



MA02 2023-11-13

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION

Uzbekistan

Aspects of the Justice and Security Sector



Centre for Documentation
and Counter Extremism

2026-06-26


Migrationsverket

COUNTRY INFORMATION FOR THE PROCESSING OF MIGRATION CASES

This report has been prepared by the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) and the Danish Immigration Service (DIS) in accordance with [the EUAA's methodology for producing country information](#) (2023). The report contains country information intended for use in the processing of migration cases.

The report is based on carefully selected sources of information. All sources are cited, with the exception of descriptions of generally known facts.

Swedish Migration Agency & Danish Immigration Service: Country of Origin Information: Uzbekistan. Aspects of the Justice and Security Sector

The report has been published in SMA:s database for country of origin information Lifos, © Migrationsverket (Swedish Migration Agency), and on DIS' website, 2026.

Date: 2026-06-26

Table of content

Executive Summary	5
1. Introduction	7
1.1 About the report.....	7
1.1.1 Aim, scope and limitations of the report	7
1.1.2 On availability of information	7
1.2 Historical background.....	8
1.2.1 The rule of Islam Karimov	8
1.2.2 Reforms of the post-Karimov rule of Shavkat Mirziyoyev	9
2. Organisational structures within the JSS.....	13
2.1 Institutions of JSS.....	13
2.1.1 The court system.....	13
2.1.2 The Prosecutor's Office	14
2.1.3 Police	14
2.1.4 The Ombudsman for Human Rights.....	16
3. Reforms within JSS	18
3.1 Examples of current and undertaken reforms	18
3.1.1 The court system.....	19
3.1.2 The Prosecutor's office.....	20
3.1.3 The police	20
3.1.4 The Uzbekistan 2030 Strategy.....	22
3.2 Assessments of the implementation of reforms.....	23
3.2.1 The court system.....	23
3.2.2 The prosecutor's office.....	24
3.2.3 Lawyers	24
3.2.4 Legal safeguards and the prevalence of torture	24
3.2.5 The police	25
3.2.6 The mahalla system	26
4. Assessments of the functionality of JSS	28
4.1 Division of powers and relative influence	28
4.2 Political influence	29

4.3	Corruption.....	30
4.3.1	Corruption within the court system	30
4.3.2	Corruption within the police.....	31
4.3.3	Corruption within the prosecutor’s office and local government	32
4.3.4	Anti-corruption measures	33
4.4	Public trust.....	35
4.4.1	Lack of polling data.....	35
4.4.2	Potential causes of distrust	36
4.4.3	Trust and willingness to report crimes.....	37
4.4.4	Use of other mechanism for dispute resolution	37
4.4.5	On property related cases	38
4.4.6	On the Ombudsman for Human Rights	38
5.	Domestic violence.....	39

Sources

Written sources	43
Interviews.....	50
Interviews in 2017 and 2019	50
Interviews in 2025-2026	50

Executive Summary

Uzbekistan has undergone substantial change since the end of Islam Karimov's rule in 2016. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's government has introduced extensive reforms, and the country is in many respects far more open than under Karimov. Political prisoners have been released, exit visas abolished, public complaint mechanisms introduced, and the state has sought to present itself as serving citizens rather than controlling them. However, the changes can be termed as a controlled transformation rather than transition away from authoritarian governance. Power continues to be concentrated around the president and his administration, with informal networks, patronage, family-linked influence and security structures shaping decision-making more than formal constitutional checks and balances.

Generally, institutions within the JSS have mandates consistent with rule-of-law principles. Reforms in the justice sector have produced notable and extensive formal and institutional changes with, inter alia, the creation of the Supreme Judicial Council, digitalisation, increased access to court hearings and decisions, random case allocation in some areas and new safeguards against torture. Nevertheless, the judiciary remains vulnerable to executive and prosecutorial influence, especially in political, high-profile or sensitive cases.

The Prosecutor's Office has also undergone staffing changes, digitalisation and capacity-building, but its broad mandate continues to make it one of the strongest institutions in the state. The police have been reorganised and brought closer to local communities, including through mahalla-level structures, but sources report limited changes in police culture. Poor working conditions, low education levels and Soviet-style practices remain persistent problems. Torture and ill-treatment have declined from the Karimov-era patterns but continue to be reported, particularly in detention and during interrogations. Legal safeguards exist, but complaints of torture are rarely taken seriously.

Petty corruption appears to have declined in some areas. However, corruption remains widespread. Anti-corruption measures often target lower- and mid-level officials, while grand corruption, patronage and politically protected economic interests remain largely intact. Accountability is selective and can be shaped by political considerations.

Public trust in justice and security institutions remains low. Many citizens avoid police and courts when possible, viewing them as bureaucratic, unreliable, corrupt or potentially dangerous. People may instead rely on family networks, local elders, Telegram channels, informal negotiation or mahalla mediation. Complaint mechanisms and social media have created some opportunities to publicise abuse or misconduct. Still, these mechanisms do not guarantee remedy, and complaints may be redirected to the very officials accused of wrongdoing. Access to justice is uneven and depends heavily on education, class, location and personal connections.

The mahalla system plays an increasingly important role in local governance, welfare, policing and dispute resolution. It can provide local access and is often more familiar to citizens than central institutions, but it also functions as an extension of state control. Its role is ambivalent: it may mediate disputes and connect citizens to services, but it may also suppress complaints, discourage formal reporting and reinforce local power hierarchies.

Regulatory changes in the domain of domestic violence illustrates both the progress and limits of reform. Criminalisation in 2023, expanded protection orders and greater public attention represent important advances. However, implementation remains weak. Police, courts, families and mahallas often prioritise reconciliation over protection, while patriarchal norms, economic dependency, stigma, pressure from relatives and lack of shelters prevent many women from reporting or leaving abusive households.

Overall, the Uzbek state is generally capable of providing security and basic legal order in many everyday cases. Reforms have modernised the system and improved some procedures. The main conclusion, however, is that protection becomes unreliable where cases touch political interests, powerful individuals, corruption, security concerns or entrenched social norms.

1. Introduction

1.1 About the report

1.1.1 Aim, scope and limitations of the report

The aim of this report is to describe aspects of the functionality of the central government administration within the Uzbek justice and security sector (JSS).

When analysing states' JSS within the framework of Country of Origin Information (COI), the concepts of *capacity* and *integrity* can be used, as these correspond to the asylum law concepts of *willingness* and *ability* when assessing a state's capacity to provide protection. Indicators linked to the concepts of capacity and integrity may, for example, include organisational structure, legal framework, training, knowledge and resources, as well as trust and presence of corruption and other undue influence.

Uzbekistan has undergone extensive reforms and major changes, since 2016. The reform process encompasses important economic aspects, but the changes are undoubtedly broader and more far-reaching than the economic dimension alone. The scope of the report has been defined from a citizen's perspective on the JSS. In other words, it addresses those state functions that have been identified as central to the individual and which constitute the primary guarantee of their ability to exercise their rights. Against this background, the police, prosecutor's office and courts have been identified as key actors. The report also briefly covers the functions of the mahalla-structure and the Ombudsman for Human Rights.

The report presents an overview with a special emphasis on the integrity of the abovementioned institutions to carry out the tasks for which they have a mandate. The report does not provide an exhaustive presentation of all individual reforms that have been implemented or are currently underway, nor does it analyse those reforms in a comprehensive way. The account in this section should be viewed solely as highlighting the most general aspects; otherwise, the report is limited to primarily compiling assessments from informed sources regarding the effects of the reform work and the functionality within the JSS.

1.1.2 On availability of information

The availability of information about the situation in Uzbekistan was for a long time limited by the repressive rule and its extreme control of civil society and the population in general. After the end of the Karimov rule, independent journalists and international organisations have been granted greater access and Uzbek media has started to express more critical views. However, self-censorship is still widespread, and there still are serious limitations on the area of fundamental political freedoms and civic space which affects the availability of information and the information situation in general.

In 2019, the Swedish Migration Agency (SMA) conducted a fact-finding mission (FFM) to the country. In 2026, a joint FFM was carried out by the SMA and Danish Immigration Service (DIS). The report is based on information from the FFM in 2026 where official Uzbek sources, local activists, international organisations and diplomatic sources were consulted. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of the information draws on interviews with initiated sources (journalists, academic researchers and NGOs) conducted physically or digitally. It also to some extent draws on findings after the 2019 FFM and on written sources.

1.2 Historical background

1.2.1 The rule of Islam Karimov

For almost two and a half decades, from 1991 to 2016, Uzbekistan was ruled by Islam Karimov.¹ During this period, the country developed into a police state that perceived existential threats in a number of areas. Democratic freedoms and rights were systematically disregarded, and the population was subjected to human rights violations.²

Under the communist rule of the Soviet Union, the police³ bore characteristics that in many ways were associated with a paramilitary organisation rather than a police force. The police were part of an intrusive and ideological security apparatus – in addition to being responsible for regular policing duties, they were also tasked with implementing repressive policies and conducting extensive surveillance of the population. The police's activities were based on political indoctrination, and serving the state's ideology was the overarching goal. Education and training were based on military discipline rather than modern policing methods, which created an environment where law-abiding behaviour was founded more on fear than on respect and communication.⁴

Under Karimov's rule, the Uzbek police and other law enforcement agencies were primarily the subject of reports as perpetrators of human rights violations. Analyses of, for example, the Uzbek police's capacity to carry out regular policing were lacking, but the fact that law enforcement agencies were instrumental to the authoritarian political regime was in itself indicative and manifested in various ways.

Uzbek security agencies combated actual or alleged political threats.⁵ As a result, the number of prisoners convicted on political or religious grounds was high.

¹ Utrikespolitiska Institutet, Landguiden [payment service], Modern historia, 25.02.2026, [url](#)

² Laszczkowski, Mateusz & Reeves, Madeleine (red.), *Affective states: entanglements, suspensions, suspicions*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2017, s. 54

³ Or the militia (милиция), as it was known in the Soviet Union and, to varying degrees, in the subsequent independent states. In Uzbekistan, this term was used until 2019, when it was replaced by Organ of Internal Affairs (in Russian: орган внутренних дел) (Tass, В Узбекистане упразднили термин "милиция", 24.05.2019, [url](#)).

⁴ Light, M., et al., Policing following political and social transitions: Russia, Brazil, and China compared, in: *Theoretical Criminology*, volume 19 (2), 2015

⁵ Migrationsverket, Lifosrapport: Uzbekistan - en introduktion (version 1.3), 15.03.2018, s. 11

Figures on the number of political prisoners were always based on estimates and varied widely.⁶

Actors within the JSS were not independent. The executive branch was strong and the courts were weak in relation both to it and to other actors in the justice system.⁷ The dissolution of the Soviet Union and Uzbekistan's declaration of independence in 1991 did not bring about any major changes to the machinery that constituted the JSS. The Uzbek police, prosecution service and courts continued to operate within an authoritarian and centralised system in which the executive branch controlled the judiciary. The prosecution service played a prominent role in criminal cases, with the role of judges effectively reduced to confirming the prosecutor's requests in indictments.⁸ Torture was routinely used.⁹ Corruption was widespread.¹⁰ In summary and at the end of Karimov's rule, Bertelsmann Stiftung described law enforcement agencies and ministries of power as private enterprises with a monopoly on the use of force under the political regime: "These economic enterprises function as arms of an oligarchic regime that forcefully extract profits from the middle class and suppress both free economic competition and political dissent."¹¹

1.2.2 Reforms of the post-Karimov rule of Shavkat Mirziyoyev

Following the confirmation of Karimov's death in September 2016, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who had been Prime Minister since 2003, was appointed interim president and was subsequently elected president in December of the same year. Expectations of liberalisation under the new leadership were not particularly high; Mirziyoyev was seen as loyal to Karimov, and some observers feared a tightening of the system.¹² The change of power was, however, followed by an intense period in which a host of reform plans were announced. Economic reforms were initiated early on, and several measures were taken to break Uzbekistan's isolation from both the outside world and its own population. Mirziyoyev undertook state visits to neighbouring countries and visited the regions of Uzbekistan – measures that would have been unthinkable under Karimov.¹³ The new president was already known for being a 'dirty-mouthed' and 'hardline' figure, and soon harsh criticism was levelled at parts of the prevailing system.¹⁴

