

Freedom in the World 2025



header1 Overview

While reforms adopted since President Shavkat Mirziyoyev took office in 2016 have led to improvements on some issues, Uzbekistan remains an authoritarian state with few signs of democratization. No opposition parties operate legally. The legislature and judiciary effectively serve as instruments of the executive branch, which initiates reforms by decree, and the media are still tightly controlled by the authorities. Reports of torture and other ill-treatment persist, although highly publicized cases of abuse have resulted in dismissals and prosecutions for some officials, and small-scale corruption has been meaningfully reduced.

header2 Key Developments in 2024

- In March, the first of a series of trials of major organized crime figures concluded with a conviction for Salim Abduvaliyev, a leader in a criminal network that has maintained

close ties to political elites in both Russia and Uzbekistan. Abduvaliyev and several of his associates were convicted of trafficking arms, explosives, and drugs; he was sentenced to six years in prison. Another key defendant, Baxtiyor Qudratullayev, was sentenced to 20 years in prison in July.

- Parliamentary elections held in October offered voters no meaningful choice, as all participating parties supported the government. Despite 2023 constitutional and electoral-law changes that were meant to make the system more competitive, the president's Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan won 64 out of 150 seats in the lower house, half of which was filled through national party-list voting and half through single-member districts. This represented a gain of 11 seats. Three smaller parties lost ground—Milliy Tiklanish (National Revival) with 29 seats, the Adolat (Justice) Social Democratic Party with 21, and the People's Democratic Party with 20—while the Ecological Party gained a seat for a total of 16. The 65-member upper house, or Senate, was indirectly elected in November, with 56 members chosen by local and regional councils and 9 appointed by the president. Observers from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe found that the year's balloting was again marked by numerous violations, and that registration for opposition parties or independent candidates remained effectively impossible. As a result of a new 40 percent gender quota for party lists under the 2023 reforms, women took 38 percent of the seats in the lower house, but retained about 24 percent of the seats in the Senate. Separately, in February authorities had banned the unregistered political party Alga Karakalpakstan, which supports independence for the autonomous Karakalpakstan Republic, as an "extremist" organization.
- Authorities reportedly renewed efforts to suppress forms of dress and appearance that they associated with banned Muslim organizations. Police raided markets and other public spaces, detained young men with beards, and compelled them to shave or face up to 15 days in jail. Also during the year, Uzbek courts convicted several citizens for serving as mercenaries in the Russian military's invasion of Ukraine; Uzbek migrant workers in Russia have faced pressure to enlist, often to avoid criminal prosecution or imprisonment in that country.
- Over the course of the year, multiple citizens across the country were convicted of insulting or slandering the president through social media posts and sentenced to penalties ranging from forced psychiatric hospitalization to five years in prison.
- In April, an investigation by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty found that some \$100 million in government contracts for delivery of overpriced natural gas had been granted in 2021 and 2022 to an obscure company linked to President Mirziyoyev's son-in-law, Otabek Umarov. Prior investigations had established a pattern of state contracts and investments going to networks of companies owned by the president's extended family. Meanwhile, citizen journalists and anticorruption activists remained subject to physical attacks and prosecution for alleged extortion or slander when they investigated alleged corruption by local and regional-level officials.

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For additional background information, see last year's [full report](#).

PR Political Rights

A Electoral Process

A1 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Was the current head of government or other chief national authority elected through free and fair elections?	0.000 4.004
A2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Were the current national legislative representatives elected through free and fair elections?	0.000 4.004
A3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Are the electoral laws and framework fair, and are they implemented impartially by the relevant election management bodies?	1.001 4.004

B Political Pluralism and Participation

Do the people have the right to organize in different political parties or other competitive political groupings of their choice, and is the system free of undue obstacles to the rise and fall of these competing parties or groupings?	0.000 4.004
B2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Is there a realistic opportunity for the opposition to increase its support or gain power through elections?	0.000 4.004
B3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Are the people's political choices free from domination by forces that are external to the political sphere, or by political forces that employ extrapolitical means?	0.000 4.004
B4 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Do various segments of the population (including ethnic, racial, religious, gender, LGBT+, and other relevant groups) have full political rights and electoral opportunities?	0.000 4.004

C Functioning of Government

Do the freely elected head of government and national legislative representatives determine the policies of the government?	0.000 4.004
C2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Are safeguards against official corruption strong and effective?	0.000 4.004
C3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	

Does the government operate with openness and transparency? | 1.001 4.004

CL Civil Liberties

D Freedom of Expression and Belief

D1 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Are there free and independent media? | 1.001 4.004

D2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Are individuals free to practice and express their religious faith or nonbelief in public and private? | 1.001 4.004

D3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Is there academic freedom, and is the educational system free from extensive political indoctrination? | 1.001 4.004

D4 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Are individuals free to express their personal views on political or other sensitive topics without fear of surveillance or retribution? | 1.001 4.004

E Associational and Organizational Rights

E1 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Is there freedom of assembly? | 0.000 4.004

E2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Is there freedom for nongovernmental organizations, particularly those that are engaged in human rights– and governance-related work? | 1.001 4.004

E3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Is there freedom for trade unions and similar professional or labor organizations? | 0.000 4.004

F Rule of Law

F1 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Is there an independent judiciary? | 0.000 4.004

F2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Does due process prevail in civil and criminal matters?	0.000 4.004
F3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Is there protection from the illegitimate use of physical force and freedom from war and insurgencies?	1.001 4.004
F4 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Do laws, policies, and practices guarantee equal treatment of various segments of the population?	0.000 4.004

G Personal Autonomy and Individual Rights

G1 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Do individuals enjoy freedom of movement, including the ability to change their place of residence, employment, or education?	1.001 4.004
G2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Are individuals able to exercise the right to own property and establish private businesses without undue interference from state or nonstate actors?	1.001 4.004
G3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Do individuals enjoy personal social freedoms, including choice of marriage partner and size of family, protection from domestic violence, and control over appearance?	1.001 4.004
G4 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Do individuals enjoy equality of opportunity and freedom from economic exploitation?	1.001 4.004