

Uzbekistan's Policy Of Interethnic Harmony And Its Role In Ensuring Regional Stability In Central Asia

Xamrayeva Muslima Odilovna

Assistant at the Department of National Idea and Philosophy at Samarkand State Pedagogical Institute, Uzbekistan

Received: 15 March 2026; **Accepted:** 19 April 2026; **Published:** 20 May 2026

Abstract: This article analyzes Uzbekistan's policy of interethnic harmony and its role in ensuring regional stability in Central Asia. In multiethnic societies, interethnic harmony is not only a social and cultural value but also a strategic condition for political stability, ideological security, and sustainable development. Uzbekistan's experience is especially important because the country is located at the center of Central Asia and has historically been a space of interaction among different peoples, languages, cultures, and religious traditions. The purpose of the article is to examine the legal, institutional, ideological, and regional dimensions of Uzbekistan's interethnic harmony policy. The study is based on descriptive, analytical, comparative, and institutional methods. The results show that Uzbekistan's policy is grounded in constitutional equality, respect for cultural diversity, support for national-cultural centers, religious tolerance, civic unity, and good-neighborly foreign policy. The article argues that interethnic harmony strengthens social trust, prevents the politicization of ethnic differences, protects society from destructive ideological influences, and creates a favorable environment for regional cooperation. In Central Asia, where peace, transport connectivity, border cooperation, water-energy issues, trade, and humanitarian relations are closely interconnected, Uzbekistan's model of interethnic harmony contributes to the formation of a stable regional environment. The article concludes that interethnic harmony should be regarded as a key factor of national consolidation and regional security.

Keywords: Uzbekistan, interethnic harmony, Central Asia, regional stability, tolerance, civic unity, national-cultural centers, social cohesion, good-neighborliness, ideological security.

Introduction: In the modern world, interethnic harmony has become one of the most important indicators of social stability and political maturity. Multiethnic states face the task of creating a common civic space while preserving the cultural, linguistic, and spiritual identity of different ethnic groups. This issue is particularly important for Central Asia, where different peoples have lived side by side for centuries, sharing historical experience, trade routes, religious traditions, cultural values, and social practices. At the same time, the region has also faced challenges connected with borders, migration, economic inequality, external ideological influence, and competition over resources. Therefore, interethnic harmony is not only a humanitarian principle but also a practical condition for regional peace.

Uzbekistan occupies a central place in Central Asia both

geographically and historically. The country borders all other Central Asian states and has deep cultural, economic, and human ties with the peoples of the region. Its territory has long been a meeting point of civilizations, ethnic communities, languages, and religious traditions. In this context, Uzbekistan's domestic policy of interethnic harmony has direct regional significance. Internal stability in Uzbekistan positively affects the wider Central Asian environment, while regional cooperation also strengthens social and political stability inside the country.

The legal basis of Uzbekistan's interethnic harmony policy is connected with the principle of equality of citizens. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan states that all citizens have equal rights and freedoms and are equal before the law, without discrimination by sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, convictions,

social origin, or social status. This constitutional norm is important because it establishes civic equality as the foundation of social relations and prevents the legal privileging or marginalization of any ethnic group.

The state policy of Uzbekistan in the field of interethnic relations is aimed at strengthening unity among the multiethnic people of the country, preserving an atmosphere of interethnic harmony, expanding friendly relations with foreign countries, and creating conditions for the preservation and development of native languages, customs, and traditions of different nationalities and ethnic groups. This shows that interethnic harmony in Uzbekistan is not understood as passive coexistence. It is treated as an active policy direction connected with citizenship, culture, education, diplomacy, and social development.

The relevance of this topic is also determined by the changing geopolitical situation in Central Asia. Regional stability today depends not only on military or economic factors, but also on social trust, ideological resilience, cultural dialogue, and good-neighborly relations. Uzbekistan's foreign policy in recent years has emphasized regional rapprochement, constructive cooperation, and predictable good-neighborly relations; analytical materials note that many vital issues of Uzbekistan's development, including water, transport corridors, regional security, and trade, depend on good-neighborly relations in Central Asia. Therefore, the study of Uzbekistan's interethnic harmony policy allows us to better understand how domestic cohesion can become a factor of regional stability.

