us until the end of activity. We tried to find the QRN-source, but our Iranian friends told us that it is some military activity on the Persian Gulf.

First night shows that the noise level on 80 and 160 meter bands is very high, because of the proximity of the power line, LED lamps and other devices in the village. We were trying the EWE-antenna in different configuration and spent a lot time, but did not achieve the desired result with that. Also it was an idea to hang a short Beverage antenna but the hosts of the neighboring houses were not thrilled with this. So the LF-bands were a big challenge, but we did our best for NA and JA stations!



Terrible 9+ QRN on S-meter

The pile-ups were really huge and almost does not decreased until the very last day of our stay on Shif island. We perfectly understand that we needed not only for IOTA-hunters, but also for those, who are looking for the new DXCC band-slots. All EP6RRC operators do their best to keep up the good work and to archive the maximum result!



Shif island, AS-189 on the air!

Seven days passed very quickly and it's time to tear down the antennas and pack up all the equipment. Last EP6RRC QSO was made on November, 23 at 22-33 UTC, just a half an hour before we take our seats in the van.

Ahead was a long way back home, to our families and friends...

This expedition took place on 16-th till 24-th of November 2018 and was dedicated to 25-th Anniversary of "Russian Robinson Club".

We were lucky to made 26K QSOs worldwide despite all the difficulties, enjoyed the endless pile-ups, met new peoples, got new and unforgettable emotions...

It was a really great radio adventure!!!

Team would like to thank our sponsors as well as all individual donors for their trust, encouragement and support of this project!



EP6RRC team (L-R: Mohsen EP3SMH, Vasily RA1ZZ, Sergey RW5D, Al RZ3K, Mohammad EP2LMA, Avinir UA1ZZ, Igor UA3EDQ, Ali EP2AK, Vasily R7AL, Mohammad EP3MIR, Vlad RK8A)

THE END...