

Judicial and Legal Reforms as A Guarantee of The Supremacy of Human Rights in The New Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article analyzes the constitutional and legal foundations of the judicial and legal reforms being implemented in the new Uzbekistan, as well as their role in ensuring human rights and freedoms. The author examines the institutional changes carried out in the judicial and legal sphere over the last decade, including the establishment of the Supreme Judicial Council and the processes of digitalizing the justice system, based on scholarly sources and normative-legal acts.

The article also analyzes issues such as the creation of a digital ecosystem for internal affairs bodies and the introduction of artificial intelligence technologies into court activities. Furthermore, special attention is paid to the integration of international legal standards into national legislation and judicial practice, the increase in the number of acquittals, and the establishment of the presumption of innocence. At the conclusion of the study, findings are presented that are aimed at further enhancing the independence of the judiciary and public trust in the justice system.

Keywords: Human rights, judicial and legal reforms, judicial independence, "habeas corpus," justice, digitalization, presumption of innocence.

Introduction: At the center of the fundamental reforms carried out in Uzbekistan over the past decade is the individual, their life, freedom, honor, and dignity. This principle is not merely a declared political slogan, but the constitutional and legislative foundation that defines the essence of practical policy.

In particular, a number of important reforms have been implemented to democratize and liberalize the judicial and legal sphere, and to enhance the role and significance of the judiciary in protecting the rights and legitimate interests of citizens.

Through the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan of October 21, 2016, "On measures for further reforming the judicial and legal system and

strengthening guarantees for the reliable protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens," significant amendments aimed at increasing the efficiency of justice were introduced into criminal, criminal procedure, civil procedure, and other legislative acts, effective from April 1, 2017 [1].

Furthermore, in order to ensure uniform judicial practice, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures for the fundamental improvement of the structure and enhancement of the efficiency of the judicial system of the Republic of Uzbekistan," dated February 21, 2017, merged the Supreme Court and the Higher Economic Court into a single supreme body of judicial power in the fields of

civil, criminal, administrative, and economic court proceedings – the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan [2].

In order to ensure unified judicial practice, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to radically improve the structure and increase the efficiency of the judicial system of the Republic of Uzbekistan" dated February 21, 2022, merged the Supreme Court and the Higher Economic Court into a single supreme body of judicial power in the field of civil, criminal, administrative, and economic proceedings - the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan [2].

An administrative court has also been established, guaranteeing the right of citizens and entrepreneurs to judicial protection against illegal decisions, actions, or omissions of state bodies and officials. The activities of economic courts have been established at the inter-district and district (city) levels, aimed at the guaranteed protection of the legal interests of business entities.

In order to prevent illegal interference in the selection and appointment of judges, to create an open, transparent and alternative selection system, a new constitutional body, the Supreme Judicial Council, has been established.

We can see the gradual reforms in the judicial and legal system in the introduction of digital technologies in the field of internal affairs bodies. In particular, in order to bring the digital ecosystem of internal affairs bodies to a new level based on targeted digital solutions in accordance with modern requirements, widely implement artificial intelligence technologies in the field of ensuring public safety and combating crime, implement a unified technological approach "center - region - mahalla," and further increase the effectiveness of digitalization processes in the information space, Presidential Decree No. PP-155 "On Comprehensive Measures for the Digital Transformation of the Internal Affairs Bodies System" was adopted.

In accordance with the resolution, the following were identified as priority areas for the digital transformation of the internal affairs system in 2025–2027[3].

Including:

- increasing the effectiveness of internal affairs bodies' activities in combating crime by integrating all information infrastructure into a unified system based on artificial intelligence technologies;
- coordinating the activities of units responsible for implementing digital technologies in the internal affairs

sector based on a unified management system and operational mechanisms, and forming a "digital team" within them;

- maintaining statistics on crimes and administrative offenses without human intervention;
- Establishment of the Department of Digital Technologies and Legal Statistics and its regional divisions.

In this regard, it should be noted that in order to increase the efficiency of court activities, ensure the principle of equality and adversarial proceedings of the parties in pre-trial proceedings, and achieve effective protection of individual rights and freedoms in operational-search and investigative activities, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted Decree No. UP-140 dated August 21, 2025, "On additional measures to increase the level of access to justice by introducing artificial intelligence technologies into court activities and improving the material and technical support of the judicial system" [4].

According to the decree, an artificial intelligence system will now perform preliminary calculations on the relevance, legal grounds, and legal costs of the application after it is submitted to the court. This, on the one hand, eases the excessive bureaucratic burden on judges, and on the other hand, provides citizens with the opportunity to receive preliminary information about the outcome of their appeal.