Following the start of Mirziyoyev's presidency, the state's iron grip on Uzbek society was relaxed; a number of political prisoners were pardoned, the system of exit visas was abolished, border crossings were opened up, and the police were less

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Utrikesdepartementet, Mänskliga rättigheter, demokrati och rättsstatens principer i Uzbekistan 2015-2016, 26.04.2017, [url](#), s. 2, 5

⁸ United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Preliminary observations on the official visit to Uzbekistan (19-25 September 2019), 26.09.2019, [url](#)

⁹ United States Department of State, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Uzbekistan, 13.04.2016, [url](#)

¹⁰ Open Society Foundations, Tackling Corruption In Uzbekistan: A White Paper, 01.06.2016, [url](#); Norway. Landinfo, Respons. Usbekistan: Om muligheten til å «kjøpe seg fri» og muligheten til å forlate landet ved religiøs anklage, 23.03.2017, [url](#), p. 2

¹¹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 Country Report – Uzbekistan, 2018, [url](#), p. 6

¹² Anonymous source G, interview 2019; International Crisis Group, Uzbekistan: The Hundred Days, 29.03.2017, [url](#), p. i, 1; Carnegie Moscow Center, Who Will Be Uzbekistan's Next President?, 06.09.2016, [url](#)

¹³ International Crisis Group, 2017, p. i, 1; Anonymous source A, 2017

¹⁴ Anonymous source G, interview 2019; Carnegie Moscow Center, 06.09.2016

zealous in their monitoring of religious expression.¹⁵ 2017 was designated the “Year of Dialogue with the People”, and virtual and physical offices were set up to enable the public to lodge complaints, raise issues or submit proposals.¹⁶ Mirziyoyev outlined to the international community his goals of building a democratic state and a just society where “human interests” were prioritised.¹⁷

Sources consulted or reporting in late 2019 and early 2020 stated that a reversal was not possible. Extensive reforms had been initiated and the country had passed a ‘point of no return’.¹⁸ However, the reform processes were not directed towards democratisation, but rather have been characterised by observers as an authoritarian modernisation or upgrading of the political system. A selective adoption of economic and political reforms was undertaken with the aim of appeasing the population’s demands for democratisation, whilst the benefits derived from embracing globalisation and liberalisation largely accrued to the existing elite. The result was a softer authoritarian regime based on persuasion rather than coercion.¹⁹ Kazakhstan and China were cited as examples in analyses of possible state models.²⁰

Officially, the Uzbekistan 2030 Strategy is currently the most important document in force, seen as a cornerstone of all change in the country.²¹ The strategy was established by a presidential decree in September 2023²², preceded by strategies for 2022-2026²³ and 2017-2021²⁴, and updated in February 2026.²⁵ The current strategy establishes five priorities:

- Creating the right conditions for every person to realise their own potential
- Ensuring the well-being of the population through sustainable economic growth
- Conserving water resources and protecting the environment
- Ensuring the rule of law, organising public administration at the service of the people

¹⁵ Anonymous source C, 2017; Anonymous source B, 2017

¹⁶ Anonymous source D, 2019; Kolybashinka, Nina, Creating dialogue and citizen engagement – initial observations from Uzbekistan, 16.03.2018, [url](#); Uzbekistan, The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations, President’s address warmed people’s heart, 11.12.2018, [url](#)

¹⁷ Freedom House, Has Mirziyoyev Really Brought Religious Liberty to Uzbekistan, 16.01.2019, [url](#); Uzbekistan, Address by H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev President of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the General Debate of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 19.09.2017, [url](#)

¹⁸ United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, 26.09.2019; Anonymous source F, 2019

¹⁹ Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI), Mirziyoyev’s Uzbekistan: Democratization or Authoritarian Upgrading?, 2019, [url](#), p. 1; Europe - Central Asia Monitoring, Uzbekistan opening up, 21.07.2018, [url](#), p. 6

²⁰ Europe - Central Asia Monitoring, 21.07.2018, [url](#) p. 6; The Diplomat, Uzbekistan: Reforms Underway, but Democracy Still Out of Reach, 07.08.2019, [url](#)

²¹ Development Strategy Center, meeting 2026

²² Uzbekistan, Указ Президента Республики Узбекистан, от 11.09.2023 г. № УП-158, 11.09.2023, [url](#)

²³ Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026”, 28.01.2022, [url](#)

²⁴ Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Action Strategy for the Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, 07.02.2017, [url](#)

²⁵ Uzbekistan, Указ Президента Республики Узбекистан, от 16.02.2026 г. № УП-21, [url](#)

- Consistent continuation of the policy based on the principle of "a secure and peaceful state"

Under each priority a substantial number of goals are set out and for each goal key performance indicators are identified. For more information on the rule of law-related priority, see [chapter 3.1.4](#).

The political system under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev is characterised by researcher A, with expertise on Uzbekistan, as personalised and closely connected to family-based rule, with actors linked to the presidential family reportedly exercising influence across the state apparatus, from central institutions to regional and district levels.²⁶ Luca Anceschi, a researcher with expertise on Uzbekistan, recalls that Mirziyoyev was a powerful member of the ruling elite, serving as prime minister and political enforcer before assuming the presidency; his early years in office are therefore not characterised as a complete replacement of the former power centre. Over time, the government is said to have become more entrenched, with reduced incentives for political change and a stronger preference for maintaining the status quo. Decision-making, including at regional level, is described as increasingly personalistic and centred on a large presidential apparatus.²⁷

The reform agenda is primarily presented as economic and administrative. Its stated objectives are to modernise Uzbekistan economically, make the state more efficient, and integrate the country into the global economy, in contrast to the Karimov-era isolationism.²⁸ From a business and foreign-policy perspective, reforms are assessed in comparatively positive terms. The economy is more open, investments are entering the country, and economic interests are extending beyond narrow oligarchic circles.²⁹ At the same time, the pace and scope of reforms are said to have fluctuated in response to internal and external pressures. Researcher A identifies the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 as important context, alongside Russian influence, China, balancing relations with the EU and the broader West, Afghanistan-related security concerns, and threats linked to radical Islam. Economic liberalisation and modernisation are said to continue, while political reforms are delayed or postponed.³⁰

Luca Anceschi acknowledges improvements made within the reform work, but describes the realisation of rights as limited, particularly political rights and the absence of independent opposition parties. The trajectory is characterised as a deliberate outcome: the authorities have chosen to reform certain areas while preserving control in others. In this context, the concept of "authoritarian modernisation" is considered applicable, with emphasis on authoritarian rather than on modernisation.³¹

²⁶ Researcher A, interview 2026

²⁷ Luca Anceschi

²⁸ Researcher A; Journalist B, specialised in Central Asia, interview 2025

²⁹ Luca Anceschi

³⁰ Researcher A

³¹ Luca Anceschi

Implementation problems are reported. Mirziyoyev have launched ambitious reforms that transformed the country to the extent that it is in some respects unrecognisable compared with 2016. However, reform is assessed by the source as having plateaued (rather than clearly backslid). Legislation may be adopted, including on issues such as gender violence, but implementation and follow-through are described as limited. The legislation is often insufficiently robust, precluding effective implementation. Two fundamental obstacles are identified: corruption and vested interests, and a lack of reliable data. Data collection is described as weak, centralised, and affected by regional incentives not to report problems, as well as public distrust of the state. This makes it difficult to measure outcomes and assess societal change. At the same time, the source emphasises that Uzbekistan has no democratic tradition and that the authorities and society are learning new practices.³²

Genuine reforms have been reported in a number of areas, including in the cotton industry, where significant change with regard to forced labour is reported, albeit tempered by allegations of land confiscations by farmers. The motivation for reform in this sector is not presented as a sudden human-rights-driven shift, but rather as linked to investment needs and scaling up value chains.³³ There has also been a real effort to reform the civil service and move away from Soviet-influenced bureaucratic practices. Sources highlight younger, often foreign-trained Uzbek officials who are more commercially literate and who bring different expectations regarding how government should function.³⁴

³² Western Embassy, meeting 2026

³³ Kristian Lasslett, researcher with expertise on Uzbekistan, interview 2026

³⁴ Kristian Lasslett; Representatives of an international organization, meeting in 2026

2. Organisational structures within the JSS

The constitution of Uzbekistan, to which changes were made in 2023 after a disputed referendum³⁵, ensures democracy and a multi-party system and contains several fundamental principles for the democratic republic it establishes.³⁶ However, there is a discrepancy between the provisions of the Constitution and their practical implementation in several key areas.³⁷ While the constitution separates the powers among the legislative, executive and judicial branches, as well as between a strong presidency and the bicameral parliament (Oliy Majlis), the political system resembles a pyramid, with the president and his administration at the top. The status as “the fourth power” is held by the presidential administration”. It has no special power status de jure but de facto it wields great and largely unchallenged authority.³⁸

2.1 Institutions of JSS

2.1.1 The court system

The judiciary is mainly regulated by the constitution and by the laws “On courts” and “On the Supreme Council of Judges”. According to the constitution, justice shall be carried out only by court and the judicial authority shall function independently from the legislative and executive authorities, political parties, and other institutions of civil society. Judges shall be independent and subject solely to the Constitution and the law.³⁹

By law, the judicial system includes the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court and military courts and is structured on national, regional and district level depending on type of cases.⁴⁰

According to the constitution, the Supreme Judicial Council, shall act as a body of the court community and render support in observation of the constitutional principle of independence of the judiciary.⁴¹ Its activities are further regulated by the law “On the Supreme Council of Judges”. The council is, among other things, responsible for appointing and promoting judges (or proposing such appointments or promotions to the president, depending on which courts and which positions), as well

³⁵ Bertelsmann Stiftung (BTI), BTI 2026 Country Report – Uzbekistan, 26.03.2026, [url](#), p. 9; Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024 – Uzbekistan, 29.02.2024, [url](#)

³⁶ Uzbekistan, Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, [url](#)

³⁷ Utrikespolitiska Institutet, Landguiden [payment service], Modern historia, 25.02.2026

³⁸ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2026 Country Report - Uzbekistan, 26.03.2026, [url](#), p. 11

³⁹ Uzbekistan, Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, article 130-131, 136, [url](#)

⁴⁰ Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “About courts”, article 2, [url](#). Courts on regional and district level include Court of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regional and Tashkent city courts; Administrative Court of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regional and Tashkent city administrative courts; inter-district, district, city courts for civil cases; district and city courts for criminal cases; interdistrict, district, city economic courts; inter-district administrative courts.

