

Civic Freedom Monitor: Uzbekistan

Last updated: **October 4, 2025**

Recent Developments

While we aim to maintain information that is as current as possible, we realize that situations can rapidly change. If you are aware of any additional information or inaccuracies on this page, please keep us informed; write to ICNL at ngomonitor@icnl.org.

Introduction

Civil society in Uzbekistan began to develop after the country gained independence in 1991, but has since operated under close state oversight. Independent organizations face significant barriers to registration, funding, and advocacy, limiting their role in shaping public policy. Nonetheless, the sector has contributed to service delivery, support for vulnerable groups, and awareness-raising on issues such as gender equality, disability rights, and community development.

The legal framework, rooted in civil law traditions, formally recognizes and protects non-profit non-governmental organizations (NNOs). In practice, however, civic freedoms remain constrained. Although presidential decrees issued since 2016 have slightly eased restrictions on NNOs, registration is still mandatory, and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) may deny or delay applications. NNOs must also notify the authorities of planned events and coordinate the receipt of foreign funding with the state. Peaceful assembly is subject to advance authorization and heavy administrative penalties, with decrees issued in 2024 further tightening rules on public gatherings. Government-organized NNOs (GONNOs) dominate the sector, while independent human rights and politically-oriented groups face the greatest barriers to operation.

Civic Freedoms at a Glance

Organizational Forms	Non-Governmental Non-commercial Organizations (NNOs), which include public associations, public funds, institutions, and associations of NGOs
Registration Body	Ministry of Justice (MoJ)
Approximate Number	According to the online register of NNOs and their branches on the MoJ's website "Portal of NNOs" (e-ngo.uz) there are 11,981 registered NNOs, including 5,238 branches and representative offices. 431 NNOs have been registered since the beginning of 2024.

Barriers to Formation	(1) Mandatory registration; unregistered group activities prohibited; (2) detailed documentation requirements, and potentially burdensome registration fee; (3) vague grounds for denial of registration; (4) the registration application, at the discretion of registration bodies, can be sent for “expertise” to other government bodies, which prolongs the registration process beyond the one month allowed for by law for consideration of the registration application (there is no clear statement in the regulations that the term for consideration of the application should be not more than one month); and (5) excessive time delays in government review of registration applications.
Barriers to Operations	(1) Burdensome and vague reporting requirements (2) NGO obligation to ensure governmental access to all activities; (3) Advance governmental approval required for particular NNO activities; (4) Harsh sanctions for violation of law. Despite some improvements in the NNO legislation, some requirements restricting the activities of NNOs remain unchanged, including: (1) notification to the justice authorities about NNOs’ planned events; (2) submission to the justice authorities of an annual report on activities; (3) requirement for NNOs to obtain a confirmation of concurrence to receive foreign aid if the value of the foreign aid exceeds 100 basic calculated values (BCVs) (or the equivalent of \$2,934) from the MoJ; and (4) requirement for accreditation of NNO employees who are foreign citizens, as well as their dependent family members.
Barriers to Resources	Limits on foreign funding
Barriers to Expression	According to Uzbek law, there are no barriers restricting speech or advocacy activity in Uzbekistan. However, the legislation is vague enough to all restrictions on freedom of expression/speech in implementation.
Barriers to Assembly	Regulations vague or nonexistent; severe punishments and the threat of use of force deter protests.

Legal Overview

This section provides a brief overview of Uzbekistan’s legal framework for the promotion and protection of civic freedoms. Click a subheading for more, or [click here to expand all subheadings](#).

RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Key International Agreements	Ratification*
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	1995
Optional Protocol to ICCPR (ICCPR-OP1)	1995
International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	1995
Optional Protocol to ICESCR (Op-ICESCR)	No
Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize Convention (ILO No. 87)	2016

Key International Agreements	Ratification*
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)	1995
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	1995
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women	No
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1994
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW)	No
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	2021

Key Regional Agreements	Ratification
CIS Agreement on joint activity in relation to foreign humanitarian aid	1993

* Category includes ratification, accession, or succession to the treaty

CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Uzbekistan adopted a new version of its constitution by nationwide referendum on April 30, 2023. It came into force on May 1, 2023.

Relevant constitutional provisions include:

- Article 15. The Constitution and laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have absolute supremacy in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have the supreme legal force and direct effect, and constitute the basis of the single legal space on the entire territory of the country. International treaties of the Republic of Uzbekistan, along with the generally recognized principles and norms of international law, shall be an integral part of the legal system of the Republic of Uzbekistan. If an international treaty of the Republic of Uzbekistan establishes other rules than those stipulated by the law of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the rules of the international treaty of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall apply.
- Article 16. None of the provisions of the present Constitution may be interpreted in a way detrimental to the rights and interests of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the basic principles and norms stipulated in section one of this Constitution. Laws and other normative legal acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall be adopted on the basis of and in fulfillment of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. None of the laws or other normative legal acts may run counter to the norms and principles of the Constitution
- Article 20. A citizen of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the state shall be bound by mutual rights and duties. The human rights and freedoms, established by the Constitution and the laws, shall be inalienable, and no one shall have the right to deprive or limit them without a court decision. The human rights and freedoms shall be directly applicable. The human rights and freedoms shall determine the essence and content of laws, the activities of state and self-government bodies and

their officials. The measures of legal influence on the individual applied by state bodies must be based on the principle of proportionality and be sufficient to achieve the goals provided by laws. All contradictions and ambiguities in the legislation, which arise in the relationship between a person and state bodies, shall be interpreted in favor of the person.

- Article 21. Every person has the right to the free development of his or her personality. No one shall be subjected to an obligation not established by law without his or her consent. The exercise of rights and freedoms by a person must not encroach on the lawful interests, rights and freedoms of other persons, the state or society. The human rights and freedoms may be limited only in accordance with the law, and only to the extent necessary to protect the constitutional order, public health, public morality, the rights and freedoms of other persons, to ensure public safety and public order.
- Article 33. Everyone shall be guaranteed freedom of thought, speech and convictions. Everyone shall have the right to seek, obtain and disseminate any information. The State shall create conditions for providing access to the worldwide information network Internet. Restrictions of the right to seek, obtain and disseminate information shall be allowed only in accordance with the law and only to the extent necessary to protect the constitutional order, public health, public morality, the rights and freedoms of others, to ensure public safety and public order, as well as preventing the disclosure of state secrets or other legally protected secrets.
- Article 34. The State bodies, organizations, citizens' self-governing bodies and their officials shall allow everyone access to documents, resolutions and other materials, relating to their rights and legitimate interests.
- Article 36. All citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have the right to participate in the management and administration of public and state affairs, both directly and through representation. They may exercise this right by way of self-government, referendums and democratic formation of state bodies, as well as public control over activities of state bodies. The procedure of public control over activities of state bodies shall be defined by law.
- Article 38. Citizens have the right to carry out their public activity in the form of rallies, meetings and demonstrations in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The authorities have the right to suspend or prohibit these events only for justified security reasons.
- Article 39. Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have the right to form trade unions, political parties and any other public associations, and to participate in mass movements. No one may infringe on the rights, freedoms and dignity of the individuals, constituting the minority opposition in political parties, public associations and mass movements, as well as in representative bodies of authority.
- Article 69. Institutions of civil society including public associations and other non-governmental nonprofit organizations, bodies of self-government of citizens, and the mass media shall form the basis of civil society. The activity of civil society institutions shall be conducted in accordance with the law.
- Article 70. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, public associations are recognized as trade unions, political parties, scientific societies, women's, veterans' and youth leagues and persons with disabilities, professional associations, mass movements and other organizations of citizens. Dissolution, prohibition or restriction of the activity of public associations may take place only on the basis of a court decision.
- Article 71. The formation and functioning of political parties and other non-profit non-governmental organizations, aiming to do the following, shall be prohibited: changing the existing constitutional

system by force, coming out against state sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of Uzbekistan, advocating war and social, national, racial and religious hostility, or encroaching on the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens, encroaching on the health and morality of the people, as well as armed associations and political parties based on the national and religious principles. Secret societies and associations shall be banned.

