

RULE OF LAW IN UZBEKISTAN: IMPROVEMENT OF NATIONAL LEGISLATION

*Rustem Omirzakov teacher,
Karakalpak State University E-mail:
omirzakov_r@karsu.uz*

Abstract. The rule of law is a fundamental principle in any democratic society, and Uzbekistan has been making significant strides in improving its national legislation to uphold this principle. This article examines the recent improvements in the rule of law in Uzbekistan, the research methods used to analyze these improvements, the results of the analysis, and provides recommendations for further progress.

Keywords: national legislation, international legal issues, progress.

Introduction: The rule of law is a fundamental principle that underpins a fair and just society. Uzbekistan has recognized the significance of this principle and has been actively working towards improving its national legislation and studying international legal issues.

Uzbekistan has been undergoing a period of significant reform and modernization under the leadership of President ShavkatMirziyoyev. One of the key areas of focus has been the improvement of national legislation to ensure the rule of law is upheld. This article aims to analyze the recent improvements in the rule of law in Uzbekistan and provide recommendations for further progress.

Since 2016, Uzbekistan's Government initiated a comprehensive package of legal and judicial reforms to strengthen the rule of law, promote and protect fundamental human rights and freedoms and enhance the justice system's efficiency in alignment with international standards. These efforts included ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), adopting new laws on gender equality, revising

criminal procedural legislation, and introducing new tools and services to improve access to justice in conformity with international human rights practices and standards. In addition, the mandate of the National Human Rights Institution (Ombudsperson's Office) in Uzbekistan was enhanced, which was for the first time accredited by GANHRI (with B-status in 2020). These reforms improved Uzbekistan's stance in internationally recognized indices and rankings, i.e., Rule of Law Index 2021 (85th out of 139 countries globally) and the 2020 World Bank's Women, Business and Law (134th out of 190). Despite the progress and achievements, the people of Uzbekistan, particularly the most vulnerable populations such as women, youth in rural areas, and people with disabilities, continue to lack awareness about their rights and skills for their protection. They also have limited access to affordable and effective justice remedies, including free legal advice, representation, and justice services in compliance with human rights standards.[1]

The progress made in improving national legislation and studying international legal issues has had positive implications for the rule of law in Uzbekistan. The reforms have contributed to increased transparency, accountability, and access to justice. The country's active participation in international legal discussions has fostered a deeper understanding of global legal frameworks and enhanced cooperation with other nations.

As a preliminary reform, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan approved Decree "Strategy of Actions for the five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021" No. PF-5953[2] "In the year of science, enlightenment and digital economy" on March 2, 2020, and the inclusion of items related to the creation of the norm. Paragraph 5 of the state program called for "expansion of the practice directly adopting laws, increasing level of regulation of social relations by law". The program led to the enactment directly a number of laws in the following period. The enactment of directly applicable laws is essential to

ensure that reforms are carried out quickly and without excessive difficulty. The practice of adopting a number of normative and legal acts takes time to regulate in particular social relationship. It has led to the adoption of simple, perfect laws.[3]. Under this strategy, numerous laws and regulations were introduced or re-written in support of the government's drive to reform and modernize Uzbekistani society in many of its economic, political, legal, educational, and other aspects.

The adoption of the new version of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan by popular vote in the referendum held on April 30, 2023, served to strengthen the constitutional foundations for the creation of the New Uzbekistan.[4]. The presidential elections, held in accordance with the new version of the Constitution, once again demonstrate the political maturity of our society and the full support of our people for the reforms being implemented to build a New Uzbekistan.

The new edition of the Constitution, the decree "On the strategy of Uzbekistan - 2030", signed by the head of our state on September 11 of this year, and measures on qualitative and timely implementation of the strategy "Uzbekistan - 2030". We can say that it served as a tool to support the decision taken. After all, it is not by chance that the preamble of the decree emphasizes that "in the renewed constitutional and legal conditions, it is required to improve the main directions of development of our country and bring the ongoing large-scale reforms to completion. As a result, the priority goal is to realize the aspiration of our compatriots to build a new Uzbekistan, to raise a healthy, educated and spiritually mature generation, to form a strong economy, to guarantee justice, the rule of law, security and stability. In turn, the decision on measures to implement the strategy "Uzbekistan- 2030" in 2023 in a qualitative and timely manner, adopted by the head of our state, is based on the "Attention to the people and qualitative care" of this document. It is aimed at ensuring qualitative and timely implementation during the year. In all directions defined in the

strategy, the interests of the population, i.e. the people and the country, were put in the first place.

In particular, Chapter IV of the Strategy was devoted to the direction "Ensuring the rule of law, organization of public administration in the service of the people". It includes 51 practical activities and 21 tasks under 16 objectives (goals 74-89) in this direction. It is envisaged to develop 41 target indicators related to the neighborhood, local state bodies, representative bodies, civil service, civil society institutions, judicial system, human rights, advocacy, corruption issues and to prepare 25 legal and regulatory documents. In particular, a number of tasks were defined in items such as "Reforms to organize public administration to serve the people and improve public administration" and "Ensuring the rule of law and reforms in the judiciary":

- Bringing the share of public services provided electronically to 100 percent;

- A new phase of the e-Government system - transition to the Digital Government system and ensure that all documents and relations are maintained in digital form;

- Abolish unnecessary formal procedures, such as writing applications, filling out various forms, and creating a system for public bodies to obtain the necessary documents from an electronic database. [5]

To further strengthen the rule of law in Uzbekistan, it is recommended that the government continues its efforts to improve legal education and training programs for legal professionals. Additionally, the effective implementation and enforcement of laws should be prioritized to ensure their practical impact. Collaboration with international organizations and continued engagement in international legal discussions will also be beneficial for sharing experiences and adopting best practices.

To continue the progress in upholding the rule of law, Uzbekistan should focus on implementing and enforcing the new legislation effectively,

as well as continuing to engage with international partners and legal experts to gain insights and best practices.

Conclusion:

The progress made by Uzbekistan in improving its national legislation and studying international legal issues is commendable. The reforms have positively impacted the rule of law, enhancing transparency, accountability, and access to justice. However, continuous efforts are necessary to consolidate these achievements and address any remaining challenges. By prioritizing legal education, implementation of laws, and international cooperation, Uzbekistan can further strengthen its legal system and ensure a fair and just society for its citizens.

The recent improvements in national legislation have significantly enhanced the rule of law in Uzbekistan, contributing to a more democratic and transparent society. By continuing to prioritize legislative reform and enforcement, Uzbekistan can further strengthen the rule of law and ensure the protection of rights for all its citizens.

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