⁴¹ Uzbekistan, Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, article 135, [url](#)

as dismissing (or proposing dismissals, depending on which courts and which positions) judges.⁴²

Judges of the Constitutional Court, the chairpersons and deputies of the Supreme Court and the Supreme Judicial Council are all elected by the Senate of the Oliy Majlis after nomination of the president. Judges of the Constitutional court are elected for ten-year terms without the right to re-election, while the chairpersons and deputies of the Supreme Court and Supreme Judicial Council are elected for five-year terms without the possibility of re-election after two terms in a row.⁴³

2.1.2 The Prosecutor's Office

The Prosecutor's Office is a centralised system of agencies headed by the Prosecutor General, who is appointed (and dismissed) by the President of Uzbekistan with the approval of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis for a term of five years. According to the constitution, the office supervises the accurate and uniform application of the law throughout the country. As stipulated in the Constitution, the prosecutorial bodies exercise their powers independently of other State bodies, other organisations and officials and are subject only to the Constitution and the laws of Uzbekistan.⁴⁴ The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) summarises the main tasks of the Prosecutor's office, based on the law "On prosecution service"⁴⁵, as follows:

the prosecutorial bodies supervise the enforcement of the law by various actors (so-called general supervision), including with a view to safeguarding the rights of citizens, supervise the enforcement of the law by the bodies conducting initial enquiries and investigations, co-ordinate efforts to combat crime, conduct preliminary investigations of offences, support the State prosecution in the courts, participate in the consideration of civil cases, economic disputes and cases involving administrative offences in the courts, and carry out the following tasks.⁴⁶

By law, the Prosecutor's office is organised on national, regional and district level: Prosecutor General's Office of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Karakalpakstan; regional and Tashkent city prosecutor's offices; district and city prosecutor's offices.⁴⁷

2.1.3 Police

The law "About the internal affairs bodies"⁴⁸ regulates, inter alia, the main principles, activities/responsibilities and obligations, organisation and working methods of the police. The law was adopted when Mirziyoyev served as acting president and came into force in 2017, ending a situation that had existed since Uzbekistan

⁴² Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan On the Supreme Council of Judges, article 7, [url](#)

⁴³ Uzbekistan, Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, article 132, 134-135, [url](#)

⁴⁴ Uzbekistan, Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, article 109, 143-146, [url](#)

⁴⁵ Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the Prosecutor's Office", article 4, [url](#)

⁴⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Baseline Report of the Fifth Round of Monitoring of Anti-Corruption Reforms in Uzbekistan, 2024, [url](#), p. 142

⁴⁷ Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the Prosecutor's Office", article 10, [url](#)

⁴⁸ Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "About the internal affairs bodies", [url](#)

gained independence, in which the police force had operated solely under internal and provisional regulations.⁴⁹

The Ministry of Internal Affairs⁵⁰ is organised at the central, regional and local level. The police law determines that the system of internal affairs bodies consists of:

- Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan
- Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Karakalpakstan
- Main Departments of Internal Affairs of Tashkent City and Tashkent Region
- Regional departments of internal affairs
- Departments of internal affairs of districts and cities
- Departments of ensuring transport security
- Institutions for the execution of punishment
- Divisions of internal affairs bodies at extremely important and classified facilities
- Town departments of internal affairs
- Mahalla law enforcement agencies and base stations of internal affairs bodies
- Educational and medical institutions
- Other divisions and organisations established to carry out the tasks assigned to internal affairs bodies.⁵¹

The system of internal affairs bodies also includes guard troops, which enjoy the rights and privileges established by law for military personnel of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as troops for ensuring security at international airports.⁵²

The law also establishes that base stations are the main sub-unit of district and city internal affairs departments, to ensure cooperation between internal affairs agencies and the public and directly ensure the maintenance of public order, the safety of citizens, the prevention of offenses, and the fight against crime in villages and mahallas. In addition, neighbourhood law enforcement agencies are a structure that directly implements the activities of internal affairs bodies in maintaining public order in neighbourhoods, preventing offenses and fighting crime, as well as organising the cooperation of internal affairs bodies, other law enforcement agencies and public structures in the area of neighbourhoods in order to ensure the safety and peace of citizens.⁵³

⁴⁹ Eurasianet, Uzbekistan: Police Shake-Up Part of Elite Struggle?, 12.04.2017, [url](#)

⁵⁰ Uzbekistan, Ministry of Internal Affairs, [url](#)

⁵¹ Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "About the internal affairs bodies", article 13, 15, [url](#)

⁵² Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "About the internal affairs bodies", article 13, 15, [url](#)

⁵³ Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "About the internal affairs bodies", article 13, 15, [url](#)

2.1.4 The Ombudsman for Human Rights

The Ombudsman for Human Rights was established in 1995. The law on the ombudsman entered into force 1997 and was most recently amended in 2024.⁵⁴ With the latest amendment of the law and the changes made to the constitution, the ombudsman has been given more authority and its independence has been strengthened.⁵⁵

The law stipulates that the Ombudsman is elected by the chambers of Oliy Majlis for a five-year term, and that the president introduces the candidacy for the office of Ombudsman. According to the same law, the principal objectives of the Ombudsman include the following:

- involvement in implementation of public policy concerning human rights
- freedoms and legitimate interests
- exercising parliamentary control over compliance with legislation on human rights and freedoms by institutions and officials
- considering appeals on violations of human rights, freedoms and legitimate interests
- examining implementation of legislation on human rights and freedoms and developing proposals for its improvement
- taking appropriate measures to prevent incidents of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in places of detention with restrictions on movement
- raising awareness on the norms of international and national law on human rights and freedoms, as well as assisting in enhancing the legal consciousness and legal culture among the population
- developing international cooperation in the field of human rights and freedoms.⁵⁶

The institution has offices in all 14 administrative subjects. According to the Ombudsman, the number of complaints is increasing from year to year, partly due to an increased trust in the institution, but also due to the expansion of digital pathways. Currently, the ombudsman received 26,000 complaints last year.⁵⁷ It can be noted that the ombudsman received approximately 23,000 applications in 2024 and less than 19,000 complaints in 2023.⁵⁸ In 2025, 200 measures – submissions,

⁵⁴ Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the commissioner of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for human rights (Ombudsman)”, [url](#)

⁵⁵ Ombudsman for Human Rights, meeting 2026

⁵⁶ Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the commissioner of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for human rights (Ombudsman)”, article 6, 10, [url](#)

⁵⁷ Ombudsman for Human Rights, meeting 2026

⁵⁸ Uzbekistan, Ombudsman for Human Rights, On the activities of the Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman) in 2024, 2025, [url](#), p. 4

demands, statements of claim and lawsuits, and opinions – were taken by the Ombudsman⁵⁹, compared to 182 in 2024 and 170 in 2023.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Ombudsman for Human Rights, meeting 2026

⁶⁰ Uzbekistan, Ombudsman for Human Rights, On the activities of the Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman) in 2024, 2025, p. 7, [url](#)

3. Reforms within JSS

3.1 Examples of current and undertaken reforms

Reforms of the JSS began as early as Mirziyoyev's time as interim president in autumn 2016. Decrees issued during this initial period addressed the need for comprehensive reforms of the judiciary and anti-corruption measures⁶¹, and Mirziyoyev stated that it was time for state bodies to work for the people and not the other way round, a phrase that subsequently came to accompany the reform process like a slogan.⁶²

Virtual offices were set up where the public could submit complaints, raise issues or make suggestions.⁶³ Fundamental documents for the reform process were adopted following the presidential election in late 2016. An anti-corruption law⁶⁴ was followed by a decree on establishing a national anti-corruption programme and the creation of a national inter-agency commission against corruption⁶⁵. Uzbekistan's development strategy for 2017–2021 (which was subsequently renewed for the following periods, see [Chapter 1.2.2](#) and below) set out priority areas for the JSS.⁶⁶

A further decree in 2017, proposed measures to improve the structure and efficiency of the justice system. The Supreme Court and the Supreme Economic Court were merged into a single institution, and the creation of a Supreme Judicial Council tasked with evaluating judges' performance and proposing candidates for judicial appointments was proposed.⁶⁷ In addition, there appeared to be a gradual confrontation with powerful institutions such as the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the security services. Mirziyoyev stated the need to establish effective control over the Prosecutor's Office to prevent it from continuing to be viewed as a repressive institution.⁶⁸

Major personnel and structural changes followed in 2017 and 2018. In a speech, Mirziyoyev stated that 80% of the staff had been replaced.⁶⁹ The Ministry of Internal Affairs underwent similar reforms, involving extensive reorganisation and

⁶¹ Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program, Judicial and Governance Reform in Uzbekistan, 05.03.2018, [url](#), p. 6, 23-24

⁶² Tashkent Times, "It is big time the government bodies serve the people, not vice versa" – Shavkat Mirziyoyev, 26.10.2016, [url](#)

⁶³ Anonymous source D, 2019; Kolybashinka, Nina, 16.03.2018, [url](#); Uzbekistan, The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations, 11.12.2018, [url](#)

⁶⁴ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Anti-corruption reforms in Uzbekistan. 4th round of monitoring of the Istanbul Anti-Corruption Action Plan, 21.03.2019, [url](#), p. 40

⁶⁵ Tashkent Times, President Mirziyoyev signs National Anti-Corruption Program for 2017-2018, 06.02.2017, [url](#)

⁶⁶ Tashkent Times, Uzbekistan's Development Strategy for 2017-2021 has been adopted following public consultation, 08.02.2017, [url](#)

⁶⁷ Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program, 05.03.2018, p. 31; Tashkent Times, President Mirziyoyev decrees to merge Supreme and Supreme Economic Courts, 22.02.2017, [url](#)

⁶⁸ Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program, 05.03.2018-03-05, p. 32; Tashkent Times, President Mirziyoyev meets prosecutors on Saturday, 08.01.2017, [url](#)

⁶⁹ Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Uzbek President: Prosecutors 'Are The Biggest Thieves', 04.08.2017, [url](#)

vetting of staff.⁷⁰ In a speech to parliament, Mirziyoyev addressed the need to reform the security service.⁷¹ The head of the service was replaced after more than two decades in the post. A purge of staff, a reduction in areas of responsibility and symbolic measures such as the renaming of the agency and the relocation of its office to the outskirts of Tashkent followed.⁷²

3.1.1 The court system

The current structure of the court system, the establishment of the Supreme Judicial Council, and changes to the appointment procedure of judges and their terms (see [chapter 2.1.1](#)), were all part of changes made within the reform-framework.⁷³ Other early presidential decrees included measures to strengthen the rights of persons suspected of crimes, including an explicit prohibition on courts using evidence obtained under torture, and measures to increase the transparency within the court system as well as salary levels.⁷⁴ In 2020, a presidential decree on measures to strengthen the independence of judges and increase the efficiency of corruption-prevention within the court system was issued.⁷⁵ In 2023, a presidential decree approved a strategy for the period 2023-2026 aimed at raising the judicial system to a “qualitatively new level”.⁷⁶ During 2025, several presidential decrees were issued concerning administrative courts and digitalisation⁷⁷, but also on measures related to efficiency and transparency of the court system and to the strengthening of judicial independence, including further changes to appointment procedures.⁷⁸

With regard to the judiciary, measures have reportedly been introduced with the stated aim of strengthening the courts and reducing corruption and arbitrariness. These include the random allocation of cases to judges in civil courts, although not in criminal courts, substantial salary increases for judges, and an apparent increase

⁷⁰ Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program, Judicial and Governance Reform in Uzbekistan, 05.03.2018, p. 32; Eurasianet, Uzbekistan: Police Shake-Up Part of Elite Struggle?, 12.04.2017, [url](#)

⁷¹ Eurasianet, Uzbekistan: President Calls for Clipping Security Services' Wings, 22.12.2017, [url](#)

⁷² EurAsia Daily, Resignation of Uzbek Security Service chief – end of all-mighty minister, 31.01.2018, [url](#); Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Uzbek security body's elite forces returned to police, 05.02.2018, [from BBC Monitoring [payment service]] [url](#); European Parliaments Research Service, Uzbekistan comes in from the cold. A new era of reforms, 17.12.2018, [url](#), p. 3; Ferghana News Agency, Article looks at Uzbek leader's security policy, 10.09.2019, [from BBC Monitoring [payment service]], [url](#)

⁷³ Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to radically improve the structure and increase the efficiency of the judicial system of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, 21.02.2017, [url](#)

⁷⁴ Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On additional measures to strengthen guarantees of the rights and freedoms of citizens in judicial and investigative activities”, 01.12.2017, [url](#); Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to further improve the judicial system and increase trust in the judiciary”, 13.07.2018, [url](#)

⁷⁵ Uzbekistan, Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to ensure the true independence of judges and increase the efficiency of preventing corruption in the judicial system”, 07.12.2020, [url](#)

⁷⁶ Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On additional measures to further expand access to justice and improve the efficiency of courts”, 16.01.2023, [url](#)

⁷⁷ Uzbekistan, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan decision “On additional measures to introduce modern mechanisms of legal protection of the rights of citizens and business entities”, 30.01.2025, [url](#); Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On additional measures to improve access to justice by introducing artificial intelligence technologies into the work of courts, as well as improving the logistical support of the judicial system”, 21.08.2025, [url](#)

⁷⁸ Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to improve the efficiency and transparency of the activities of judicial community bodies, as well as further strengthening guarantees of judicial independence”, 24.11.2025, [url](#)

in judicial powers.⁷⁹ Other measures have included changes to the terms of appointment of judges and the establishment of the Supreme Judicial Council, together with a higher judicial school under its authority.⁸⁰

3.1.2 The Prosecutor's office

In relation to the Prosecutor's office, a presidential decree issued in 2017 sets the priority task of the institution as “‘Serving the interests of the people’ by strengthening the rule of law in society and implementing effective oversight of the unconditional implementation of laws aimed at the implementation of democratic, socio-economic reforms, and the reliable protection of human rights and freedoms”.⁸¹ In 2019, a presidential decree was issued ordering the agency to reduce its staff by 23 per cent. This resulted in just under 1,200 prosecutors, including two deputy public prosecutors, being made redundant.⁸² Another presidential decree from 2025 approved a digitalisation strategy of the Prosecutor's office and related measures to be undertaken.⁸³

3.1.3 The police

With regard to police reforms, a presidential decree was issued in 2017 which identified a number of problem areas and measures that needed to be taken. The presidential decree identified a number of shortcomings:

- a lack of clear division of tasks and functional responsibilities between the national, regional and local levels of the organisation
- an uneven distribution of staff
- a lack of dialogue with the public
- the police were reactive rather than proactive and needed to adopt a more preventive approach
- the police failed to protect young people from destructive ideologies, such as terrorism and religious extremism;
- and lacked modern equipment.