- Article 72. The state shall safeguard the rights and lawful interests of non-governmental non-profit organizations, and provide them with equal legal possibilities for participating in public life. Interference by state bodies and officials in the activity of non-governmental non-profit organizations, as well as interference by non-governmental non-profit organizations in the activities of state bodies and officials, shall be impermissible.
- Article 73. Trade unions express and protect the social and economic rights and interests of workers. Membership in trade unions is voluntary.
- Article 74. Political parties shall express the political will of various sections and groups of the population, and through their democratically elected representatives shall participate in the formation of state authority. Political parties, in accordance with the established procedure, shall submit to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan or to the body authorized by it, public reports on the sources of financing their activity.
- Article 75. Religious organizations and associations shall be separated from the state and equal before law. The state shall not interfere in the activity of religious organizations. The State shall guarantee the freedom of activities of religious organizations functioning by the procedure prescribed by the law.

NATIONAL LAWS, POLICIES, AND REGULATIONS

Relevant national-level laws and regulations affecting civil society include:

- Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan 02.05.2007 No. ZRU-96 "On charity";
- Law "On guarantees of activity of nongovernmental nonprofit organizations" of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. ZRU-76 03.01.2007;
- Law of the RUz No. 763-I 14.04.1999 "On nongovernmental nonprofit organizations";
- Law of the RUz N 223-XII "On public associations in the Republic of Uzbekistan" 15.02.1991; [1]
- Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On social funds" No. 527-II 29.08.2003;
- Law of the RUz № 3PY-96 On Charity dated May 2, 2007;
- "On measures aimed at enhancing support for non-government non-commercial organizations and other civil society institutions", Joint Decree of the Kengash of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Kengash of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan. 03.07.2008 г. N 842-I/513-I;
- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan 19.01.1998 N 31 "On government support to the development of international scientific technical connections, scientific programs and projects based on the grants from international organizations and funds". (ICNL online library);

- Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to increase reporting effectiveness of financial resources of technical assistance, grants and humanitarian aid received from international, foreign governmental and nongovernmental organizations". 04.02.2004 N. 56;
- The Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan 12.03.1993 No.132 "On regulation of registration of charters of public associations in Republic of Uzbekistan". (English text unavailable);
- Application 1 to the Decree mentioned above the "Rules of processing the applications for charter registration of public associations acting on territory of Republic of Uzbekistan". (English text unavailable);
- The Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan 22.03.1994 No.153 "On regulation of registration of legal entities associations in Republic of Uzbekistan". (English text unavailable);
- The Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan 12.03.1993 No.133 "On regulation of registration of public associations' symbols in Republic of Uzbekistan". (English text unavailable);
- The Civil Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Articles 73-78), dated 29.08.1996 N 257-I;
- The Tax Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 25.12.2007 N ZRU-136;
- The Code on administrative responsibility of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 01.04.1995;
- Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 08.12.1992;
- Resolution by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Measures to Support the Independent Institute for Monitoring the Formation of Civil Society N ПП-1576, 12.07.2011;
- Decree #PP-2085 of December 12, 2013 on Additional Measures to Promote the Development of Civil Society Institutions;
- Decree #205 of July 24, 2014 on Measures of Further Improvement of the Procedures for Organizing and Holding Public Events;
- [The Regulation on Procedure on State Registration of Non-Governmental and Non-Commercial Organizations](#) (March 10, 2014);
- [The Law on Introduction of Amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan](#) (April 16, 2014);
- [The Law on Openness of Activities of Governmental Bodies](#) (May 5, 2014);
- [The Law on Social Partnership](#) (September 25, 2014); and
- [The Law on Appeals of Individuals and Legal Entities](#) (December 3, 2014).
- Regulation on Procedure for Termination of Activities of Non-commercial Organizations (January 15, 2015)
- Regulation on the procedure of Work with Appeals of Physical and Legal Persons to State Bodies

and to State Institutions (by Order of the MoJ # 2679 dd. March 31, 2015)

- New forms of reports for NCOs (by Order of the MoJ # 2680 dd. June 4, 2015)
- Amendments to the Accreditation Procedure for Foreign Employees of NCOs (by the Order of the MoJ , # 2681 dd. June 4, 2015)
- [Regulation on Procedure of Coordination of NNOs' Activities](#) (adopted on June 4, 2015)
- [Amendments to the Law on on NNOs, the Law on Public Foundations, the Law on Bank Secrecy, the Law on Charity, and the Code of Administrative Liability](#) (April 25, 2016)
- [Law on Parliamentary Control](#) (adopted on April 11, 2016)
- [The Law on State Youth Policy](#) (September 14, 2016)
- [The Presidential Decree "On additional measures to ensure rapid development of entrepreneurial activity, protection of a private property and high-quality improvement of a business climate"](#) (October 5, 2016)
- [The Presidential Decree "On measures to further reform judicial and legal system, and enhance guarantees for sound protection of rights and freedoms of citizens"](#) (October 21, 2016)
- [The Law on Social Services for the Elderly, Disabled and Other Socially Vulnerable Categories of the Population](#) (December 26, 2016)
- The Law on Introduction of Amendments to Some Legislative Acts of Uzbekistan in Connection with the Adoption of Main Directions of Tax and Budget Policy for 2017 (December 27, 2016)
- Decree on Approval of the Concept of Administrative Reform in the Republic of Uzbekistan" (the Concept) (September 8, 2017)
- Law on Distribution and Ensuring Access to Legal Information (September 8, 2017)
- Law on the Introduction of Amendments to the Law on Citizens' Appeals (September 11, 2017)
- Amendments to the Law on Guarantees of the Activities of NNOs and the Law on Social Partnerships (September 14, 2017)
- [Law on Public Control](#) (April 12, 2018)
- [Regulation on the Procedure for Informing about Planned Activities of Non-governmental Non-commercial Organizations](#) (by Order of the MoJ #3020 dd. June 1, 2018)
- [New form of reporting on NNO activities](#) (by Order of the MoJ # 3027 dd. June 27, 2018)
- [Regulations on the Procedure for the Interaction of Justice Bodies with Other Government Bodies, Local Governmental Bodies, and Law Enforcement Agencies to Identify Non-Governmental Non-Commercial Organizations that Violate the Law](#) (by the Government resolution #854 dd. October 23, 2018)
- [Resolution on Measures of Organization of Activity of the Non-Governmental Non-Commercial Organization – Nationwide Movement 'Yuksalish' and its Territorial Subdivisions](#) (by Government Resolution #124 dd. February 13, 2019)

