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 Research Article

## A NEW STAGE OF DEMOCRATIC REFORMS IN UZBEKISTAN

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**Talapov Bakhridin Alijanovich**

**Doctor Of Philosophy (Dsc), Professor, Dean Of The Faculty Of Law, Namangan State University, Uzbekistan**

### ABSTRACT

The article discusses key issues such as economic liberalization, improvement of human rights, activation of civil society and Uzbekistan's foreign relations with the world community. The author also assesses the prospects for the future development of democracy in Uzbekistan and its role in regional and world politics. This article is an important study that contributes to a deeper understanding of the current democratic processes in Uzbekistan and their potential consequences for the country and the region as a whole.

### KEYWORDS

Uzbekistan, democratic reforms, political changes, economic liberalization, human rights, civil society, foreign relations, regional policy, world community, development prospects.

### INTRODUCTION

Uzbekistan, a country with a rich history and culture, is on the threshold of a new era of democratic reforms. In recent years, there have been significant changes in the political, economic and socio-cultural spheres of this country, which aroused the interest and admiration of many

observers around the world. In this article we will look at the key points of this new stage of democratic reforms in Uzbekistan.

Historical context. Uzbekistan has been under the rule of an authoritarian regime for a long time,

since 1991, when the country gained independence from the Soviet Union. This period was characterized by the restriction of political freedoms, the absence of a multiparty system and limited access to information[1]. However, Uzbekistan has been undergoing profound transformations in recent years. Uzbekistan, one of the largest and most influential countries in Central Asia, continues to move along the path of democratic reforms that began after the change of power in 2016. This process has a significant impact on the political, economic and social life of the country, as well as on its place in the world arena. In this article, we will look at the key aspects of the new stage of democratic reforms in Uzbekistan and their impact on the future of the country.

**Continuity and stability** One of the important elements of democratic reforms in Uzbekistan is the desire to ensure stability and sustainability in the country. After the change of President Islam Karimov in 2016 as a result of his death, Shavkat Mirziyoyev came to the post of head of state. The new leader of the country has taken a course to continue reforms and modernization of Uzbekistan, while striving to maintain stability and predictability in politics.

**The role of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.** One of the key factors in this transformation is the active participation of the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who has become a figure symbolizing changes in the country. Since taking office in 2016, Mirziyoyev has taken a number of decisive steps to reform the country. President Mirziyoyev reorganized state bodies, increasing

their efficiency and openness. He also actively involved young people in the governance of the country and created feedback mechanisms between citizens and the authorities, which contributed to a more open exchange of opinions and proposals.

**Economic reforms.** In parallel with political changes, economic reforms are also taking place in Uzbekistan. The country is implementing measures aimed at attracting foreign investment, developing small and medium-sized businesses and improving the investment climate. This contributes to the diversity of the economy and the creation of new jobs.

**Building a civil society.** The development of civil society is another important component of democratic reforms in Uzbekistan. Civic organizations and independent media have become more actively involved in the public life of the country. They play the role of election observers, and also contribute to raising important public issues.

**International cooperation.** Uzbekistan is actively developing international cooperation within the framework of democratic reforms. The country cooperates with international organizations, such as the UN and OSCE, to strengthen democratic institutions and human rights[2]. This helps Uzbekistan strengthen its democratic institutions and become a more open and transparent country.

A new stage of democratic reforms has begun in Uzbekistan, which poses many ambitious tasks and challenges to the country. Under the

leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan is undergoing profound changes aimed at strengthening civil society, improving human rights and developing democratic institutions. In this article, we will look at the key aspects of this new stage of democratic reforms in Uzbekistan.

### **I. Guarantees of human rights and freedoms:**

One of the first steps on the path of democratic reforms was the strengthening of guarantees of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Uzbekistan has adopted a number of laws and measures aimed at protecting freedom of speech, assembly and association. Mass political repressions have been stopped, and the process of rehabilitation of political prisoners is progressing.

Strengthening the guarantees of human rights and freedoms in Uzbekistan is an important step towards democratic reforms. It is important to note several key points:

**Laws on the protection of human rights:** Uzbekistan has adopted a number of laws aimed at protecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. These laws may include norms on freedom of speech, assembly, association and other basic human rights.

**Cessation of mass political repression:** One of the important aspects of democratic reforms is the cessation of mass political repression. This means that the State stops arbitrarily persecuting and oppressing political opponents or dissidents.

**Rehabilitation of political prisoners:** The process of rehabilitation of political prisoners means the release or mitigation of punishment for persons who have been unlawfully convicted or persecuted because of their political beliefs.