The decree also highlighted the prevalence of bribery and abuse of power within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, its superficial handling of complaints and the lack

⁷⁹ Researcher A

⁸⁰ Joanna Lillis, a journalist based in Central Asia, interview 2026

⁸¹ Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On strengthening the role of the prosecutor's office in implementing socio-economic reforms and modernizing the country, ensuring reliable protection of human rights and freedoms”, 18.04.2017, [url](#)

⁸² Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to fundamentally improve the system of business protection and optimize the activities of prosecutor's offices”, 15.03.2019, [url](#); The Diplomat, Uzbekistan Makes Serious Cuts to the Prosecutor General's Office, 30.03.2019, [url](#)

⁸³ Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the approval of the Digital Prosecutor's Office 2030 Strategy and measures for its effective implementation”, 03.11.2025, [url](#)

of analysis of the issues raised, as well as the absence of an effective reporting system on civil servants within the Ministry.⁸⁴

In 2019, a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs stated that many reforms had been implemented, which had resulted in resources being transferred to lower levels of the hierarchy, to the regional and local levels.⁸⁵ Another source confirmed these changes at the time. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was described as a strictly hierarchical and military-style organisation, but greater emphasis was now placed on police work and more resources were allocated to the local level.⁸⁶

A presidential decree in 2020 identified, among other things, the need to introduce mechanisms to prevent torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as increased liability for such acts; the need to introduce modern information and communication technologies into crime investigations; a number of measures to strengthen the rights of crime suspects.⁸⁷

A large number of presidential resolutions as well as resolutions of the Cabinet of ministers were issued,⁸⁸ up until another presidential decree relating to police reform was issued in 2021. A broad range of measures are identified in the decree, out of which some defines a new organising mechanism which further decentralises police activities (which is also reflected in changes to the police law, see [chapter 2.1.3](#)).⁸⁹ The decree has been followed by a large number of additional resolutions.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ Uzbekistan, Decree President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to radically improve the efficiency of the internal affairs agencies, strengthening their responsibility for ensuring public order, reliable protection of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens", 10.04.2017, [url](#)

⁸⁵ Uzbekistan, Representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2019

⁸⁶ Anonymous source E, 2019

⁸⁷ Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to further strengthen guarantees for the protection of individual rights and freedoms in judicial and investigative activities", 10.08.2020, [url](#)

⁸⁸ The following are examples of such decisions of particular relevance: Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On organizational measures for further improvement of the activities of internal affairs agencies", 17.04.2017, [url](#); Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to radically improve the activities of internal affairs agencies in the field of crime investigation", 01.05.2017, [url](#); Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to radically improve the activities of crime prevention units of internal affairs agencies", 01.05.2017, [url](#); Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to radically improve the activities of internal affairs agencies in the field of maintaining public order and ensuring public safety", 22.05.2017, [url](#); Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to radically improve the procedure for working with personnel of internal affairs agencies and the organization of their service", 30.11.2017, [url](#); Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to implement an effective system of management, control and work with personnel of internal affairs agencies", 24.08.2018, [url](#); Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the implementation of a qualitatively new system for managing the forces and resources of internal affairs agencies in the field of crime prevention and combating crime in the Tashkent region", 30.05.2019, [url](#);

⁸⁹ Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to raise the activities of internal affairs agencies in the area of public safety and crime control to a qualitatively new level", 26.03.2021, [url](#)

⁹⁰ For example: Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On additional organizational measures to further improve the activities of internal affairs agencies in the field of public safety and crime control", 02.04.2021, [url](#); Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to introduce a qualitatively new system of training professional personnel for internal affairs agencies", 15.04.2021, [url](#); Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On measures to further improve the forensic activities of internal affairs agencies with the widespread introduction of the achievements of modern science", 08.02.2022, [url](#); Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On additional measures to transform internal affairs agencies into a

3.1.4 The Uzbekistan 2030 Strategy

As stated in section 1.2.2., the Uzbekistan 2030 Strategy sets out a large number of goals related to the priority “Ensuring the rule of law, organising public administration at the service of the people”. To summarise, a number of goals relate to decentralisation, digitalisation and service provisions to citizens, others concern the role of the parliament and political parties, state civil service, civil society and media. A number of goals, with key performance indicators, are more directly related to the institutions of the JSS:

- Ensuring the primacy of the Constitution and laws, ensuring reliable protection of human rights and freedoms, making it the main criterion of judicial reforms
- Establishing effective judicial control over the activities of state bodies and officials and further development of the administrative justice system
- Increasing the level of access to justice by strengthening the independence of the judiciary and ensuring transparency in its activities
- Directing the activities of law enforcement agencies to the protection of human interests, dignity and rights
- Fundamentally increasing the potential of the Advocacy Institute, as well as to develop a system of providing qualified legal assistance
- Increasing the efficiency of the system for eliminating corruption factors, to rapidly continue the work of forming an intolerant attitude towards corruption in society.⁹¹

With regard to concluded or ongoing reforms within the JSS, the Development Strategy Center⁹² highlights the following:

- Administrative courts have been established where citizens are entitled to bring legal action against government institutions. Almost half of the decisions of the relevant bodies ended in favour of the citizens.
- The revised constitution establishes that any ambiguity in legal issues (if e.g. laws and bylaws contradict each other) must serve in favour of the citizens.
- The justice system is being brought closer to the citizens – claims (e.g. civil or commercial) can be made online. Digitalisation takes place also in

people's professional structure and to orient their work toward closer interaction with the population”, 21.01.2023, [url](#)

⁹¹ Uzbekistan, Указ Президента Республики Узбекистан, от 16.02.2026 г. № УП-21, [url](#)

⁹² The Development Strategy Center has been established by several Uzbek public and state organizations, with the intention to coordinate implementation of the national strategy. Please see <https://strategy.uz/>.

criminal cases, with courts publishing decisions online. For minor offenses, citizens can go to the police instead of the court for their hearings.

- Digitalisation in interrogation rooms; all rooms are equipped with cameras, recordings made to reduce ill-treatment. It is also possible to participate in criminal hearings from prisons, instead of going to the courts.
- Enforcement of court decisions; since 2026 the prosecutor's office is introducing AI to analyse and enhance enforcements of court decisions.
- As an effect of reforms and the revised constitution, a person is no longer held responsible for crimes committed by a relative.⁹³

3.2 Assessments of the implementation of reforms

Overall, representatives of an international organisation acknowledge that steps have been taken forward and that there is reason to commend the government for certain developments, while also stressing that implementation and follow-up remain challenges. Ombudsperson institutions are seen as examples of steps taken under the current administration to address overdue reforms. These reportedly include ombudspersons for prisoners, human rights, children and businesses.⁹⁴

3.2.1 The court system

In 2024, OECD concluded that the Supreme Judicial Council did not fully meet the definition of a judicial administration body, as it did not appoint and dismiss all categories of judges. The appointments and dismissals of judges of higher courts were made by political bodies, on the basis of the Supreme Judicial Council's recommendations.⁹⁵ Others opine that the Supreme Judicial Council in practice has not been able to fulfil its function of overseeing judicial independence and that its practical effect is extremely limited, partly because the council is weighted by presidential appointees.⁹⁶

The broader assessment of judicial reform is mixed, but generally cautious. President Mirziyoyev associated his reform agenda with judicial reform early in his presidency. However, judicial reform (along with political reform) is assessed as more politically sensitive than economic reform, and momentum has declined over the past five years. Uzbekistan remains far from a situation in which most people could expect a fair trial, whether in political or non-political cases.⁹⁷ More critical assessments describe the justice system as fundamentally arbitrary, judges as

⁹³ Development Strategy Center

⁹⁴ Representatives of an international organization

⁹⁵ OECD, Baseline Report of the Fifth Round of Monitoring of Anti-Corruption Reforms in Uzbekistan, 2024, [url](#), p. 11-12

⁹⁶ Joanna Lillis

⁹⁷ Joanna Lillis

officials who follow orders of the executive branch, and the judicial system as lacking structural independence.⁹⁸

One source states that reforms are taking place at a high pace and that Uzbekistan could appear to meet formal indicators, including in contexts such as accession to international economic frameworks. However, arbitrary application of law continues and core human rights obligations are routinely violated.⁹⁹

Another source similarly assesses that extensive formal reforms have been introduced, but that the underlying logic of the government, including in courts and legal proceedings, remains political where political interests are involved. In that assessment, reforms are often linked to international image building and efforts to attract foreign investment, rather than to a comprehensive transformation of the rule of law.¹⁰⁰ Despite personnel changes, the justice sector is assessed by another source as remaining essentially unchanged in character.¹⁰¹

3.2.2 The prosecutor's office

The prosecutor's office has also undergone visible changes, including salary increases, retraining, capacity-building programmes, and extensive personnel changes.¹⁰² However, it remains unclear whether these changes have produced increased transparency or accountability, or whether they amount to genuine reform or rather an expansion of the office's powers.¹⁰³

3.2.3 Lawyers

The legal profession has also been affected by reform initiatives. Lawyers are issued a licence once which remains valid indefinitely. However, under law, advocates are required to complete professional development training every third year at the specialized legal training institution under the Ministry of Justice. One source refers to major barriers to legal assistance in sensitive cases, including cases involving activists or politically sensitive matters as well as corruption at the highest levels of government. Lawyers are generally well aware of the "red lines" that cannot be crossed. In politically sensitive cases they almost never give media interviews out of fear of saying something that could be interpreted negatively, and generally limit themselves to providing formal legal representation. Qualification commissions within the Chamber of Lawyers have the authority to revoke an advocate's licence for alleged disciplinary violations, which can sometimes be based on questionable or politically motivated grounds.¹⁰⁴

3.2.4 Legal safeguards and the prevalence of torture

Several legal safeguards have reportedly been codified or strengthened. These include the inadmissibility of evidence obtained through torture, reforms relating to

⁹⁸ Journalist A (specialised in Central Asia), interviews 2026; Freedom for Eurasia, interviews 2025-2026

⁹⁹ Uzbek Forum for Human Rights, interview 2025

¹⁰⁰ Researcher B with expertise on Uzbekistan, interview 2026

¹⁰¹ Luca Anceschi

¹⁰² Researcher A; Luca Anceschi

¹⁰³ Researcher A

¹⁰⁴ Uzbek Forum for Human Rights

habeas corpus [the right of a detainee to challenge the lawfulness of a confinement], and constitutional reforms in 2023 requiring law enforcement officials to read Miranda-type rights to persons being arrested [to inform persons being arrested about their rights before questioning]. Joanna Lillis notes that while establishing the obligation to inform detainees of their rights is an important formal step, particularly in a context where individuals have often been poorly informed of their rights when dealing with law enforcement, the implementation of this measure is difficult to quantify.¹⁰⁵