This article is based on a qualitative research approach. The methodological framework includes descriptive analysis, institutional analysis, comparative analysis, and theoretical generalization. Descriptive analysis was used to explain the concepts of interethnic harmony, civic unity, tolerance, social cohesion, and regional stability. Institutional analysis made it possible to examine the legal and organizational foundations of Uzbekistan's interethnic harmony policy. Comparative analysis was used to distinguish between interethnic harmony as an internal social value and interethnic harmony as a regional stability factor. Theoretical generalization helped identify the main mechanisms through which Uzbekistan's policy contributes to peace and cooperation in Central Asia.

The study relies on official legal documents, analytical materials, and academic literature related to interethnic relations, Central Asian regionalism, social cohesion, and political stability. Particular attention is paid to Uzbekistan's constitutional principles, the state policy concept in the sphere of interethnic relations,

the role of national-cultural centers, and the country's regional foreign policy. The article does not present statistical field research, because its main aim is theoretical and analytical. However, the discussion is based on observable institutional and policy trends in Uzbekistan and Central Asia.

The analysis shows that Uzbekistan's policy of interethnic harmony has several interconnected dimensions. The first dimension is legal. Constitutional equality creates the normative basis for relations between citizens of different nationalities, languages, and religious backgrounds. Legal equality is important because it prevents ethnic hierarchy and strengthens confidence in state institutions. In a multiethnic society, the perception of justice is one of the main conditions of stability. If citizens believe that their rights are protected regardless of ethnic origin, they are more likely to identify themselves with the state and participate in public life.

The second dimension is institutional. Uzbekistan has developed mechanisms aimed at supporting interethnic relations, cultural dialogue, and friendship with foreign countries. In 2019, the Concept of State Policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the Field of Interethnic Relations was approved, and it provides for the implementation of a unified state policy in this sphere and the formation of mutually respectful relations among representatives of different nationalities and peoples. This institutional approach demonstrates that interethnic harmony is considered a systematic and long-term policy priority rather than a temporary campaign.

The third dimension is cultural. Uzbekistan's approach recognizes that the preservation of language, customs, traditions, and cultural identity of different ethnic communities is compatible with civic unity. This is a significant principle because forced assimilation or cultural neglect can produce alienation, while respectful cultural policy strengthens loyalty and social trust. National-cultural centers, cultural associations, educational events, and friendship societies contribute to the preservation of ethnic identity and the development of intercultural communication.

The fourth dimension is ideological. Interethnic harmony protects society from destructive narratives that attempt to divide citizens by ethnic, linguistic, religious, or regional identity. In the contemporary information environment, ethnic issues can be manipulated by extremist groups, foreign propaganda, or radical political forces. A society with a strong culture of mutual respect and civic solidarity is less vulnerable to such manipulation. In this sense, Uzbekistan's policy of interethnic harmony is closely

connected with ideological security.

The fifth dimension is regional. Uzbekistan's domestic policy has a direct impact on Central Asian stability because many ethnic communities in the region are historically connected across borders. Family ties, language similarities, cultural traditions, migration flows, and economic cooperation link the peoples of Central Asia. When Uzbekistan strengthens interethnic harmony inside the country, it also supports a peaceful regional atmosphere. The policy of friendship and cooperation with neighboring countries transforms interethnic harmony from a domestic value into a regional resource.

The sixth dimension is diplomatic. Uzbekistan's emphasis on good-neighborliness and regional cooperation creates a broader political environment in which interethnic harmony can develop. Regional cooperation in Central Asia is becoming more important in trade, transport, ecology, energy, education, security, and cultural exchange. Recent developments also show that Uzbekistan has promoted deeper regional cooperation, including the idea of transforming regular meetings of Central Asian leaders into a more formal regional cooperation format. Although such initiatives are primarily political and economic, they also have humanitarian and ideological significance because they strengthen the idea of Central Asia as a shared space of peace and cooperation.