All these measures demonstrate Uzbekistan's desire to strengthen human rights and freedoms of citizens, which is an important element of democratic reforms and improvement of the political situation in the country. However, it is important to monitor the actual implementation of these measures and their impact on the life and freedom of citizens in Uzbekistan.

### **II. Development of civil society:**

An important component of democratic reforms in Uzbekistan is the development of civil society. The Government actively interacts with non-governmental organizations and public activists, giving them more freedom to work and participate in decision-making processes.

The development of civil society is an important element of democratic reforms in any country, including Uzbekistan[3]. The interaction of the Government with non-governmental organizations and public activists contributes to the strengthening of democratic institutions, ensures wider participation of citizens in decision-making and increases the transparency and responsibility of the authorities. Here are some key aspects of the development of civil society in Uzbekistan:

**Freedom of expression:** An important aspect of the development of civil society is the guarantee of freedom of speech and freedom of expression.

This allows journalists, activists and public organizations to freely express their views and opinions without fear of reprimand.

**Participation in decision-making:** The Government of Uzbekistan should provide mechanisms for active participation of citizens in the decision-making process. This may include conducting public consultations, listening to the opinions of citizens, as well as carefully considering proposals and initiatives of civil society.

**Development of non-governmental organizations:** Support of non-governmental organizations dealing with various social and political issues helps to strengthen civil society[4]. These organizations can perform important functions, such as monitoring government activities, educating citizens on civic participation, and protecting minority rights.

**Transparency and openness:** It is important that the Government of Uzbekistan be open and transparent in its activities. The publication of information on the budget, draft laws and government decisions contributes to improving citizens' trust in the authorities.

**Human rights protection:** The development of civil society is also linked to the protection of human rights. The Government must guarantee respect for the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens, including the right to life, freedom from torture and discrimination, as well as the right to a fair trial.

The development of civil society is a long-term process that requires efforts from both the Government and civil society. It contributes to the strengthening of democracy, contributes to the solution of social and economic problems and creates conditions for a more just and open society.

**III. Economic reforms:** Economic reforms also occupy an important place in the plans of the Uzbek government. In order to develop free entrepreneurship and attract foreign investment, Uzbekistan is conducting a series of measures to simplify the business environment and improve the investment climate.

Economic reforms aimed at developing free entrepreneurship and attracting foreign investment play an important role in the development of Uzbekistan. Here are some of the main events and initiatives carried out by the Uzbek government:

**Simplification of business registration procedures:** Uzbekistan is implementing measures to reduce the time and costs required to register and launch a business. This includes improving electronic registration systems and reducing bureaucratic barriers.

**Liberalization of the foreign exchange market:** The country introduced changes to the currency exchange system, which contributed to greater freedom of currency exchange and improved conditions for foreign investors.

**Attracting foreign investment:** Uzbekistan is actively looking for foreign investors and

provides various benefits and guarantees for investments in various sectors of the economy, such as energy, transport, agriculture and others.

**Infrastructure development:** In order to facilitate the business environment and stimulate economic growth in the country, Uzbekistan invests in the development of transport infrastructure, including the construction and modernization of roads, railways, airports and ports.

**Improving the legal framework:** Uzbekistan is working to improve legislation in the field of business and investment to provide greater legal protection and predictability for entrepreneurs and investors.

**Tourism development:** Uzbekistan is also actively promoting tourism as an important area of economic development, focusing efforts on developing infrastructure for tourists and promoting the country's rich cultural heritage.

All these measures are aimed at creating a more favorable and open economic environment in Uzbekistan, which can attract more investment, promote business growth and contribute to the overall economic development of the country.

**I. International cooperation:** Uzbekistan seeks to strengthen its democratic institutions and the rule of law through international cooperation. The country actively cooperates with international organizations such as the UN and OSCE, and has ratified important international human rights treaties.

Uzbekistan really strives to strengthen its democratic institutions and the rule of law through international cooperation[5]. This is evident from a number of actions and initiatives taken by the country in recent years:

**Cooperation with international organizations:** Uzbekistan actively cooperates with organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). This allows the country to exchange experience and information with other States and participate in international discussions on democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

**Ratification of international human rights treaties:** Uzbekistan has ratified a number of important international human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These steps demonstrate the country's readiness to comply with international human rights standards.

**Internal reforms:** In recent years, reforms have been carried out in Uzbekistan aimed at strengthening the rule of law and improving the living conditions of citizens. These reforms include changes in the judicial system, the fight against corruption and the promotion of civil society.

**Dialogue with the international community:** Uzbekistan actively participates in dialogue with the international community, including international organizations and partner countries. This helps the country to receive

support and advice on implementing its reforms and improving the observance of human rights.