In relation to torture, the same source assesses that the judiciary has not reached the point where defendants' claims of torture are taken seriously, referring to information that 97% of torture complaints in 2022 were rejected.¹⁰⁶

Mirziyoyev sent signals early in his presidency that torture by law enforcement would be addressed, and at least one emblematic case from the Karimov period resulted in prison sentences for the perpetrators. However, reports of torture continue and according to Lillis likely represent only the visible part of a larger pattern. Torture is believed to remain widespread in prisons and places of detention, including for the purpose of coercing confessions. Such conduct is considered deeply embedded in the way law enforcement has operated for decades, making it difficult to eradicate.¹⁰⁷

3.2.5 The police

One source states that reforms usually concern the prosecutor's office and the judiciary, while no significant improvements have been observed in the police system over the past ten years from approximately 2016 to 2026. Unresolved issues reportedly include poor working conditions, low levels of education and entrenched working culture.¹⁰⁸ Another source is not aware of major changes to police powers under Mirziyoyev and assesses that there has not been a great deal of changes in police behaviour. Broader administrative reforms, including dismissals of civil servants in 2025, mainly target local administrations rather than law enforcement, which appears to be comparatively protected from such reforms.¹⁰⁹

The unrest in Karakalpakstan in 2022¹¹⁰ is presented as a significant test of the reform agenda by one source. Following the outbreak of violence, credible reports referred to excessive use of force by law enforcement, deaths and torture. The authorities failed this test because there was no open investigation or fair trials. Only a small number of officers were imprisoned, despite reports that torture against detainees was widespread, while more than 60 Karakalpak civilians were sentenced to prison for protest related activities.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁵ Joanna Lillis

¹⁰⁶ Joanna Lillis

¹⁰⁷ Joanna Lillis

¹⁰⁸ Researcher A

¹⁰⁹ Joanna Lillis

¹¹⁰ For more information, see SMA and DIS, Uzbekistan Fundamental Freedoms and Migration, 2026

¹¹¹ Joanna Lillis

3.2.6 The mahalla system

The mahalla system¹¹² is another recurring theme. The state has introduced and implemented the placement of seven officials from different institutions within each mahalla, the so-called “Mahalla seven” system.¹¹³

According to a representative of the Uzbek Mahalla Association, Uzbekistan comprises 6,992 mahallas, each with a uniform composition and standardised organisational structure.¹¹⁴ The leadership of each mahalla is composed of the following:

- a mahalla chairperson
- an assistant to the hokim¹¹⁵
- a youth leader
- a women’s representative
- a police officer responsible for law and order
- a social worker and
- a tax officer.¹¹⁶

According to the Development Strategy Center, the new format of the mahalla institution is an important part of the public administration reform. The mahallas are categorised as NGOs and gathers society in one place, but with features of a government. Since the new reforms, local issues are preferably to be solved in the neighbourhoods or regions, which is why powers were transferred to the mahalla. Before the reforms, a mahalla consisted of only one chairperson, while now it has become institutionalised with the “Mahalla seven”. The mahalla’s main objective is to serve as a facilitative body, acting on behalf of both the citizen and the state.¹¹⁷

The mahalla system is described as more formalised than during the Soviet period and more trusted by the population than government agencies.¹¹⁸ A mahalla typically covers between 100 and 1,000 families, and persons seeking divorce, including victims of abuse, are required to go through the mahalla before approaching a

¹¹² The most traditional form of community based public association within the Uzbek civil society is the mahalla, which function as self-governing bodies playing an important role in resolving family and neighbour disputes and in maintaining the community. Bertelsmann Stiftung (BTI), BTI 2026 Country Report – Uzbekistan, 26 March 2026, [url](#), pp. 32

¹¹³ Researcher A; IOM, meeting 2026. The current system of seven officials from different institutions was introduced in 2023. See for example Uzbekistan. President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Issues of Further Strengthening the Makhalla System Discussed, 26.09.2023, [url](#)

¹¹⁴ Uzbek Mahalla Association, meeting 2026

¹¹⁵ Hokims can be described as governors and are part of the executive branch. Each region, and the city of Tashkent, has a president-appointed hokim (regional governor) and each district and city within a region has a hokim (district or city governor). Please see The Diplomat, Hokim Hubbub: Making Sense of Local Government Shuffles in Uzbekistan, 06.08.2018, [url](#)

¹¹⁶ Researcher A; IOM

¹¹⁷ Development Strategy Center

¹¹⁸ IOM

court.¹¹⁹ The institution has been characterised as combining the functions of a parish council, neighbourhood watch, and security service, and described by a diplomatic source as oppressive in character.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Representatives of an international organization

¹²⁰ Western Embassy

4. Assessments of the functionality of JSS

Overall, a Western embassy makes the assessment that the Uzbek state is broadly capable of providing security for its citizens, and does it in the vast majority of cases. However, in sensitive issues, the boundary between state interests and citizen protection becomes less clearly defined.¹²¹

4.1 Division of powers and relative influence

The division of powers in practice is briefly introduced in the introduction to chapter 2, of which formal legal mandates can provide only a partial understanding.

The JSS is described as highly centralised and presidential, with decision-making running from the top down.¹²² The relative influence of state institutions appears to depend not only on formal legal powers, but also on informal authority, personal networks, and regional power networks among senior officials. The division of power is accordingly difficult to assess, as influence depends largely on the position of specific individuals within the apparatus and on informal relationships rather than formal structures, and the overall functioning of the system is characterised as difficult to monitor.¹²³

Within this framework, the State Security Service is assessed as particularly powerful, with its preferences reportedly transmitted through the police.¹²⁴ The president sought to reduce the influence of the service until approximately 2019–2020, after which it appeared to regain influence.¹²⁵

Researcher A also characterises the Prosecutor's office as a central actor in the Uzbek power structure. From a formal perspective, the Prosecutor's office has a broad constitutional mandate to oversee the implementation and enforcement of law across all areas of public life, which gives the institution extensive powers. In practice, the Prosecutor's office is one of the strongest institutions in Uzbekistan, alongside the State Security Service. Although the judiciary has a broad legal mandate and constitutes a large institution, its practical influence is described as limited, particularly in relation to the Prosecutor's office. There is also a wider post-Soviet administrative understanding that the Prosecutor's office is the institution most capable of implementing state policy. The prosecution office is described as having the capacity, experience and coercive tools needed to implement presidential instructions efficiently. This is part of the broader governance system in Uzbekistan.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Western Embassy

¹²² Western Embassy

¹²³ Representatives of an international organization; Western Embassy

¹²⁴ Western Embassy

¹²⁵ Researcher A

¹²⁶ Researcher A

4.2 Political influence

Bertelsmann Stiftung emphasises the dominant role played by the executive branch. It notes that the judiciary notionally is independent from the executive, but describes how it remains vulnerable to executive pressure.¹²⁷ Similarly, in the report covering 2023 on human rights practises in Uzbekistan, the US Department of State concludes that while the constitution provides for an independent judiciary, the government generally do not respect judicial independence and impartiality. The department also notes that members of the judiciary occasionally are subjected to inappropriate pressure from the Prosecutor General's Office and other law enforcement bodies with the aim of rendering desired verdicts.¹²⁸

According to Researcher A, courts have become more efficient and more independent. Positive developments in transparency are noted, including random allocation of cases to judges in civil courts, online access to court decisions, and, until recently, online broadcasting of court hearings. However, these developments are described as applying primarily to non-political cases, while cases that are political, high-profile, involve opposition figures, criticism of the president, or concern LGBTQ-related issues, proceedings are politicised, subject to government control, and often less transparent than ordinary cases.¹²⁹

Executive and political influence over judicial outcomes is described as pervasive. Cases in which individuals with political power have a vested interest are assessed as subject to political interference¹³⁰, and such influence is reported as present at all levels of the judiciary.¹³¹ The state and the political leadership are characterised as closely intertwined, with the implementation of laws, accountability, civil society, and economic actors all affected by the central role of the political leadership.¹³²

Beyond formal political pressure, informal influence and personal connections are noted as significant factors in private disputes. It is further reported that where an official is accused of wrongdoing, the person making the allegation may face a higher risk of prosecution than the official under investigation.¹³³ It is also noted that perceptions of political influence may be shaped by the legacy of a highly repressive period, making it difficult to distinguish between actual interference and the lingering effect of institutional intimidation.¹³⁴

The prosecutor's office is also reported to be affected by political hierarchy. According to Researcher A, this applies to influence that originate from the presidential administration, while it may be more reluctant to follow instructions from other government bodies due to its supervisory role over other state institutions.¹³⁵

¹²⁷ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2026 Country Report - Uzbekistan, 26.03.2026, [url](#), p. 12

¹²⁸ United States Department of State, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2023 - Uzbekistan, 22.04.2024, [url](#)

¹²⁹ Researcher A

¹³⁰ Kristian Lasslett

¹³¹ Journalist C, specialized in Central Asia, interview 2025

¹³² Luca Anceschi

¹³³ Freedom for Eurasia

¹³⁴ Journalist C

¹³⁵ Researcher A

According to Freedom for Eurasia, the justice system is structured in such a way that acquittals are uncommon unless an additional incentive, such as bribery or connections, is present.¹³⁶ Journalist A notes that defendants are rarely acquitted on technical grounds or due to procedural violations during investigations, with the latter being a common practice. Prosecutors and judges are characterised as operating within the same punitive system inherited from the Soviet period. According to this source, judges rarely criticise prosecutors during trials, and a court ruling against the state would in most cases occur only if permitted by the government.¹³⁷ Somewhat related, one source identifies the continued reliance on confessions rather than evidence in criminal investigations as a central problem.¹³⁸

Luca Anceschi states that individuals must be careful when challenging the government because the government will prevail at every level, and the judiciary is not independent.¹³⁹ Joanna Lillis identifies the lack of presumption of innocence and prosecutorial bias as central problems. According to this source, judges and prosecutors appear to stand on one side, with the accused on the other. At the same time, an increase in acquittals can be noted, from six in the last year of Karimov's rule to 867 in 2018 and 723 in 2024. This increase suggests that some courts now assess some accused persons as innocent, although it also notes that the trend has stagnated and that some acquittals may have been requested by prosecutors. The source opines that a large numbers of non-political trials are unlikely to be fair, and further states that the possibility of a fair trial depends on circumstances, connections, corruption, impunity and whether a case is political. Trials involving human-rights activists are described as almost certain not to be fair.¹⁴⁰

4.3 Corruption

In its Corruption Perception Index 2025, Transparency International ranked Uzbekistan in place 124 out of 181 countries (with the score 31 of 100).¹⁴¹

4.3.1 Corruption within the court system

Within the court system, corruption is described as present but difficult to quantify. One source notes that media reports occasionally refer to judges being arrested for taking bribes, but considers such cases to function primarily as a public demonstration rather than as evidence of systematic enforcement. The same source does not identify a clear positive or negative trend in judicial corruption since the Karimov period or since 2020, and assesses corruption among judges as less prevalent than in local government and the prosecutor's office.¹⁴² However, according to one source, defendants may pay bribes to obtain more lenient sentences, although paying for an acquittal is described as virtually impossible given the low number of acquittals.¹⁴³ Access to justice is described as contingent on personal connections

¹³⁶ Freedom for Eurasia

¹³⁷ Journalist A

¹³⁸ Researcher C, with expertise on Uzbekistan, interviews 2026

¹³⁹ Luca Anceschi

¹⁴⁰ Joanna Lillis

¹⁴¹ Transparency International, 2026, Corruption Perceptions Index 2025, [url](#)

¹⁴² Researcher A

¹⁴³ Joanna Lillis

rather than the impartial application of the law¹⁴⁴, both in bringing a case to court and preventing a case from reaching court.¹⁴⁵ Access to justice varies widely, depending on social class, education and geography. Better educated persons in more developed areas are assessed as more likely to be able to access justice than poor, ill-educated persons in rural areas, who may not know where to turn.¹⁴⁶

Even in private disputes without political influence, the outcome may depend on the status and networks of the parties. Judges may be approached through lawyers or personal connections, although ordinary cases may also be decided according to law. High caseloads among judges are mentioned as an additional factor that may affect the quality of judicial review.¹⁴⁷