Uzbekistan's policy of interethnic harmony can be understood as a model of balancing unity and diversity. Unity is expressed through citizenship, constitutional equality, statehood, common development goals, and respect for the laws of the country. Diversity is expressed through the recognition of different ethnic cultures, languages, customs, and traditions. The success of interethnic policy depends on maintaining a balance between these two principles. If unity is emphasized without respect for diversity, society may experience cultural pressure. If diversity is emphasized without civic unity, society may become fragmented. Uzbekistan's approach seeks to combine these two dimensions.

The regional importance of this policy is connected with the specific nature of Central Asia. The region cannot be understood only as a group of separate states. It is also a historical-cultural space where peoples have interacted for centuries. Many ethnic communities are present in more than one Central Asian country. Therefore, interethnic relations inside one state may influence attitudes and perceptions in neighboring states. This makes interethnic harmony an important factor of regional confidence.

One of the most important contributions of Uzbekistan's policy is the prevention of ethnic politicization. Ethnic identity itself is not a threat. It becomes dangerous when it is used as an instrument of political mobilization, separatism, discrimination, or conflict. By supporting cultural expression within a common civic framework, Uzbekistan reduces the risk that ethnic identity will be transformed into a source of confrontation. This is especially important in a region where external actors may attempt to use ethnic or linguistic differences for geopolitical influence.

Interethnic harmony also contributes to social cohesion. Social cohesion means that citizens feel connected to one another and to the future of their country. It includes trust, solidarity, shared responsibility, and participation in common public life. In Uzbekistan, interethnic harmony strengthens the idea that representatives of different nationalities are part of one society and one state. This idea is important not only for domestic peace but also for regional stability, because a cohesive society is more capable of participating constructively in international cooperation.

Another important aspect is the connection between interethnic harmony and religious tolerance. In Central Asia, ethnic and religious identities are often closely connected with historical and cultural traditions. Uzbekistan's policy of tolerance helps prevent the radicalization of identity and supports peaceful coexistence. Interethnic harmony and interfaith respect together create a stable moral and social environment. This is particularly important in the context of global ideological conflicts, religious extremism, and online radicalization.

Education plays a central role in strengthening interethnic harmony. Schools, universities, and cultural institutions should form respect for different peoples, teach the history of cultural interaction in Central Asia, and develop critical thinking against stereotypes. Young people should understand that national development is not achieved through ethnic isolation but through cooperation, mutual respect, and civic responsibility. In this regard, the educational system becomes one of the main instruments of long-term stability.

The media also has a significant role. Modern media can either strengthen interethnic trust or spread stereotypes, hate speech, and provocative narratives. In the digital age, misinformation can quickly damage relations between communities. Therefore, Uzbekistan's policy of interethnic harmony should be supported by media literacy, ethical journalism, and responsible online communication. Preventing ethnic

hostility in the information space is now as important as preventing it in everyday social relations.

The foreign policy dimension of Uzbekistan's interethnic harmony policy is especially significant. Since 2016, Uzbekistan has increasingly prioritized cooperation with neighboring states, border dialogue, trade development, cultural exchange, and regional connectivity. This policy has helped change the political atmosphere in Central Asia from cautious distance toward more active cooperation. A stable domestic interethnic environment strengthens Uzbekistan's credibility as a regional partner and allows the country to promote peace-oriented initiatives.

At the same time, interethnic harmony should not be viewed as a completed achievement. It is a continuous process that requires constant institutional attention. Social inequality, migration problems, employment challenges, language issues, regional disparities, and external propaganda can create risks. Therefore, the policy must be regularly renewed through practical programs, public dialogue, legal protection, cultural support, and youth education.