As a logical continuation of the implemented reforms, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "Justice - 2030: Strategy for Establishing a People-Friendly and Fair Judicial System for the Reliable Protection of Human Rights in New Uzbekistan," adopted on August 14, 2026,[5] states that this document was prepared under the ideological motto "Courts - the Fortress of People-Friendly and Fair Justice and the Pillar of Truth of New Uzbekistan," based on the principles of six priority areas: "people-friendly court," "fortress of justice," "guaranteed justice," "guardians of justice," "digital justice," and "international recognition."

It is well known that demanding an independent and impartial court is the right of every person. This right is enshrined in Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[6] and other international legal acts to which the Republic of Uzbekistan is a party. Only an independent court can inspire confidence that every citizen can protect their violated rights through an impartial and transparent trial. In this regard, the reforms carried out on the basis of the Action Strategy laid the foundation for the democratization and liberalization of the judicial sphere, ensuring the true

independence of the judiciary, and protecting the rights and legitimate interests of citizens.

In the words of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan: "We all understand well that the adoption of laws is only part of the work. The main issue is the timely conveyance of the essence and content of laws to our people and responsible executors, the proper organization of their execution, and ensuring strict compliance with the requirements of the law," which is also a clear proof of our opinion [7].

The true development of any state is measured by how fairly it treats its citizens and to what extent it can protect their rights and freedoms. Therefore, the Decree No. UP-160, signed by the President, includes not only institutional changes but also a set of comprehensive measures aimed at strengthening public trust in the judicial system. The "Action Program" presented in the appendix to the Decree defines 57 specific tasks, the deadlines for each of them, and the responsible executors, which will ensure the practical, systematic, and controlled implementation of these reforms.

In the updated Constitution, the Republic of Uzbekistan is defined as a sovereign, democratic, legal, social, and secular state, in which the person, their life, freedom, honor, dignity, and other inalienable rights are recognized as the highest value. State power assumes the obligation to ensure, implement, and protect human and civil rights and freedoms in the interests of the people. As a practical expression of these constitutional principles, the second priority of the "Justice 2030" Strategy is the "fortress of justice" principle, which provides for the strengthening of an independent justice system that ensures the unconditional priority of human rights and is free from any influence or interference.

As President Sh. Mirziyoyev rightly noted, "Justice is the solid foundation of statehood" [8]. After all, democratic transformations are becoming irreversible at the heart of reforms in all spheres carried out in the country today. This, in turn, is recognized by the international community.

Specifically, according to the Rule of Law Index, Uzbekistan ranked 84th out of 143 countries in 2024 and 81st in 2025. In the "Order and Security" indicator, it recorded the best result, ranking 9th alongside Canada, the UAE, and Hungary.

It can be seen that in New Uzbekistan, strategic steps are being taken to ensure the rule of law, reform the judicial system, and protect the rights and interests of citizens, which are an urgent link in the reforms. Undoubtedly, these fundamental changes are a reflection of the practical work being carried out in the

interests of the people.

In the 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index published by the international non-governmental organization Transparency International in 2025, Uzbekistan ranked 153rd out of 180 countries with 25 points, and in 2025, this indicator was 124th with 31 points[10].

In addition, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan On August 14, 2026, the fourth section of the Decree "Justice - 2030: Strategy for Building a People-Friendly and Fair Judicial System that Reliably Protects Human Rights in New Uzbekistan" was dedicated to strengthening judicial oversight at the pre-trial stage of criminal proceedings, and reforms in this area cover the most sensitive aspects of human rights protection. In particular, the proposal of the Supreme Court and the Prosecutor General's Office to grant the investigating judge, in accordance with the international standard of "well-founded suspicion" (Prima Facie), the authority to verify the legality and validity of a person's detention, the sufficiency of grounds for making a suspicion or indictment, and, in case of suspicion, to request additional documents while ensuring the secrecy of the investigation when considering a petition for the application of appropriate procedural coercive measures, such as detention or house arrest, has been established. This is an important mechanism widely used in world practice that allows for increasing the role of the court in restricting individual rights.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, judicial and legal reforms are not merely institutional restructuring or technical changes in the management system, but a long-term strategic direction aimed at ensuring that every citizen can protect their rights in relations with the state and can look to justice with confidence. These reforms are the final and most important expression of the struggle for human dignity in the judicial system and are important reforms that will determine the future of New Uzbekistan as a state governed by the rule of law.

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