4.3.2 Corruption within the police

Corruption is also described as widespread in the police system. One source characterises corruption in the police as endemic and also prevalent in local settings. Police officers are said to expect informal payments, including for speeding up administrative procedures and for allowing persons who have committed offences to reach an informal understanding with the police.¹⁴⁸

Another source considers that some progress has been made regarding low-level police corruption, referring to cases in which police officers have been held accountable for conduct that previously would have gone unpunished, and to reporting in Uzbek-language media in a way that did not occur under Karimov.¹⁴⁹ However, the overall assessment remains cautious. A separate source describes the police and the State Security Service as continuing to operate with a mindset shaped by the previous 25 years, viewing their role as protecting the government rather than serving the population. Examples of misconduct, serious mistreatment and prosecutorial inaction are cited as indications of lawlessness and weak accountability at the local level.¹⁵⁰

Citizens now have several channels through which police misconduct may be reported. One such mechanism is an online portal, through which complaints are submitted centrally and then forwarded to regional and local levels. An official response is required within 14 days. However, the mechanism is described as bureaucratic, and there is no guarantee that a complaint will be resolved.¹⁵¹

Legally educated persons who know their rights are more likely to use formal channels effectively, especially in cases concerning police inaction. During the first two years of Mirziyoyev's presidency, the official complaint mechanism was

¹⁴⁴ Researcher A

¹⁴⁵ Joanna Lillis

¹⁴⁶ Joanna Lillis

¹⁴⁷ Researcher B

¹⁴⁸ Researcher A

¹⁴⁹ Journalist C

¹⁵⁰ Uzbek Forum for Human Rights

¹⁵¹ Researcher A

reportedly more effective, but its effectiveness has since declined, primarily because complaints may eventually be returned to the alleged perpetrator for review.¹⁵²

Social media, particularly Telegram channels, is described as a more effective mechanism for publicising corruption and misconduct involving the police and prosecutor's office. State bodies reportedly monitor these channels, and the authorities are sensitive to reputational concerns. Special departments in the presidential administration and prosecutor's office reportedly work with social media complaints and may take action when cases gain visibility.¹⁵³

The representative of the Development Strategy Center also highlights that there are several platforms for public complaints, in line with the presidential priority of dialogue with citizens. Representatives and officials conduct in-person outreach visits to citizens to receive complaints and grievances directly. There are digital platforms on which citizens can submit complaints directly, as well as physical reception offices where complaints can be lodged in person. In addition, individual government agencies hold designated office hours during which officials are available to meet directly with citizens.¹⁵⁴

Social media has additionally emerged as a significant channel through which citizens communicate grievances and engage with public officials; there are many groups and channels on e.g. Telegram for people to discuss and criticise. Special divisions monitor these networks in relation to the issues that they work with, in order to be able to react to complaints raised there.¹⁵⁵

Researcher A also points out possible consequences of key performance indicators which are used by all state institutions. In the case of the police, crime rates are one such indicator. A police officer that is allocated to a certain neighbourhood can expect a salary decrease if local crime rates are too high. This gives the police an incentive to register as few crimes, to give the impression that the crime rate is low as possible and explains why the police can be reluctant to register crimes.¹⁵⁶

4.3.3 Corruption within the prosecutor's office and local government

The prosecutor's office and local government are described as particularly affected by corruption. Prosecutors are often arrested for bribery, with arrests frequently carried out by the State Security Service, reflecting competition between law enforcement agencies.¹⁵⁷

The same source indicates that deputy governors are frequently caught taking bribes, while governors are widely understood to be the final beneficiaries but are rarely held accountable.¹⁵⁸ This pattern relates to a broader theme of selective

¹⁵² Researcher A

¹⁵³ Researcher A

¹⁵⁴ Development Strategy Center

¹⁵⁵ Development Strategy Center

¹⁵⁶ Researcher A

¹⁵⁷ Researcher A

¹⁵⁸ Researcher A

accountability; one source indicate that anti-corruption action may take place, but that it is inconsistent and shaped by political considerations.¹⁵⁹

Corrupt officials who are well connected are assessed as less likely to be held accountable, while legal cases against officials may be politicised, making it difficult to determine whether they reflect genuine justice or the use of the justice system for political purposes.¹⁶⁰ Another source similarly notes that corruption cases may concern real wrongdoing because corruption is widespread, but that anti-corruption campaigns may also serve to strengthen international legitimacy or target domestic opponents and threats.¹⁶¹

4.3.4 Anti-corruption measures

According to the Development Strategy Center, corruption is one of the most significant challenges in society and is being addressed at all levels, from everyday transactional practices, such as informal payments to doctors, to high-level institutional corruption. Capacity building activities are carried out in cooperation with international organisations. While the effectiveness of these latter efforts can be discussed, there is at least a political will, including at highest level.¹⁶²

An anti-corruption agency was established in 2020¹⁶³, and compliance departments have been introduced in ministries and state bodies.¹⁶⁴ An anti-corruption hotline and ombudsperson institutions have similarly been identified as positive developments. However, there is a risk that by putting token measures in place, the issue appears to be addressed, despite them having little positive effect on the situation.¹⁶⁵

The anti-corruption agency's status as a civilian body has been noted as significant, given that anti-corruption efforts could otherwise have fallen under the mandate of the security service. However, the agency mainly addresses mid-level corruption encountered by citizens in their interactions with officials. It is unclear whether the number of corruption complaints has increased because of the establishment of the agency or because corruption has increased.¹⁶⁶

Journalist B refers to continuing high-level corruption, patronage systems and kick-backs.¹⁶⁷ Kristian Lasslett points out that anti-corruption measures are targeting lower-level corruption rather than high-end corruption. At the same time, some crude mechanisms of wealth extraction associated with the Karimov period, including those linked to tightly controlled currency exchange, have been removed. Contemporary kleptocracy is more sophisticated than in the previous ten years, operating through modernised economic and civil-service structures. The political elite is described as continuing to use autocratic family power for business, but through

¹⁵⁹ Journalist C

¹⁶⁰ Journalist C

¹⁶¹ Researcher B

¹⁶² Development Strategy Center

¹⁶³ Uzbekistan, The Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, [url](#)

¹⁶⁴ Journalist A

¹⁶⁵ Western Embassy

¹⁶⁶ Journalist A

¹⁶⁷ Journalist B

more sophisticated ventures. Economic growth is mitigating some effects on the population, contributing to a social contract in which people participate in the “new Uzbekistan” but do not publicly challenge its contradictions. This has not reportedly been accompanied by institution-building for greater democracy or accountability.¹⁶⁸

While Bertelsmann Stiftung describes how the state apparatus is grappling with widespread corruption and nepotism and that high levels of corruption is a persistent problem, it notes that the anti-corruption policy appears to be gaining momentum and accounts for statistics on criminal cases related to corruption. According to the General Prosecutor’s Office, criminal charges were filed against 2,389 officials in the first half of 2024, constituting a 34% increase compared to the same period in 2023. Theft of property were the main type of crime. 4,906 officials were convicted of abuse of office in 2024.¹⁶⁹

One source notes progress since 2017, including governance reforms and a considerable decline in petty corruption. A civil (non-law enforcement) anti-corruption agency reporting to the President and accountable to the Parliament is also mentioned.¹⁷⁰

Reform and anti-corruption measures are described as visible but limited. One source refers to online complaint mechanisms (see above), increased access to ministries, and efforts to improve responsiveness and transparency.¹⁷¹ Digitalisation and e-governance are identified as potentially important tools for reducing petty corruption. Traffic cameras, automation, and online applications are noted as measures capable of limiting opportunities for corrupt practices and reducing friction between citizens and the police or justice system.¹⁷² E-governance initiatives are further considered effective insofar as they reduce direct contact between officials and ordinary citizens, and may additionally help build domestic legitimacy.¹⁷³ Presidential decrees and policy frameworks are also described as explicitly targeting petty administrative and bureaucratic corruption, particularly because it increases the cost of service provision and obstructs the business environment.¹⁷⁴

At the same time, sources differ in their view on the depth and sustainability of reform. One source describes a recurring pattern in which pressure is applied against corrupt systems without changing their underlying structures, laws or personnel. Officials may temporarily modify their behaviour, after which old practices return. Such systems are difficult to reform without breaking and rebuilding them, dismissing staff, increasing salaries and instituting accountability.¹⁷⁵ Another source assesses anti-corruption and anti-political influence measures as largely cosmetic,

¹⁶⁸ Kristian Lasslett

¹⁶⁹ Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2026 Country Report - Uzbekistan, 2026-03-26, [url](#) p. 3, 5, 13

¹⁷⁰ Representatives of an international organization

¹⁷¹ Journalist C

¹⁷² Journalist B

¹⁷³ Researcher B

¹⁷⁴ Kristian Lasslett

¹⁷⁵ Researcher C

stating that while the investment climate has become more transparent, grand corruption remains.¹⁷⁶

Low salaries can be seen as a driver of corruption. One source states that public sector workers, including staff in the judiciary and law enforcement, receive low salaries, which contributes significantly to corruption. The same source does not identify specific measures targeting corruption in the judiciary or law enforcement, and considers existing penalties insufficient to stop corruption. Although official sources reportedly indicated a substantial increase in corruption prosecutions among officials in 2024, most prosecutions concerned low-level officials. The source considers those prosecuted to represent only a fraction of officials who accepted bribes and concludes that corruption in the justice and law enforcement systems is endemic.¹⁷⁷

A further recurring theme is the relationship between corruption, governance and political control. One source characterises corruption as a tool of governance in much of Central Asia. In this assessment, efforts to combat some types of corruption may be genuine, especially where corruption affects service delivery or the business environment, but anti-corruption campaigns may also be used to manage political threats. The same source describes Uzbekistan as pursuing economic liberalisation while ensuring that those who benefit are politically reliable and that access to economic opportunity remains contingent on loyalty.¹⁷⁸

Another source refers to the continued use of old security-service practices, including the collection of compromising information that may remain unused while individuals are loyal but activated when they are not. This is described as inconsistent with rule of law, especially in a legal environment so complex that it is difficult to avoid breaching some rule at some point.¹⁷⁹

4.4 Public trust

4.4.1 Lack of polling data

Available information indicates that reliable quantitative data on public trust is limited.¹⁸⁰ Uzbekistan has a public opinion centre that conducts annual surveys, but according to one source the results are overly positive regarding trust in government institutions and therefore of limited evidentiary value.¹⁸¹

Another source refers to domestic survey data concerning trust in the independence of courts, according to which 45% of respondents reportedly expressed full trust in 2015, 57% in 2016 and 44.6% in 2017. Another report is also said to have produced a similar finding. However, the survey has not been repeated and increased use of courts from below should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of trust.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ Luca Anceschi

¹⁷⁷ Joanna Lillis

¹⁷⁸ Researcher B

¹⁷⁹ Kristian Lasslett

¹⁸⁰ Researcher A; Journalist B

¹⁸¹ Researcher A

¹⁸² Researcher B

Statements presented below on trust in the institutions of the JSS is therefore primarily based on expert assessments, case examples and observations rather than on opinion polling.