- [Presidential Decree on Establishment of a Public Chamber under the President of Uzbekistan](#) (April 16, 2020)
- The Law “On amendments and additions to some legislative acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan” dated on March 30, 2021
- The Law “On Normative Legal Acts” dated on April 20, 2021
- The Resolution of the President of the RUz “On additional measures for state support of NNOs, ensuring the freedom of their activities, protection of rights and legitimate interests” dated on March 3, 2021
- The Resolution of the President of the RUz No. PP-5072 “On additional measures to ensure the participation of citizens in the budget process” dated on April 13, 2021
- The Concept on Development of Civil Society in 2021-2025, approved by Decree of the President of the RUz, dated on March 4, 2021 together with the Road Map on Implementation of the Concept.
- Presidential Decree on additional measures to ensure the openness of activity of state bodies and organizations, as well as effective implementation of public control dated on June 16, 2021 № УП-6247
- The Resolution of the President of the RUz dated on August 11, 2021 № ПП-5220 ‘On the establishment of public foundation ‘Vatandoshlar’
- The Resolution of the President of the RUz on measures to organize the activities of the public foundation to support children, dated on October 4, 2021 № ПП-5255
- Presidential Decree on measures to improve the activities of the Authorized Person of the Oliy Majlis of the RUz for Human Rights (Ombudsman) dated on September 10, 2021 № УП-6312
- Regulation #527”, which establishes a procedure for the registration of foreign grants received by Uzbek non-governmental non-commercial organizations (NNOs) and on the implementation of activities funded under these foreign grants

PENDING REGULATORY INITIATIVES

Amendments to Law on Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons

The President of the RUz has yet to sign the amendments to the Law “On the legal status of foreign citizens and stateless persons in the Republic of Uzbekistan,” approved by the Senate on September 20, 2024; see “Introduction” for more details on this initiative.

Amendments to Law on “Enlightening/Educational Activities”

The President of the RUz has yet to sign the amendments to the Law “on making additions and amendments to some legislative acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan aiming to establish the procedure for carrying out enlightening/educational activities,” approved by the Senate on September 20, 2024; see “Introduction” for more details on this initiative.

Draft Law on Rallies and Mass Demonstrations

The presidential administration announced in March 2023 that it is considering a draft law on rallies and mass demonstrations. The text of the draft is not publicly available. The Ministry of Internal Affairs published similar drafts in June 2019, and again in August 2020; however, it was never adopted.

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Legal Analysis

This section provides an in-depth assessment of Uzbekistan's legal environment for civic freedoms, including the barriers to the exercise of the freedoms of association (formation, operations, resources), expression, and peaceful assembly. Click a subheading for more, or [click here to expand all subheadings](#).

ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS

The *Civil Code* defines a legal entity to include both commercial and non-commercial organizations and contains a list of permissible legal forms, including, among others, the public association, public fund, institution, legal entities' associations (societies and unions), and citizens' self-governance body.

Mirroring the language of the *Civil Code*, the *Law on NGOs* states that non-governmental, non-profit organizations may be established in the following forms: public association, public fund, institution, and other lawful forms provided by legal acts. The *Law on Public Associations* is the primary law under which NGOs are established and operate. In addition, NGOs may form associations or unions, with the purpose of coordination of their activities, and in order to represent and advocate common interests. NGOs can be established for protecting the rights and lawful interests of natural persons and legal entities; for achieving social, cultural and educational aims; to satisfy spiritual and other non-material needs; and for realizing other public benefit purposes. Founders of an NGO must detail the organizational purposes in the charter of the NGO.

A **public association** is a voluntary association of citizens (natural persons only) who have joined together for the realization of their common interests in the areas of politics, economics, social development, science, culture, ecology, and other aspects of life (Article 1, the *Law "On public associations"* and Article 11, the *Law "On NGOs"*).

A **public fund** is recognized as a non-membership organization, founded by natural and/or legal persons on the basis of voluntary property contributions, pursuing charitable, social, cultural, educational, or other public benefit purposes (Article 12, the *Law "On NGOs"* and Article 3, the *Law "On Public funds"*).

An **institution** is recognized as an organization established by natural and/or legal persons in order to realize social, cultural and other functions of non-profit nature (Article 13, the *Law "On NGOs"*). Notably, the legal form of "institution" is a legacy of the Soviet legal system. There are no existing procedural rules in place to establish and register an institution; in practice, therefore, this form is essentially non-existent.

The **association (union) of NGOs** is a legal entity whose founding members are legal persons (NGOs). It is not possible to establish an association made up of both natural and legal entities simultaneously. Members of associations (unions) have secondary (vicarious) liability on obligations of the overarching association (union); the degree of liability is based on the charter of the association (union).

A **citizens' self-governance body** (more commonly known as "mahalla") is a traditional form of neighborhood organization. The activities of the "mahalla" are governed by the *Law "On self-governance bodies"*.

Uzbek law also categorizes NGOs according to the territorial scope of their activity: international NGOs, which can operate not only in Uzbekistan, but in other countries; republican or inter-regional NGOs, which can operate in several regions of Uzbekistan or throughout the country; and local NGOs, which can operate only in one region or in Tashkent city.

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATUS

Uzbek law provides for a "charitable organization" status, but it is not linked to fiscal benefits. Instead, all

registered NNOs are exempt under tax law from certain taxes and financial obligations.

(1) A charitable organization is a non-governmental, non-commercial organization established for the purpose of implementing philanthropic activities in the interest of the public at large as well as in the interest of specific categories of legal entities and physical persons (Article 3 of the Law "On charity"). Charitable organizations may be created in the form of a public association, foundation or in any other form stipulated by legislative acts (Article 6 of the Law "On charity"). Significantly, however, there are no tax or fiscal benefits linked to charitable organization status. Article 14 of the Law "On Charity" declares that government can provide support (e.g., discount on rent, if the accommodation or other property is owned by government; transfer government property to charitable organizations, and so on) to charitable organizations. But there is no legal obligation to provide concrete benefits to charitable organizations.

(2) According to Article 58 of the Tax Code, the term non-commercial organization includes all legal entities that do not seek to gain profit as the main purpose of their activities and do not distribute income (profits) among their members. Through registration, NNOs accrue rights as a legal entity and the status of a non-commercial organization. All non-commercial organizations, irrespective of their organizational legal form, are exempt from the following taxes:

- corporate income (profit) tax, except where NNOs carry out commercial activities (Article 318 of the Tax Code);
- corporate property tax (Article 411 of the Tax Code);
- land tax (Article 426 of the Tax Code); and
- tax on use of water resources (Article 442 of the Tax Code).