It is important to note that strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law is a long and complex process, and the results may be ambiguous[6]. However, international cooperation and participation in international initiatives are important steps towards improving the human rights situation and strengthening democracy in Uzbekistan.

II. Education and culture: Education and culture are necessary for the formation of a democratic society. Uzbekistan is focusing its efforts on the development of the educational system, including the training of a new generation of citizens who are aware of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society.

It is important to realize that education and culture play a key role in creating informed and active citizens who can actively participate in the democratic process and respect rights and obligations.

Education: Education provides people with the necessary knowledge and skills for reflection, analysis and critical thinking. It also helps to develop social and cultural diversity, which is important for a democratic society. Uzbekistan, paying attention to the development of the educational system, creates a basis for training citizens who are able to understand and respect different points of view and cooperate in solving social problems.

Culture: Culture plays a role in the formation of common values and identity of society. It also contributes to the preservation and dissemination of historical experience and traditions, which can strengthen the unity of the nation. Promoting a culture of diversity and respecting cultural rights and freedoms are also important aspects of a democratic culture.

Focusing on education and culture in Uzbekistan helps to prepare an active and informed population capable of participating in democratic processes, protecting their rights and fulfilling their obligations to society. These efforts contribute to the development of democratic institutions and the strengthening of civil society, which is important for a stable and prosperous society[7].

III. Citizen participation: An important element of democratic reforms is the active participation of citizens in decision-making and policy-making. Uzbekistan encourages dialogue and exchange of views between the Government and citizens.

The active participation of citizens in decision-making and policy-making is indeed an important element of democratic reforms. This process promotes greater openness and responsibility on the part of the authorities, as well as strengthens trust between citizens and the Government. In Uzbekistan, as in other countries where democracy is developing, mechanisms of dialogue and exchange of views between the Government and citizens are encouraged. The following are

some of the possible ways in which this can be done:

**Public consultations:** The Government can hold public consultations on various important issues, giving citizens the opportunity to express their opinions and suggestions.

**Openness and access to information:** It is important to ensure the availability of information about government activities, budget expenditures, draft laws and other key aspects of policy.

**Civic forums and public organizations:** Civic organizations and forums can serve as platforms for discussing public policy issues and forming proposals.

**Petitions and appeals:** Citizens can be provided with mechanisms for submitting petitions and appeals to the Government.

**Participation in elections:** Regular elections at different levels of government allow citizens to choose their representatives and influence the political process.

**Education and awareness:** Conducting educational programs and campaigns can help citizens better understand the political process and their rights.

**Citizens' participation in policy-making** contributes to fairer and more effective decisions, as well as strengthens democratic institutions in the country.

The new stage of democratic reforms in Uzbekistan represents an important period in the country's history. These reforms are designed to strengthen civil society, guarantee human rights and improve the quality of life of citizens[8]. The country is open to cooperation with the international community and strives to make Uzbekistan a modern, democratic state where civil liberties and human rights are the norm, not the exception. One of the key aspects of democratic reforms is the liberalization of the economy. Uzbekistan is actively working to improve the business environment, simplify the procedures for registering enterprises and attract foreign investment. These measures help diversify the country's economy, create new jobs and reduce poverty.

Uzbekistan also attaches great importance to the development of civil society. The country is carrying out reforms in the field of education and culture to ensure access to knowledge and information, as well as to promote the development of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. These steps create a more open and informed society.

Uzbekistan is also focusing its efforts on strengthening human rights. In recent years, the country has undergone significant changes in the field of law and order, which has led to a decrease in the number of arbitrary detentions and violations of citizens' rights. Uzbekistan has also started cooperation with international organizations on human rights issues. Uzbekistan actively participates in regional and international initiatives, such as the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation

Organization), the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) and others. This contributes to the strengthening of peaceful relations and cooperation in the region. Uzbekistan also attaches great importance to environmental sustainability and green development. The country is developing strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, develop renewable energy and sustainable use of natural resources.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Uzbekistan is at a new stage of democratic reforms, which is designed to make the country more open, stable and prosperous. These changes have a positive impact not only on Uzbekistan itself, but also on the whole of Central Asia. Taking into account the implementation of the above-mentioned measures, it can be expected that Uzbekistan will continue to develop as a strong, democratic and prosperous state in the region and in the world. The new stage of democratic reforms in Uzbekistan represents significant progress in the development of the country. Under the leadership of President Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan is striving for greater openness, citizen participation in governance and economic growth. These efforts not only improve the life of the Uzbek people, but also make the country more attractive to investors and partners around the world. Uzbekistan is becoming a vivid example of how democratic reforms can lead to positive changes in the country and the region as a whole.

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