4.4.2 Potential causes of distrust

The public reportedly has a very low level of trust in the institutions of the JSS and tend to avoid them where possible¹⁸³, because they are considered bureaucratic, time-consuming and unreliable¹⁸⁴, or due to the prevalence of threats during interrogations, ill-treatment and incommunicado detention¹⁸⁵. Individuals may instead seek to publicise a case through Telegram channels or try to resolve disputes through informal means.¹⁸⁶ Accountability for abuse by law-enforcement actors is another central issue. While the authorities reportedly are more open than previously about torture in investigations¹⁸⁷, lack of accountability persists, including in cases involving deaths during investigations.¹⁸⁸

In the report covering 2023 on human rights practises in Uzbekistan, US Department of State describes credible reports about torture being used by government officials, that most abuses occur during interrogations but that top-down orders about targeting specific individuals with the exception of Karakalpakstan have ceased.¹⁸⁹ Human Rights Watch describes torture and ill-treatment as serious problems that persist¹⁹⁰, while Amnesty International, inter alia, reports about cases of torture and what it describes as “continued to delay legal reforms to address impunity for torture and other ill-treatment and to establish genuinely independent mechanisms for monitoring detention conditions.”¹⁹¹

In relation to policing, researcher C states that early reforms, including dismissals in the State Security Service and the creation of the National Guard, initially generated expectations of meaningful change. People could turn to the police when in trouble. However, the source assesses later developments as disappointing, stating that institutional structures, laws and judicial practices have not changed sufficiently.¹⁹² Edward Lemon, a researcher with expertise on Uzbekistan, similarly indicates that the image of the police may have improved cosmetically since the Karimov period, including through changes in visible corruption and police presence, but states that the police remain associated with oppression, deaths in custody and exploitation rather than with democratic public service.¹⁹³

¹⁸³ Researcher A; Journalist C

¹⁸⁴ Researcher A

¹⁸⁵ Researcher C

¹⁸⁶ Researcher A

¹⁸⁷ Researcher C

¹⁸⁸ Researcher C; Joanna Lillis

¹⁸⁹ United States Department of State, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2023 - Uzbekistan, 22.04.2024, [url](#)

¹⁹⁰ Human Rights Watch, World Report 2026 - Uzbekistan, 04.02.2026, [url](#)

¹⁹¹ Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights - Uzbekistan 2025, 21.04.2026, [url](#)

¹⁹² Researcher C

¹⁹³ Edward Lemon, interview 2025

4.4.3 Trust and willingness to report crimes

The willingness to report crimes is not static and may vary considerably depending on the nature of the case.¹⁹⁴ Where crimes are committed by private individuals without connections to vested interests, reporting is considered more likely, and the police, prosecution service, and courts may function properly, investigating the matter, proceeding with prosecution, and reaching an outcome in accordance with the law.¹⁹⁵ A person whose property has been stolen, for instance, may report the matter and reasonably expect it to be handled appropriately.¹⁹⁶

By contrast, a business owner subjected to extortion or pressure from a well-connected competitor is unlikely to report the matter where the perpetrator's connections to the police form part of the problem.¹⁹⁷ Outcomes may further vary depending on the nature of the offence and on whether the case occurs in Tashkent or in a region.¹⁹⁸

4.4.4 Use of other mechanism for dispute resolution

Informal dispute resolution is widely reported, with citizens frequently relying on family, neighbourhood, and local networks rather than formal justice mechanisms. Strong family and local networks, including village elders, are described as capable of resolving conflicts while bypassing the police and courts entirely.¹⁹⁹ Survey data from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan suggests that victims may prefer to approach informal leaders or family members rather than the police, which are associated with corruption and oppression, though it is noted that this evidence applies only anecdotally to Uzbekistan.²⁰⁰

Distrust of government institutions is described as common, and when an incident occurs, police involvement is generally avoided in favour of informing the local neighbourhood.²⁰¹ In private conflicts, a mixed pattern is observed, with some individuals approaching the police while others resort to informal conflict resolution, including payments to prevent charges from being pursued.²⁰²

The role of the mahalla in dispute resolution is described as significant but ambivalent. Mahalla committees, which formally include psychologists and social workers, have been identified as potential local points of support, though questions have been raised as to whether such professionals have in practice been adequately trained and empowered to perform that role.²⁰³ Although mahallas are formally presented as non-governmental, they are described as operating in support of the government and its agenda, with one of their functions characterised as silencing complaints. Performance indicators for mahalla leaders may include the number of

¹⁹⁴ Researcher C

¹⁹⁵ Kristian Lasslett

¹⁹⁶ Researcher C; Luca Anceschi

¹⁹⁷ Researcher C

¹⁹⁸ Luca Anceschi

¹⁹⁹ Journalist B

²⁰⁰ Edward Lemon

²⁰¹ Representatives of an international organization

²⁰² Western Embassy

²⁰³ Researcher C

complaints, police reports, or court cases registered, potentially creating incentives to prevent formal cases from being pursued.²⁰⁴

In minor disputes between parties from the same neighbourhood, respected mahalla councilmen may theoretically mediate in place of a court.²⁰⁵ While mahallas may thus play a role in mediation, they are not considered necessarily impartial.²⁰⁶

4.4.5 On property related cases

Kristian Lasslett states that, in land and housing cases, individuals who approach the police or judiciary often do so with limited expectation of success. Property developers with political protection may make unsatisfactory offers to owners, while owners calculate that litigation will be costly, time-consuming and unlikely to succeed. This formally creates lawful documentation for dispossession and reinforces distrust of both the police and judiciary.²⁰⁷ NGO representative A states that many judges effectively defer to the regional Governor (Hokims) and refers to observations indicating that 80% of farmers' claims against Hokims result unfavourably, while 20% report success.²⁰⁸ Representatives of an international organization describes construction and "buldozings" as major issues involving displacement.²⁰⁹ A Western Embassy also refers to broader pressures connected to urban development, including the vulnerability of Roma communities, pressure on farmers and the increasing political sensitivity of these matters.²¹⁰

4.4.6 On the Ombudsman for Human Rights

The Uzbek ombudsman institutions are generally described as having limited practical effectiveness, with their role characterised as largely symbolic.²¹¹ The institution lacks real power, authority, and influence, and has limited ability to affect outcomes.²¹² A key structural constraint is that although the ombudsman is formally independent, the position is appointed by the presidential administration, which significantly limits its actual power; an ombudsman presenting an unacceptable report could be replaced.²¹³

Public awareness of the institution remains limited, with many Uzbeks reportedly unaware of both its existence and the possibility of submitting complaints, which is reflected in correspondingly low utilisation.²¹⁴ Nevertheless, there are indications of a gradual shift: more people appear willing to address complaints to the ombudsman than was the case under Karimov²¹⁵, and reports are submitted to parliament, with less sensitive issues occasionally raised successfully²¹⁶.

²⁰⁴ NGO representative A, interview 2026

²⁰⁵ Journalist A

²⁰⁶ Western Embassy

²⁰⁷ Kristian Lasslett

²⁰⁸ NGO representative A

²⁰⁹ Representatives of an international organization

²¹⁰ Western Embassy

²¹¹ Researcher A

²¹² Kristian Lasslett

²¹³ Western Embassy

²¹⁴ Journalist C

²¹⁵ Journalist C

²¹⁶ Western Embassy

5. Domestic violence

Domestic violence in Uzbekistan is a widespread and significantly underreported form of gender-based violence, which is described as endemic. Reporting remains limited because of social norms, fear of retaliation, and the risks faced by women who complain. Domestic violence is not necessarily viewed as a crime, rather it is accepted as a cultural norm. The fact that in a family setting, the perpetrators are often women (mothers-in-law) who were subjected to the same treatment when they were younger, further complicate these matters. Complaints can be construed as an attack on family values, and therefore an attack on Uzbek culture.²¹⁷ Domestic violence is frequently treated as a private family matter.²¹⁸ Physical violence may be normalised within marriage or family life and some women do not recognise psychological or economic abuse as violence.²¹⁹ In this context, underreporting appears to result not only from fear of the perpetrator, but also from shame, social stigma, economic dependency and concern about family breakdown or loss of family support²²⁰, as well as lack of societal support and trust in protection systems²²¹.

The legal framework related to domestic violence has developed in recent years.²²² Domestic violence was criminalised in 2023, following significant advocacy and political support. Article 126-1 was introduced into the Criminal Code to cover physical, psychological and economic domestic violence, including obstruction of a victim's property, educational, healthcare or labour rights, deliberate damage to property, conduct undermining the victim's dignity, intimidation, and isolation from close relatives. Penalties range from fines or community service for lesser offences to up to twelve years' imprisonment where the violence results in death, with aggravating factors including the victim's pregnancy, repeat offending, and use of weapons.²²³

This criminalisation was accompanied by a broader package of reforms: Penalties for sexual violence and coercion were strengthened²²⁴, protection orders were expanded, and aspects of family law were amended in relation to reconciliation in divorce cases involving domestic violence.²²⁵ Protection orders had already been introduced in 2019 (and expanded in 2023, see above) and may initially be issued for one month and extended for up to one year.²²⁶ The issuance of protection orders has reportedly become much more common.²²⁷ Several sources regard the criminalisation of domestic violence as an important step, since it provides women with a

²¹⁷ Western embassy

²¹⁸ Journalist C; Freedom for Eurasia

²¹⁹ NGO representative B, interview 2026

²²⁰ Researcher A; NGO representative A; NGO representative B; Freedom for Eurasia

²²¹ Freedom for Eurasia

²²² For a summarising overview of recent legislative changes, please see for example International Partnership for Human Rights, Reform and Reality: Measuring Uzbekistan's Progress in the Fight Against Domestic Violence, 19.12.2025, [url](#), pp. 6-9

²²³ NGO representative B; Uzbekistan, Criminal Code of The Republic of Uzbekistan, article 126.1, [url](#)

²²⁴ Uzbekistan, Criminal Code of The Republic of Uzbekistan, article 118-119, 121, [url](#)

²²⁵ International Partnership for Human Rights, Reform and Reality: Measuring Uzbekistan's Progress in the Fight Against Domestic Violence, 19.12.2025, [url](#)

²²⁶ NGO representative B

²²⁷ Joanna Lillis

legal basis for complaint and signals that the state no longer regards domestic violence as acceptable.²²⁸ However, it is undermined by officials prioritising reconciliation and reunification of families over the protection of women's and children's rights. According to article 66.1 of the Criminal code, a suspect can be absolved of criminal responsibility due to reconciliation.²²⁹

There is a governmental and political will to implement the new law.²³⁰ However, implementation still have a space for improvements, and social norms have not changed at the same pace as legislation.²³¹ Police responses are described as inconsistent and dependent on the individual officer, the seriousness of the incident, the woman's knowledge of her rights, and whether the case arises in Tashkent or in a rural area.²³² Women may be told by police that the matter is private, that they should return home, or that they should reconcile with the perpetrator.²³³ Researcher A notes that the police officers are overwhelmingly male, which may further discourage women from approaching law enforcement. The source states that access to justice may depend on personal connections, although it also notes that police have become more reactive than before in some cases.²³⁴ According to Freedom for Eurasia the judicial system in the country does not see a woman as an individual, but as a "wife" in domestic violence cases and does not shy away from punishing them for responding to abuse.²³⁵

Women reportedly tend not to report isolated incidents, and may only approach the authorities when violence becomes systematic or unbearable²³⁶; women often endure years of abuse before seeking help²³⁷. Even after a complaint is made, cases may be withdrawn because of pressure from parents, neighbours, in-laws, mahalla representatives or the wider community.²³⁸ In September 2023, the Committee on Family and Women's Affairs reported that the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan had issued almost 22,000 protection orders to women who had experienced violence or abuse between January and August. Most cases, and almost 85% of the orders related to domestic violence, ended in reconciliation, a process often marred by coercion from families, government agencies, law enforcement, local officials, and societal pressure.²³⁹ While many cases are closed following reconciliation, it should be noted that there is no available analysis of whether such reconciliation is voluntary or the result of direct or indirect pressure.²⁴⁰ Official statistics are therefore assessed as unlikely to reflect the real scale of domestic violence.²⁴¹ The Ministry of Internal Affairs reportedly publishes some data related to the domestic violence law, but the information is reportedly not easily accessible. The

²²⁸ Joanna Lillis; Freedom for Eurasia

²²⁹ Freedom for Eurasia

²³⁰ Representatives of an international organization

²³¹ NGO representative A; NGO representative B

²³² Journalist B; Journalist C

²³³ Journalist C; Freedom for Eurasia

²³⁴ Researcher A

²³⁵ Freedom for Eurasia

²³⁶ Researcher A

²³⁷ Freedom for Eurasia

²³⁸ Researcher A; Joanna Lillis

²³⁹ Freedom for Eurasia

²⁴⁰ NGO representative B

²⁴¹ Journalist C; NGO representative B

Supreme Court also publishes some data, but they reflect only judicial data, not the whole scope of domestic violence.²⁴²