The foregoing fiscal privileges do not generally apply to income generated through the commercial activity of NNOs. Certain categories of NNOs are exempt from several compulsory payments and taxes, even where the NNO carries out economic activity through a corporate subsidiary. For example, enterprises owned by public associations of disabled persons are exempt from VAT and corporate income (profit) tax (Article 243 and 337 of the Tax Code) if "goods and services of their own production, sold by legal entities, the only participants of which are public associations of persons with disabilities, in the total number of which persons with disabilities account for at least 50 percent, and the salary fund for persons with disabilities is at least 50 percent of the total wages fund."

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Article 36 of the Uzbek Constitution addresses public participation, and provides that "All citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have the right to participate in the management and administration of public and state affairs, both directly and through representation. They may exercise this right by way of self-government, referendums and democratic formation of state bodies, as well as public control over activities of state bodies. The procedure of public control over activities of state bodies shall be defined by law."

The 1991 Referendum Law, as last amended in May 2023, defines a referendum as a nationwide vote of citizens on the most important issues of public and state life in order to adopt laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan and other decisions. However, the Law sets onerous criteria by requiring the signatures of at least 5% of all citizens entitled to participate in the referendum, subject to their equal and proportional distribution in each administrative-territorial entity, and restricts collecting signatures online.

The 2014 Law on Social Partnership addresses the mechanisms for government-civil society interaction. Under the Law, CSIs have the right to: (1) participate in development initiatives; (2) participate in public discussion and examination of development proposals; (3) submit proposals to state bodies for conducting joint events; and (4) monitor the implementation of development programs.

The 2018 Law on Public Control authorizes monitoring of the activities of state bodies and institutions by citizens, CSIs, public councils, and the media. Monitoring methods include applications and inquiries to state bodies; participation in open collegial meetings of state bodies; public hearings and public monitoring; public expert evaluations; and public opinion research. Information, recommendations, and proposals are then to be considered by state bodies.

The 2021 Law on Regulations provides that all draft laws and regulations will pass through public or professional discussion and sets forth the procedure for holding a public discussion. The Law also enshrines the right of citizens, self-governing bodies, CSIs, and the media to monitor the implementation of laws and legal measures, in accordance with the Law on Public Control and other laws.

On March 4, 2021, the President issued a decree approving the Concept on Development of Civil Society in 2021-2025 ("the Concept") and the Road Map on Implementation of the Concept. The Concept sets conditions for CSIs' active participation in public governance and envisions increased CSI participation in the implementation of state social projects. It sets a range of targets, such as increasing the percentage of CSI representative membership in public councils (consultative bodies under the auspices of state bodies at national and local levels) to 5% in 2021 and to 25% in 2025.

On April 13, 2021, the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Additional Measures to Ensure Citizens' Participation in the Budget Process was adopted. In accordance with this decree, 5% of approved total budget expenditures must be allocated to finance activities based on public opinion starting from May 2021.

Interactive citizen services are being developed, such as the 'virtual parlor' of President Mirziyoyev (gov.uz) and the portal for discussions of draft normative legal acts (regulation.gov.uz). Public advisory councils have been formed under almost every state body.

On August 26, 2024, the President signed the Decree "On measures to further improve the system of state support for civil society institutions." The Decree introduced several initiatives related to public participation, including the following:

- amendments to the Social Partnership Law seeking to improve state support to CSIs;
- amendments to the Public Control Law seeking to develop effective mechanisms of public control; and
- the establishment of the office of a permanent NNO representative in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) (this will be the Chairman of NANNOUz).

In practice, however, government bodies are often unwilling to engage in meaningful public participation.

BARRIERS TO FORMATION

Certain legal barriers affecting the formation and registration of NNOs continue to exist in Uzbekistan.

First, registration is mandatory and unregistered group activities are prohibited. An NNO is established only when officially registered (Article 15 of the Law "On NNOs"). Possible sanctions for carrying out activities through an unregistered (i.e., illegal) organization include a fine of 15-30 BCVs (or \$440-\$880), according to Article 239 of the Administrative Code. Active participation in unregistered organizations exposes those who violate the law to a fine of 50 BCVs (\$1,467-\$2,933), or restriction of freedom from two to five years, or imprisonment of up to five years (Article 216 of the Criminal Code).

Second, the registration requirements, which vary according to the organizational form, are more demanding for NNOs than the registration requirements for commercial organizations. Required documentation is quite detailed.

Third, the registration application, at the discretion of registration bodies, can be sent for “expertise” to relevant organizations. The list of such organizations is not provided, and the exact dates of approval, and the minutes of their meetings / negotiations, if they took place, are not provided to the initiative groups applying for registration.

Fourth, the grounds for denial of registration allow a broad discretion in the government’s decision-making on whether to register an organization. For example, the law allows for denial where the name or symbols of an NNO encroaches on the “morality, national or religious feelings of citizens.”

One positive trend conducive to the formation and operation of NNOs is the reduction of the state fee for state registration of NNOs: it has been downsized several times since Mirziyoyev became President of Uzbekistan. From January 1, 2020, the state fee for state registration has been reduced:

- for republican and inter-regional NNOs – from 4 to 3 BCVs;
- for regional NNOs – from 2 to 1 BCVs; and
- for NNOs whose activities cover the territory of a district (city), settlement, kishlak and aul – from 2 BCVs to 50% of BCVs.
- The size of the state fee for state registration of international NNOs in Uzbekistan, representative offices, and branches of international and foreign NNOs has not changed – 12.5 BCVs.
- No fee is required for registration of branches of local NNOs. Organizations of people with disabilities, veterans, women’s organizations, and youth organizations pay half the registration fee from January 1, 2020. As per Presidential Decree of August 26, 2024, the state registration fee for such organizations will be halved, beginning from January 1, 2025 (the fee will be 25% of the registration fee).

From March 1, 2021, the state fee and registration deadlines were revised as follows:

- NNOs operating on the territory of the region, district, city, village, and aul became “territorial” NNOs, and the state registration fee for such NNOs is 50% of BCVs (namely, the rate of state registration fee for a regional NNO was 1 BCV, and from March 2021, it has become 50% of the BCVs; for other types of NNOs the rate of state registration fee has not changed).
- The period for re-registration of NNOs, as well as state registration of its symbols, is reduced from one month to 15 days.
- For state registration (re-registration) of symbols of public associations of persons with disabilities, veterans, senior citizens, women, children, the state fee is not charged.
- A separate subdivision of an NNO (branches) has become a legal entity.

Another positive innovation is the possibility to register NNOs through the web portal e-ngo.uz, which was launched by the MoJ. This web resource also allows NNOs to receive several services electronically, such as state registration, and re-registration of NNOs and their symbols.

BARRIERS TO OPERATIONS

NNOs are required to submit reports to multiple government bodies. According to Article 33 of the Law on NNOs, NNOs must maintain records of the results of their activities and must submit reports to the registration authorities (the MoJ and its departments), to the statistical authorities, and to the tax authorities. All NNOs are subject to the same detailed reporting standard; there is no simplified reporting

form available for small and medium-sized NNOs. The frequency of reporting varies with the category of report; some are required on a monthly basis, some on a quarterly basis, and others on an annual basis.

According to Article 8 of the Law on NNOs, NNOs are obliged to provide access to information on the use of organizational property and financial assets. In addition, NNOs must ensure that the MoJ has access to information on all their activities.