The concept of regional stability should also be understood broadly. Stability does not mean only the absence of war or conflict. It includes predictable relations between states, trust between peoples, sustainable economic ties, cultural cooperation, security coordination, and the ability to resolve disputes peacefully. Uzbekistan's interethnic harmony policy contributes to all these dimensions indirectly. A state that successfully manages internal diversity can better support regional dialogue and cooperation.

The Central Asian region needs such approaches because many regional challenges are transboundary. Water resources, environmental risks, labor migration, transport corridors, border trade, and security threats cannot be solved by one country alone. Cooperation requires trust, and trust requires positive images of neighboring peoples. Interethnic harmony helps create these positive images by promoting the idea that cultural diversity is not a threat but a shared historical advantage.

Uzbekistan's policy of interethnic harmony plays an important role in ensuring both national stability and regional security in Central Asia. Its foundation is constitutional equality, respect for cultural diversity, institutional support for interethnic relations, civic unity, religious tolerance, and good-neighborly cooperation. The experience of Uzbekistan shows that interethnic harmony is not only a moral or cultural value but also a strategic factor of political stability and ideological resilience.

The analysis demonstrates that Uzbekistan's policy

strengthens social cohesion, prevents ethnic politicization, supports cultural dialogue, reduces vulnerability to destructive ideological influence, and creates favorable conditions for regional cooperation. In Central Asia, where historical ties and contemporary challenges connect the peoples of the region, interethnic harmony becomes an important resource for sustainable peace.

The article concludes that Uzbekistan's interethnic harmony policy should be studied as a comprehensive model combining legal guarantees, institutional mechanisms, cultural support, education, media responsibility, and regional diplomacy. Its significance goes beyond domestic policy because it contributes to the formation of a stable, cooperative, and peaceful Central Asian environment.

References

1. Конституция Республики Узбекистан. — Ташкент, 2023. — Национальная база данных законодательства Республики Узбекистан. — URL: <https://lex.uz/docs/6451070>
2. Указ Президента Республики Узбекистан «Об утверждении Концепции государственной политики Республики Узбекистан в сфере межнациональных отношений». — Ташкент, 2019.
3. The Priority of the State Policy of New Uzbekistan is to Unite Representatives of All Nations and Nationalities of the Country into a Single and Friendly Family. — Embassy of Uzbekistan, 2024. — URL: <https://uzbekistan.org/the-priority-of-the-state-policy-of-new-uzbekistan-is-to-unite-representatives-of-all-nations-and-nationalities-of-the-country-into-a-single-and-friendly-family/4566/>
4. In Uzbekistan, Strengthening Interethnic and Interfaith Solidarity is Always a Priority of State Policy. — Embassy of Uzbekistan in Ukraine. — URL: <https://www.uzbekistan.org.ua/en/news/7426-in-uzbekistan%2C-strengthening-interethnic-and-interfaith-solidarity-is-always-a-priority-of-state-policy.html>
5. New Central Asia in the Foreign Policy of Uzbekistan. — International Institute for Central Asia. — URL: <https://www.iica.uz/en/page/novaya-tsentralnaya-aziya-vo-vneshney-politike-uzbekistana>
6. Reuters. Uzbek President Proposes Setting up Bloc of Central Asian States. — 2025. — URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia->

pacific/uzbek-president-proposes-setting-up-bloc-central-asian-states-2025-11-16/

7. Каримов И.А. Узбекистан на пороге XXI века: угрозы безопасности, условия и гарантии прогресса. — Ташкент: Узбекистан, 1997. — 326 с.
8. Мирзиёев Ш.М. Новый Узбекистан: стратегия развития. — Ташкент: Узбекистан, 2021. — 464 с.
9. Кастельс М. Информационная эпоха: экономика, общество и культура. — М.: ГУ ВШЭ, 2000. — 608 с.
10. Хабермас Ю. Структурное изменение публичной сферы: исследования относительно категории буржуазного общества. — М.: Весь Мир, 2016. — 344 с.
11. Anderson B. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. — London: Verso, 2006. — 240 p.
12. Smith A.D. National Identity. — Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991. — 226 p.