

THE CONSTITUTION – THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PROGRESS

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This article is dedicated to highlighting the adoption of the Constitution of Independent Uzbekistan, our national values, the establishment of a just civil society and a democratic rule-of-law state, the pathways to transitioning to market relations, and the core principle of our Constitution—the reverence for human beings and their lives. It emphasizes that a person's life, freedom, honor, dignity, and other inalienable rights are the highest values.

The glorious historical events of the last decade of the 20th century remain forever etched in the memory of the Uzbek people. It was during this decade that the first steps toward independence were taken. The eternal dream of our ancestors—independence, the right to determine one's own destiny—was realized. These years laid the necessary foundation for building a humane, democratic state and civil society. The dawn of the new millennium, the 21st century, will be an era for the Uzbek people in which Uzbekistan transforms into a great nation and builds a prosperous life where human rights are prioritized.

In this regard, large-scale and consistent reforms and constructive efforts are being implemented across all spheres of societal life. The descendants of this land bear a tremendous responsibility to contribute to the creation of a great Uzbekistan. Recognizing this profound responsibility and living in compliance with the established order and discipline are characteristics of a rule-of-law state.

It must be noted that a rule-of-law state does not emerge on its own. For this, the supremacy of the Constitution and laws must be ensured in practice. Based on the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, it is essential to cultivate a high legal awareness and legal culture, as well as a way of life that acknowledges responsibility and duty.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan is a legal document of supreme juridical power. Its adoption marked a step toward legal restoration and progress.

In the legal system of the Republic of Uzbekistan, constitutional law serves as the primary foundation of the legal framework. It ensures the unity and coherence of legal branches and the uniformity of their guiding principles. In our developing state, which is advancing toward the establishment of a rule-of-law system, ensuring the primacy of law is among the most crucial tasks. The supremacy of our Constitution demands from each of us a profound sense of legal

responsibility. This responsibility entails knowing and adhering to the Constitution and laws, which in turn underscores the necessity of studying the Constitution.

Understanding laws plays a crucial role in deepening our awareness of rights, freedoms, and responsibilities. The Constitution not only safeguards rights and freedoms but also imposes duties and obligations on citizens. Duty begins, first and foremost, with studying the Constitution. A person who knows the Constitution acts within the legal framework, respects the rights and freedoms of others, and upholds the interests of society and the state.

Legal awareness, formed through knowledge of the Constitution, becomes a powerful force driving societal progress. Recognizing the importance of knowing the law serves this very purpose. Our ancestors valued respect for and obedience to the law, as reflected in wise sayings such as:

"To the one who knows the law, the world is wide; to the one who does not, it is narrow."

"The key to law is justice, and the key to justice is generosity."

"A lawbreaker is a people's enemy, and the law will hold them accountable."

These proverbs embody an enlightened attitude toward the law.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan is a living, functioning mechanism that regulates the life of the state and society, influencing every family and every individual!

Article 19 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan states:

"In the Republic of Uzbekistan, human rights and freedoms are recognized and guaranteed in accordance with universally accepted norms of international law and this Constitution. Human rights and freedoms belong to everyone from birth."

All citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have equal rights and freedoms and shall be equal before the law without any discrimination based on sex, race, nationality, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, or social status. Privileges may be granted only by law and must conform to the principles of social justice."

"The newly revised Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan has laid a solid foundation for the stable development of statehood, socio-political, socio-economic, and judicial-legal spheres in the future." This rightful acknowledgment was particularly emphasized in the decree signed by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, on November 16, 2023, *"On Preparations for and Celebration of the Constitution Day of the Republic of Uzbekistan."*



Indeed, during the referendum held on April 30, 2023, 90.21% of participating citizens voted in favor of the revised Constitution. This clearly demonstrates that the aspirations and ambitions of our people in building a New Uzbekistan are reflected in our supreme law.

We know that the previous version of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan was adopted on December 8, 1992, by the people of Uzbekistan through their "authorized representatives"—the members of parliament, the deputies of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In contrast, the new version of our country's Basic Law was adopted directly by "the united people of Uzbekistan" through a nationwide referendum—by direct vote.

In this sense, the true author of the new Constitution is the people themselves. The will of the citizens is the source and driving force behind reforms.

Article 7, Part 1 of the revised Constitution establishes the principle: *"The people are the sole source of state power."* This norm embodies the globally recognized principle of popular sovereignty, affirming that the people are the bearers of sovereignty and the only source of state power in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Systemic Reforms in Recent Years: A New Era for Uzbekistan

In recent years, our country has been implementing systematic measures aimed at realizing the following key principles and ideas:

- New Uzbekistan is a state where human dignity, rights, freedoms, and lawful interests are recognized as supreme values.
- The people do not exist to serve state institutions—rather, state institutions must serve the people.
- Citizens want to see positive changes in their lives not tomorrow or in the distant future, but today. Therefore, *"living with the people's concerns"* and fulfilling their legitimate demands must become the most important criterion for evaluating the work of government bodies.
- "The people must be the sole source and author of the law." All major decisions should be made with public participation and in consultation with civil society institutions.

The Direct Application of Constitutional Norms: A New Chapter in Human Rights

The strict and consistent implementation of the new, modern, and highly significant norms introduced into the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan—particularly their direct application by courts—marks the beginning of a new era in our nation's history. This era prioritizes the protection of human rights, freedoms, lawful interests, and dignity.

As the President of Uzbekistan has emphasized:
"Human dignity is not some abstract, lofty concept for us. When we speak of human dignity, we mean, first and foremost, ensuring every citizen's peaceful and secure life, along with their fundamental rights and freedoms."

Conclusion:

A Constitution for Sustainable Development

In conclusion, we can confidently state that the new provisions of our Constitution focus primarily on ensuring the sustainable development of individuals, society, and the state. The adoption of the revised Basic Law has strengthened the constitutional and legal foundation in this regard. By doing so, New Uzbekistan has once again demonstrated its firm commitment to its international obligations in these areas.

Our Constitution reflects the positive constitutional experiences of countries across Europe, Asia, the East, and the Americas. It has been thoroughly studied by legal scholars, political scientists, and numerous international experts, with additional harmonization of international human rights standards.

As rightly noted by representatives and experts of international organizations, the adoption of the revised Constitution of Uzbekistan has laid a solid foundation for further enhancing the people's well-being and accelerating the development of individuals, civil society, and the state—all based on the principle of *"For Human Dignity and Honor."*

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