The law requires that NNOs inform the MoJ about events conducted by NNOs in advance. Events held by NNOs without the MoJ's consent entail fines from 30 to 50 BCVs.

Sanctions are also applicable for the failure to submit reports, for the late submission of reports, for the submission of reports in the wrong form, for the submission of knowingly inaccurate information about their activities, as well as for non-submission by NNOs of information, including supporting documents on their use of property and funds. Article 239 of the Administrative Code, applicable to NNOs, provides for a fine on officials from 15 to 30 BCVs.

On April 25, 2016, the government adopted a Law on Introduction of Amendments to Some Legislative Acts, which introduced amendments to the Law on NNOs, the Law on Public Foundations, the Law on Bank Secrecy, the Law on Charity, and the Code of Administrative Liability. This Law represented a significant deterioration in the NNO legal environment because it introduced additional restrictions on activities, such as the requirement to notify the MoJ about upcoming trips of NNO representatives to foreign countries, and to obtain approval for the receipt of all funds and assets from foreign states, organizations, and citizens. The approach of approving all funds and property received from foreign sources with the MoJ was revised several times thereafter. Now, an NNO must approve with the MoJ the receipt of foreign aid if it exceeds 100 BCVs (or \$2,934).

In 2005, NANNOUz was established. While clearly controlled by the Government, NANNOUz contributed to positive developments for the NNO sector by setting up information centers around the country for NNOs, and providing small grants to NNOs. According to the new Presidential Decree of August 26, 2024, the chairperson of NANNOUz will represent the interests of all NNOs (members and non-members of NANNOUz) in Parliament.

Barriers to International Contact

Starting from June 1, 2018, it has no longer been required to obtain the prior approval of the justice authorities to hold an event. However, NNOs must notify the relevant justice body in writing or electronically about an event within the following timeframes:

- when planning an event on the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan without the participation of a foreign citizen – at least 10 days before the day of the event; and
- when planning an event on the territory of the RUz with the participation of a foreign citizen or on the territory of a foreign state – at least 20 days before the day of the event. In some cases, as prescribed in the regulations, it is enough to notify three days before an event.

The notification procedure is not much different from the prior approval requirement, since the MoJ retains the right to request additional information no later than three days before a scheduled event and may decide to prohibit an NNO from holding an event based on the results of analyzing the submitted notification. The justice body analyzes information received about the event, as well as the compliance of the event with legislation and the goals and objectives determined by the NNO's charter or regulation. The MoJ has the right to request additional information, and, based on the results of the study, may decide to prohibit an NNO from conducting the event by notifying the NNO at least two days prior to the event.

BARRIERS TO RESOURCES

In general, Uzbek legislation does not prohibit NNOs from receiving funding from foreign sources. Article 29 of the Law on NNOs allows them to receive “other revenues not prohibited by legislative acts.” Article 8 of the Law on NNOs requires NNOs to “coordinate with the registration authority the receipt of funds and property from foreign states, international and foreign organizations, citizens of foreign states or, on their instruction, from other persons.”

While this requirement is somewhat outdated, as not all NNOs are obliged to coordinate the receipt of foreign funding in all cases, the norm indicates that NNOs are allowed to receive such funding.

The prohibition on foreign funding exists only for political parties and mass movements pursuing political goals. They are prohibited from receiving financial and other material assistance from foreign states, international organizations and legal entities of foreign states, their representative offices and branches, enterprises with foreign investment, foreign citizens, stateless persons, citizens' self-government bodies, religious organizations, anonymous individuals, or individuals under a pseudonym. Upon receipt, said funds must be returned, and should it be impossible to return them, they must be transferred to the state income. (Art. 18 of the Law on Public Associations)

Legislation contains different terms for different types of foreign aid, such as:

- grants (Art. 48 of the Tax Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan);
- humanitarian aid (Art. 48, Tax Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan);
- gratuitous technical assistance (Decree #275 of the Cabinet of Ministers on Measures for Further Expansion of Attracting Free Grant Technical Assistance in the Republic of Uzbekistan (October 20, 2009)).

The definition of grant and humanitarian aid from the point of view of taxation is set forth in Art. 48 of the Tax Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

[This section partially used materials from the [legal analysis](#) “Regulation on Coordination Between Non-Governmental Non-Commercial Organizations and Public Authorities in the Implementation of International Grant Projects”, published by ICNL in November 2022, and “[Overview comparing Regulation #527 to previously existing regulations related to Uzbek NNOs in receipt of foreign grants](#),” published by ICNL in October 2023.]

Effective October 4, 2023, the Cabinet of Ministers of the RUZ approved the Regulation “On the Procedure for Approval of Receipt of Funds and Property from External Sources by Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations and the Procedure for Implementation of Projects on the Territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan Financed from External Sources” (hereinafter – “Regulation #527”).

Regulation #527 replaced the previously existing provisions concerning Uzbek NCOs receiving funds from external sources (hereinafter – “foreign grants”). Compared to the earlier Regulations #328 (Regulation #328 of the Cabinet of Ministers on Approval of the Regulation on the Procedure of Interaction Between Non-governmental Non-commercial Organizations and Government Bodies in Implementing International Grant Projects of June 13, 2022) and #858 (Regulation #858 of the Cabinet of Ministers on Approval of the Regulation on the Procedure for Coordination with the Registering Body of the Receipt by Non-governmental Non-commercial Organizations of Funds and Property from Foreign States, International and Foreign Organizations, Citizens of Foreign States or, on Their Instruction, from Other Persons of October 9, 2019), in general, Regulation #527 is an improvement by simplifying the procedure for registering foreign grants. However, Regulation #527 retains excessive restrictions on the access of NCOs to sources of funding.

Regulation #527 simplifies the procedure of registration of funds and property from external sources by:

- limiting the number of state authorities that must render their opinion and/or decision in the

registration process. In particular, according to Regulation #527, the registering authority is not obliged to notify and request the opinion of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan before making a decision to approve a foreign grant;

- changing the conditions and terms of the decision to approve a foreign grant. Regulation # 527 gives the registering body 15 days to consider an NCO's application for registration of a foreign grant. In addition, Regulation #527 allows the registering authority to add up to ten days for "further consideration," bringing the entire process to a maximum of 25 days (in past Regulations, this timeframe remained unclear);
- clarifying that recipients of foreign grants are required to obtain approval from the registering authority for a foreign grant if the value of the foreign grant exceeds 100 BCVs, which is equivalent to approximately \$2,934 (i.e., the minimum amount threshold still applies); and
- establishing a new affirmative rule that "the requirement for the total amount of funds and property received in a single calendar year generally applies separately for each foreign source." This new rule potentially represents an important positive change, given that the threshold that previously applied to the total amount of all foreign grants received by an NCO in a single year, regardless of the number of external sources, now applies to each funding source. For example, if an NCO receives 10 foreign grants, it does not need to register them if the amount of each grant does not exceed \$2,934.

However, some norms of Regulation #527 require additional interpretation by the Government of Uzbekistan to ensure common understanding of the norms of this Regulation by all stakeholders, namely:

- the wording of "the requirement for the total amount of funds and property received in one calendar year is generally applied separately for each external source" is vague. The Government and the MoJ should clarify the meaning of the term "is generally applied", as elsewhere in Regulation #527, these words are no longer used and it is stated that "A nongovernmental non-profit organization does not need approval from the registering body to receive funds and property from external sources in the following cases: when the total amount of funds and assets received from external sources does not exceed 100 BCV[s] for one calendar year (\$2,934)."
- Regulation #527 states that an NCO does not need permission from the registration authority to receive funds and property from external sources "when funds and property are allocated to representative offices and branches of international and foreign non-governmental non-profit organizations by their parent organizations to cover administrative expenses." Meanwhile, Regulation #858 stated that it was not necessary to register funds and other property with the registering authority if: "assets and property [are] provided to representative offices and branches of international and foreign non-profit organizations by their head offices." Compared to Regulation #858, this new requirement of Regulation #527 may limit exempt funds from registration to only "administrative expenses" and not funding for program activities. This rule poses a negative risk for foreign NCOs operating in Uzbekistan if funds received for grants and/or contacts to local entities cannot be considered "administrative expenses."

Unlike the requirement to have a "national partner" under Regulation #328, Regulation #527 requires NCOs to have a "state organization" that provides them with "organizational and methodological support."

Such a "state organization" is assigned to each NCO by the registration authority for the purpose of participating in and supporting the NCO in the implementation of a foreign grant if the value of the foreign grant received exceeds 1,000 BCVs, which is equivalent to approximately \$27,000. The NCO may submit its proposal to the registration authority as to which governmental entity may be designated as its partner "governmental organization." It is the authors' understanding that if the value of the foreign grant

is less than 1,000 BCVs, the NCO may decide for itself whether it will have a partner “state organization.” If the NCO decides to partner with a “state organization,” the choice of such “state organization” is left to its discretion.

Regulation #527 defines the competence of a “state organization” as a partner of an NCO-recipient of a foreign grant as follows: “providing organizational and methodological support to the project, provides assistance to the [NNO] in the following forms:

- organizing meetings, negotiations and other events within the framework of the project;
- attracting specialized experts and specialists to participate in the project;
- exchange of necessary statistical and analytical data to ensure the effectiveness of the project, with the exception of information constituting a state or other secret protected by law
- exchange of necessary statistical and analytical data to ensure the effectiveness of the project, except for information constituting a state or other secret protected by law, damaging the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of individuals and legal entities, the interests of society and the state;
- give practical suggestions and recommendations aimed at solving problems that have arisen in the course of project implementation.”

While the powers set out in Regulation #527 remain excessive, it does provide for limitations compared to Regulation #328, by prohibiting “state organizations” from:

- “hindering the activities of a non-governmental non-profit organization in accordance with its charter;
- giving instructions and assignments to a non-governmental non-profit organization, set tasks and demand additional information from it that is not related to the project;
- making amendments and additions to the approved project documentation (estimate, plan, etc.);
- requesting financial incentives for participation in the project.”

In Regulation #328, which introduced the concept of a “national partner,” there were no such restrictions on the powers of the “national partner” (analogous to a “state body”) to interfere in the activities of an NCO-recipient of a foreign grant.

As mentioned earlier, Regulation #527 excessively restricts the access of NCOs to sources of funding, which is reflected in the preservation of the approval procedure. This procedure requires NCOs to obtain authorization from the state to receive funds from foreign sources.

This conclusion stems from the right of justice registering bodies to deny NCOs the right to receive funds from foreign sources on a wide range of grounds, including such grounds as:

- “The activities of an external source, as well as the use of the funds and property received, may lead to an immediate change in the constitutional order of the [RUz], damage its sovereignty, integrity and security, as well as violate the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens, are aimed at infringement of health and morality, propaganda of war, social, national, racial and religious enmity, legalization of proceeds of crime and financing of terrorism;
- if the external source is included in the list of persons involved or suspected of involvement in

terrorist activities or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, according to legal documents, and the organizations and persons associated with them are judicially recognized as extremist and terrorist;

- If the external source is the parent organization located outside the [RUz] or its founders, forcibly liquidated by a court in the territory of the [RUz];
- If the purpose of receiving funds and property contradicts the requirements of the regulatory documents and the charter (statute) of the non-governmental non-profit organization;
- If the application and the documents attached to it contain false information;
- if the application is submitted in violation of the procedure and terms established by these Regulations;
- if the non-governmental non-profit organization fails to provide the registration authority with additional information requested in connection with the application within the specified period of time." (Paragraph 18 of Regulation #527)

The justice authorities may also request additional documents from an NCO and, if such documents are not submitted within the established timeframe, forbid NCOs to receive funds and property from foreign sources.

An NCO is obliged to use funds and property received from external sources in accordance "with its constituent documents, charter (regulation) of the NCO, as well as the goals and methods specified in the submitted documents." (Par. 32 of Regulation #527) If this requirement is violated, the head of the NCO or a person authorized by them is liable.

NCOs are obliged to provide information and documents "on the use of funds and property received from external sources on the basis of a request from the registration authority." (Par. 33 of Regulation #527)

In case of violation of the procedure for coordinating with the registration authority on the receipt of funds from external sources, administrative liability is also envisaged. Thus, for receiving funds and property from foreign states, international and foreign organizations, citizens of foreign states, or on their behalf from other persons, NCOs receiving funds and property from foreign sources without the approval of the registration authority are fined between 15 to 30 BCVs (from \$402 to \$804).

After the adoption of Regulation #527, an independent group of NCOs and civil activists in Uzbekistan started public monitoring of the process of implementation of this Regulation by collecting cases of NCOs in Uzbekistan that have encountered problems in working with Regulation #527.

BARRIERS TO EXPRESSION

According to Uzbek law as written, there are generally no barriers restricting speech or advocacy activity in Uzbekistan; NGOs and individuals are both free, in theory, to criticize the Government, for example. In practice, however, there are constraints on speech and advocacy. NGOs engaging in human rights activity or government monitoring, for example, may be subject to harassment or even termination. Because these measures are extra-legal (i.e., outside the law), they are unpredictable.

In addition, on March 30, 2021, the President signed new amendments to the Law on Informatization, Criminal Code, and Administrative Code ("the Law"). The amendments are related to the introduction of a new offense related to any public call to not fulfil or violate of Uzbek law, posing a threat to public order and public safety, including those carried out using the media, telecommunication networks, the internet, as well as print media. In general, the Law could significantly restrict freedom of expression for civil society, journalists, and others by prohibiting broad categories of speech, while also adding new obligations for website owners, including bloggers. The obligations for website owners and bloggers are:

(a) to constantly monitor their websites and pages for prohibited content; and (b) to take immediate measures to restrict access to prohibited content. If website owners do not comply with these obligations, the Law makes clear that website owners are in violation of the Law and are liable for any damages. The Law also creates a right of redress for individuals who believe their “rights” or “legitimate interests” have been affected to sue website owners for damages. These obligations, along with exposing website owners to liability while allowing anyone harmed to seek damages in court, are likely to result in censorship of speech in violation of international law. Website owners are ill equipped to undertake proper legal assessment, and therefore are likely to err on the side of caution and simply remove any content that could be deemed prohibited.

NGOs are affirmatively granted the right to participate in legislative activities, and “to exercise lawmaking initiative.” For example, some NGOs make seek engagement with Parliament and/or governmental bodies by preparing analyses of legislation or through conducting a conference to facilitate cross-sectoral dialogue on draft legislation. In practice, however, few NGOs take advantage of this right.

BARRIERS TO ASSEMBLY

Article 38 of the 2023 version of the Constitution states that “Citizens have the right to exercise their public activity in the form of meetings, assemblies and demonstrations in accordance with the laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The authorities shall have the right to suspend or prohibit these activities only for justified security reasons.” The content of the article has not changed significantly comparative to the previous version of the Constitution; now, the wording of the article allows it to be extended not only to those who take part, but also to those who organize such public activity.

Article 33 of the Constitution establishes that “All citizens have the right to participate in civic activity by taking part in meetings, assemblies and demonstrations in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan. State bodies shall have the right to suspend or prohibit such activities only for justified security reasons.”

On July 29, 2014, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted Decision No. 205 on measures to further improve the procedure for organizing and holding public events, which established the rules for holding “mass events” (Annex No. 1 to Cabinet Decision No. 205 of July 29, 2014). A “mass event” is defined as “the presence of citizens organized at the venue of a public event for the purpose of holding social and political programs (symposiums, conferences, congresses, etc.); cultural and entertainment programs and performances (musical, literary and other festivals, concerts, theatrical, sports and promotional events, folk festivals, circus and folklore performances, games, shows and competitions, etc.); as well as national religious and professional holidays, attended by one hundred people or more.”

Penalties provided for in “The Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Administrative Liability” may deter the organizers from arranging and holding public gatherings. For example, a fine of 60 to 80 BCVs, or an administrative detention for up to 15 days, is provided for violating the established procedure for organizing or holding public gatherings, rallies, marches, and demonstrations (Article 201). Violations of the rules for holding mass events (Article 201 of the CoAO) are punishable by fines of 5 to 10 BCVs (\$73.50 to \$147) for citizens, and 10 to 15 BCVs (\$147 to \$440) for officials. Violations of the rules for holding religious meetings, street processions, and other ceremonies of worship are punishable by a fine of 80 to 100 BCVs (\$2,347 to \$2,934), or administrative detention for up to 15 days (Article 201 of the CoAO). Creating conditions for holding unauthorized meetings, rallies, street processions, and demonstrations by providing participants of unauthorized meetings, rallies, street processions, and demonstrations with premises or other property (communications, multiplying and other equipment, hardware, and transportation means), or creating other conditions for holding such events, is punishable by a fine of 50 to 100 BCVs for citizens, and 70 to 150 BCVs for officials (Article 202 of the CoAO).

In 2024, two Decrees of the Cabinet of Ministers of the RUz on tightening the requirements for ensuring the safety of citizens and protecting public order during mass events were adopted: Decree No. 360 of June 28, 2024 (concerning Tashkent); and Decree No. 569 of September 12, 2024, which, among other things, expanded the responsibilities of an organizer of mass events.

Decree No. 360 stipulates that, in order to tighten measures to ensure the safety of citizens and maintain public order during mass events, it is prohibited to attract citizens to mass events by distributing food, goods and other products, and merchandise free of charge or selling them at an extremely reduced price for advertising, promotional, or other purposes. Organizers of a public event and the administration of the site of such public event who violate the rules for holding public events are held liable in accordance with the procedure established by the [Uzbekistan Administrative Liability Code](#).

[Decree No. 569 “On tightening measures to ensure the safety of citizens, maintain public order and prevent possible emergencies when holding ‘mass events’”](#) provides that, for the organizer of mass events, “when choosing a venue for holding a public event, one should consider whether there are conditions in place to ensure the safety of citizens, maintain public order and prevent possible emergencies, as well as effective organization of the evacuation of citizens in threatening situations.”

In particular, the organizer of mass events [must now](#) “take measures to prevent emergencies and, when and if such threats arise, he should create conditions for effective evacuation of citizens... In addition, the passport of a permit to hold mass events shall include an additional requirement for the organizer to ensure the availability of technical and special means to eliminate emergencies related to natural hazards and man-made accidents.”

Additional Resources

This section contains links to external reports and news reports relevant to civic freedoms. The Historical Notes section contains links to past developments which ICNL has reported on. Click a subheading for more, or [click here to expand all subheadings](#).

GLOBAL INDEX RANKINGS

Ranking Body	Rank	Ranking Scale (best - worst possible)
UN Human Development Index	107 (2023)	1 – 193
World Justice Project Rule of Law Index	83 (2024)	1 – 142
Transparency International	121 (2024)	1 – 180
Fund for Peace Fragile States Index	96 (2024)	179 – 1
Freedom House: Freedom in the World	Status: Not Free Political Rights: 2 Civil Liberties: 10 (2025)	Free/Partly Free/Not Free 40 – 0 60 – 0

REPORTS

UN Universal Periodic Review Reports	Uzbekistan UPR page
UN Human Rights Reports	Uzbekistan
U.S. State Department	2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices
Fund for Peace Fragile States Index Reports	Uzbekistan

IMF Country Reports	Uzbekistan and the IMF
Human Rights Watch	World Report 2025: Uzbekistan
International Center for Not-for-Profit Law Online Library	Uzbekistan

historical noteS

The legal environment for civil society in Uzbekistan began to take shape in the 1990s and early 2000s, when key legislation such as the Citizens' Self-Governance Bodies Act, the Voluntary Associations Act, and the Non-Profit Non-Governmental Organizations Act was adopted. Many "citizens' action" groups emerged during this period, often with international donor support.

GONNOs

Alongside independent initiatives, the state created government-organized NNOs, financed from the budget and active across all districts. Today, large GONNOs such as the Mahalla Foundation, the Women's Committee, and the Youth Union dominate the civic landscape, with extensive branch networks and ongoing state funding. Other GONNOs such as YUKSALISH, the National Association of NNOs of Uzbekistan (NANNOUz), and the Centre for Development Strategy play an active role in the development of civil society.

Mahallas

Mahallas—traditional neighborhood institutions recognized by law as citizens' self-governing bodies—remain central to community life, with more than 10,000 nationwide. Governed by the Law on Self-Governance Bodies, they function as intermediaries between state and society. Their responsibilities, powers, and funding from the state budget expand every year.

A mahalla's administrative staff—referred to as the "mahalla seven"—consists of a chairman, an assistant mahalla hokim, a youth leader, a women's activist, a prevention inspector, a tax officer, and a social worker. They report on their activities to the mahalla's assembly of citizens.

Legal Framework and Reforms

In 2023, Uzbekistan amended its Constitution to include a dedicated chapter on civil society institutions (Chapter XIII) covering NNOs, mahallas, GONNOs, media, and other CSOs. The amendment obliges the State to respect their rights, ensure equitable opportunities for participation in society, and prohibits interference in NNO activities. It also specifies that "public associations may be dissolved, prohibited, or restricted in their activities only through a court ruling."

The main legal forms of NNOs are public associations, public foundations, and institutions. Their operations are regulated by the Civil Code, the Law on Non-Governmental Non-Commercial Organizations (Law on NNOs), the Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations' Operations Safeguarding Act, the Public Foundations Act, and the Public Associations Act. The Code on Administrative Offences (CoAO) and the Criminal Code provide for liability in case of legal violations.

NNOs and other CSIs are also governed by presidential decrees. Since President Mirziyoyev came to power in September 2016, several decrees have eased restrictions, including by simplifying event notification procedures, allowing foreign grants to be received through more banks, and reducing social tax rates. These reforms led to an increase in NNO registrations, but challenges remain: registration remains complex, unregistered groups cannot operate, and foreign funding still requires coordination with the government.

Funding and Sustainability

NNOs in Uzbekistan draw funding from membership fees, founder contributions, voluntary property contributions and donations, entrepreneurial activities, state social procurements, grants, foreign aid, and other lawful income.

State financing has grown steadily, primarily through subsidies, grants, and State Social Procurement (SSP). The Public Foundation for Support of NNOs and other CSIs, under the Oliy Majlis, manages both budgetary and non-state funds for NNO projects. State administration bodies also provide SSP for socially significant projects.

Accessing foreign aid remains challenging, often requiring authorization from the MoJ or other registration bodies. Corporate donations are negligible due to the lack of tax incentives, and cash donations from individuals are rare, though in-kind support and volunteering are more common. Entrepreneurial activities are limited by complex reporting requirements. Overall, most NNOs remain financially fragile, even when receiving state support, due to limited funding diversification.

NEWS

[**International Human Rights Organisations Call on President Mirziyoyev to Veto “Undesirable” Foreigners Law**](#) (June 2024)

International human rights organisations express profound alarm at the recent approval of a new law by Oliy Majilis, the lower chamber of Uzbekistan’s Parliament, concerning the legal status of foreign citizens and stateless individuals. These amendments represent a flagrant violation of international standards on freedom of expression and pose a serious risk of isolating the country. We urgently call on the President to veto this proposal and uphold fundamental human rights.

[**Foreigners may be deemed undesirable for statements about Uzbekistan and its people**](#) (June 2024)

Uzbekistan is suggesting a procedure to designate foreign citizens as undesirable. The designation may be based on statements and actions threatening the country’s sovereignty, integrity, and security, inciting interstate and national enmity, demeaning the honor, dignity, or history of its people.

[**Expert Commentary on the Draft Law of Uzbekistan on Free Legal Aid**](#) (May 2024)

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has published an analysis of the draft Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan on Free Legal Aid. The draft law provides for the creation of a unified system for managing, coordinating and regulating legal aid; ensures state-funded legal advice to socially vulnerable groups of the population in administrative and civil cases, along with criminal proceedings; and determines the categories of persons who are guaranteed the right to receive free legal assistance.

[**New procedure for NGOs to work with international grants: one step forward, two steps back?**](#) (August 2023) (Russian)

The Ministry of Justice has proposed a new procedure for coordination and partnership between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government authorities in the implementation of international grant projects. Despite the positive changes, measures limiting the freedom of association and activities of NGOs are still in place.

[**Civil Society Struggles for Freedom in Central Asia**](#) (July 2023)

Efforts to establish robust, independent civil societies are facing headwinds in the post-Soviet republics of Central Asia, where foreign-funded NGOs have long been regarded as agents of Western influence and even purveyors of “color revolutions.” In Uzbekistan, officials boast of “thousands” of functioning NGOs, but they are subject to tight controls and onerous checks. However, the government is reconsidering a year-old decree requiring “significant size-grant receivers” to partner with state institutions.

[**How Will Civil Society Develop?**](#) (May, 2023) (Russian)

Resolution No. 192 “On Measures for the Implementation of the Development of Civil Society Concept Paper in 2023 and 2024” was adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers on May 6, 2023.

[**The bill on rallies is being considered by the Presidential Administration - Ministry of**](#)

[**Justice**](#) (March, 2023) (Russian)

The draft law on rallies has been developed and approved, and is now being considered by the Presidential Administration, Mirjalol Allakulihev, head of the department of the Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan, said. The procedure for organizing rallies is still not spelled out in the laws, although there is responsibility for its violation.

ARCHIVED NEWS

[The draft strategy “Uzbekistan-2030” has been published for discussion](#) (July 2023) (Russian)

[President discusses constitutional reform](#) (June 2022) (Russian)

[New article examines NNO code](#) (May 2022) (Russian)

[Uzbekistan registers a branch of the IREX](#) (April 2021)

[Environmental activism begins to make its mark in Central Asia](#) (March 2021)

[Uzbekistan: Public or State Chamber](#) (April 2020)

[Uzbekistan Adopts Strict Regulations to Fight COVID-19](#) (April 2020)

[Uzbek Lawmakers Legitimize Activities of Volunteers](#) (November 2019)

[Tashkent hosts the National Forum of Civil Initiatives](#) (July 2019)

[Burkhanov appointed chairman of “Yuksalish” National Movement](#) (January 2019)

[Ministry of Justice of Uzbekistan and USAID signed a Memorandum of Understanding](#) (June 2018)

[Law on public control enters into force in Uzbekistan](#) (March 2018)

[Concept of tax reform for 2018-2020 published for public discussion](#) (March 2018)

[Shavkat Mirziyoyev orders drafting of new tax code](#) (February 2018)

[UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in historic Uzbekistan visit](#) (May 2017)

[Uzbekistan adopts law on social services for population](#) (December 2016)

[Uzbekistan elects Shavkat Mirziyoyev as president](#) (December 2016)

[Ministry of Justice receives right to check CSOs’ bank accounts](#) (April 2016) (Russian)

[Government significantly decreases sizes of administrative penalties for CSOs](#) (April 2016) (Russian)

[Law of Uzbekistan on Appeals of Individuals and Legal Entities discussed](#) (February 2015)

[Uzbekistan Gears Up to Vote for “Rubberstamp” Parliament](#) (December 2014)

[HRW Documents Plight Of Political Prisoners](#) (October 2014)

[Free political prisoners on Constitution Day](#) (December 2012)

[EU representative visits Uzbekistan](#) (December 2012)

[CIVICUS intervention in the UPR for Uzbekistan](#) (October 2012)

[Uzbekistan “not free” according to internet freedom report](#) (October 2012)

[Watchdog urges EU action over human rights](#) (June 2012)

[Activist free but crackdown widening](#) (April 2012)

[Release of Mr. Norboy Kholjigitov, ongoing arbitrary detention of eight other HRSU members](#) (October 2011)

[AIDS activist released, but other human rights defenders harassed](#) (September 2011)

[Internet censorship in Uzbekistan](#) (August 2011)

[British Embassy staffer fined by court for contact with activists](#) (July 2011)

[Tashkent journalist lost her job because of the trip abroad](#) (July 2011)

[Activists harassed after TV broadcast](#) (April 2011)

[Uzbekistan can't muzzle the messenger](#) (April 2011)

[Government shuts down Human Rights Watch office](#) (March 2011)

[Uzbek human rights group facing criminal libel suit](#) (March 2011)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW

<https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor/uzbekistan>