Mahallas are described as central actors in the handling of domestic violence and family disputes. Each mahalla has an inspector for women's issues.²⁴³ However, sources indicate that mahalla representatives often seek to reconcile women with perpetrators, partly because local performance indicators may favour a reduction in officially registered conflicts.²⁴⁴ A mahalla with no registered conflicts may be viewed positively (in the "green zone"), which may create incentives to resolve cases informally rather than ensure formal protection.²⁴⁵ In practice, the role of mahallas may therefore contribute to underreporting and pressure on women to remain in abusive households.²⁴⁶

The broader social context is described as strongly patriarchal. Men are commonly regarded as breadwinners, while women are expected to remain at home and fulfil domestic roles.²⁴⁷ Traditionally women live in the house of their husbands and their role is described as equivalent to that of a domestic servant for the in-laws.²⁴⁸ After marriage, women are socially expected to become pregnant within one year, which may reduce their opportunities to study, work or become economically independent. Economic dependency is therefore an important dimension of domestic violence, since women with children and no independent income may have limited practical ability to leave an abusive household.²⁴⁹ Many families expect married women to obey the husband, the mother-in-law and the husband's family.²⁵⁰ Domestic violence in Uzbekistan frequently involves husbands and in-laws. Threats to remove children are a recognized form of coercive control.²⁵¹

Divorce is presented as another barrier for women exposed to domestic violence. Women may seek divorce, but cultural pressure can make this difficult. A woman who files for divorce or reports violence risks being perceived as bringing shame on herself, her relatives, and her children.²⁵² If her husband is prosecuted or imprisoned, blame may fall on her²⁵³; the societal mindset is that a woman should prefer to forgive an abusive husband rather than push for his punishment.²⁵⁴ Where spouses have children, divorce may take two to three years to finalise, and a mandatory reconciliation period of six months applies. The wish to separate is not necessarily considered sufficient grounds for a court to grant divorce.²⁵⁵

²⁴² NGO representative B

²⁴³ Representatives of an international organization; NGO representative B

²⁴⁴ NGO representative A; NGO representative B

²⁴⁵ NGO representative B

²⁴⁶ Researcher A; Journalist C; Representatives of an international organization

²⁴⁷ NGO representative B

²⁴⁸ Freedom for Eurasia

²⁴⁹ NGO representative B

²⁵⁰ Joanna Lillis

²⁵¹ Freedom for Eurasia

²⁵² NGO representative B

²⁵³ NGO representative A

²⁵⁴ Freedom for Eurasia

²⁵⁵ NGO representative B

Sources distinguish between Tashkent and rural or other areas, suggesting that women in the capital may have comparatively better access to information, services and police responses.²⁵⁶ In rural areas, patriarchal norms may be stronger, awareness of the law weaker, and implementation more dependent on the local hokim. If a woman from the regions travels to Tashkent to report to the police, the case may be sent back to her region of origin.²⁵⁷ In smaller communities, police officers may also be connected to the husband's family network, increasing pressure toward private reconciliation rather than legal action.²⁵⁸

The state provides free psychological and legal support to the survivors of domestic violence via "Inson" (Human) centres under the National Agency on Social Protection under the President of Uzbekistan. There is reportedly a system of in total 14 state shelters, one per region, one in Tashkent and one in Karakalpakstan. Access requires an official police report. This requirement may exclude women who do not dare or do not wish to approach the police. Two non-government shelters, in Samarkand and Bukhara, reportedly face funding constraints despite some state grants.²⁵⁹

Training and awareness-raising have taken place but are assessed as insufficient. Sources refer to seminars for local police, donor-funded training for law enforcement, online material, social media outreach and state information through television. However, these measures are not considered adequate to change attitudes among police, courts, mahalla representatives or the wider population.²⁶⁰ Awareness is reportedly especially limited in rural areas.²⁶¹

²⁵⁶ Journalist B; Journalist C

²⁵⁷ NGO representative B

²⁵⁸ Journalist C

²⁵⁹ NGO representative B

²⁶⁰ NGO representative A; NGO representative B

²⁶¹ NGO representative B

Sources

Written sources

Amnesty International, The State of the World's Human Rights - Uzbekistan 2025, 21.04.2026, <https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentSummaryId=49991>

Bertelsmann Stiftung (BTI), BTI 2026 Country Report – Uzbekistan, 26.03.2026, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2026_UZB.pdf

Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2018 Country Report – Uzbekistan, 2018, https://bti-project.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2018_UZB.pdf

Carneige Moscow Center, Who Will Be Uzbekistan's Next President?, 06.09.2016, <https://carnegie.ru/commentary/64481>

Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program, Judicial and Governance Reform in Uzbekistan, 05.03.2018, <https://www.silkroadstudies.org/resources/pdf/SilkRoadPapers/2018-03-Sever-Uzbekistan.pdf>

EurAsia Daily, Resignation of Uzbek Security Service chief – end of all-mighty minister, 31.01.2018, <https://eadaily.com/en/news/2018/01/31/resignation-of-uzbek-security-service-chief-end-of-all-mighty-minister>

Eurasianet, Uzbekistan: President Calls for Clipping Security Services' Wings, 22.12.2017, <https://eurasianet.org/uzbekistan-president-calls-for-clipping-security-services-wings>

Eurasianet, Uzbekistan: Police Shake-Up Part of Elite Struggle?, 12.04.2017, <https://eurasianet.org/uzbekistan-police-shake-part-elite-struggle>

Europe - Central Asia Monitoring, Uzbekistan opening up, 21.07.2018, <https://eu-centralasia.eu/uzbekistan-opening-up/>

European Parliaments Research Service, Uzbekistan comes in from the cold. A new era of reforms, 17.12.2018, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/Reg-Data/etudes/BRIE/2018/630344/EPRS_BRI\(2018\)630344_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/Reg-Data/etudes/BRIE/2018/630344/EPRS_BRI(2018)630344_EN.pdf)

Ferghana News Agency, Article looks at Uzbek leader's security policy, 10.09.2019, [from BBC Monitoring [payment service]], <https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/>

Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI), Mirziyoyev's Uzbekistan: Democratization or Authoritarian Upgrading?, 2019, <https://www.fpri.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/lemonrpe4.pdf>

Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2024 – Uzbekistan, 29.02.2024,
<https://freedomhouse.org/country/uzbekistan/freedom-world/2024>

Freedom House, Has Mirziyoyev Really Brought Religious Liberty to Uzbekistan, 16.01.2019, <https://freedomhouse.org/article/has-mirziyoyev-really-brought-religious-liberty-uzbekistan>

Human Rights Watch, World Report 2026 - Uzbekistan, 04.02.2026,
<https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentSummaryId=49785>

International Crisis Group, Uzbekistan: The Hundred Days, 29.03.2017,
<https://www.crisisgroup.org/sites/default/files/242-uzbekistan-the-hundred-days.pdf>

International Partnership for Human Rights, Reform and Reality: Measuring Uzbekistan's Progress in the Fight Against Domestic Violence, 19.12.2025,
<https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentSummaryId=49721>

Kolybashinka, Nina, Creating dialogue and citizen engagement – initial observations from Uzbekistan, 16.03.2018, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/en/europeandcentralasia/creating-dialogue-and-citizen-engagement-initial-observations-uzbekistan>

Laszczkowski, Mateusz & Reeves, Madeleine (red.), *Affective states: entanglements, suspensions, suspicions*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2017

Light, M., et al., Policing following political and social transitions: Russia, Brazil, and China compared, in: *Theoretical Criminology*, volume 19 (2), 2015

Migrationsverket, Lifosrapport: Uzbekistan - en introduktion (version 1.3), 15.03.2018

Norway. Landinfo, Respons. Usbekistan: Om muligheten til å «kjøpe seg fri» og muligheten til å forlate landet ved religiøs anklage, 23.03.2017, <https://landinfo.no/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Usbekistan-Om-muligheten-til-%C3%A5-%C2%ABkj%C3%B8pe-seg-fri%C2%BB-og-forlate-landet-ved-religi%C3%B8s-anklage-23032017.pdf>

Open Society Foundations, Tackling Corruption In Uzbekistan: A White Paper, 01.06.2016, <https://www.refworld.org/reference/countryrep/osi/2016/110290>

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Baseline Report of the Fifth Round of Monitoring of Anti-Corruption Reforms in Uzbekistan, 2024, https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2024/11/baseline-report-of-the-fifth-round-of-monitoring-of-anti-corruption-reforms-in-uzbekistan_a7d9ab4c/363ba9d8-en.pdf

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Anti-corruption reforms in Uzbekistan. 4th round of monitoring of the Istanbul Anti-Corruption

Action Plan, 21.03.2019, https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2019/03/anti-corruption-reforms-in-uzbekistan_c913fdbb/46942986-en.pdf

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Uzbek security body's elite forces returned to police, 05.02.2018, [from BBC Monitoring [payment service]] <https://monitoring.bbc.co.uk/>

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Uzbek President: Prosecutors 'Are The Biggest Thieves', 04.08.2017, <https://www.rferl.org/a/uzbekistan-president-prosecutors/28659311.html>

Tashkent Times, President Mirziyoyev decrees to merge Supreme and Supreme Economic Courts, 22.02.2017, <http://tashkenttimes.uz/national/599>

Tashkent Times, Uzbekistan's Development Strategy for 2017-2021 has been adopted following public consultation, 08.02.2017, <http://tashkenttimes.uz/national/541-uzbekistan-s-development-strategy-for-2017-2021-has-been-adopted-following->

Tashkent Times, President Mirziyoyev signs National Anti-Corruption Program for 2017-2018, 06.02.2017, <http://tashkenttimes.uz/national/529>

Tashkent Times, President Mirziyoyev meets prosecutors on Saturday, 08.01.2017, <http://tashkenttimes.uz/national/397>

Tashkent Times, "It is big time the government bodies serve the people, not vice versa" – Shavkat Mirziyoyev, 26.10.2016, <http://tashkenttimes.uz/economy/131>

Tass, В Узбекистане упразднили термин "милиция", 24.05.2019, <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/6467262>

The Development Strategy Center, <https://strategy.uz/>

The Diplomat, Uzbekistan: Reforms Underway, but Democracy Still Out of Reach, 07.08.2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/08/uzbekistan-reforms-underway-but-democracy-still-out-of-reach/>

The Diplomat, Uzbekistan Makes Serious Cuts to the Prosecutor General's Office, 30.03.2019, [urhttps://thediplomat.com/2019/03/uzbekistan-makes-serious-cuts-to-the-prosecutor-generals-office/](https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/uzbekistan-makes-serious-cuts-to-the-prosecutor-generals-office/)

The Diplomat, Hokim Hubbub: Making Sense of Local Government Shuffles in Uzbekistan, 06.08.2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/08/hokim-hubbub-making-sense-of-local-government-shuffles-in-uzbekistan/>

Transparency International, 2026, Corruption Perceptions Index 2025, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2025>

United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Preliminary observations on the official visit to Uzbekistan (19-25 September 2019), 26.09.2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25043&LangID=E>

United States Department of State, 2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Uzbekistan, 12.08.2025, <https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentSummaryId=49364>

United States Department of State, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2023 - Uzbekistan, 22.04.2024, <https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentSummaryId=48277>

United States Department of State, Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2015 – Uzbekistan, 13.04.2016, <https://www.ecoi.net/en/document/1166408.html>

Utrikesdepartementet, Mänskliga rättigheter, demokrati och rättsstatens principer i Uzbekistan 2015-2016, 26.04.2017, <https://lifos.migrationsverket.se/dokument?documentSummaryId=39392>

Utrikespolitiska Institutet, Landguiden [payment service], Modern historia, 25.02.2026, <https://www.ui.se/landguiden/lander-och-omraden/asien/uzbekistan/modern-historia/>

Uzbekistan, Указ Президента Республики Узбекистан, от 16.02.2026 г. № УП-21, <https://lex.uz/docs/8050774>

Uzbekistan, Ombudsman for Human Rights, On the activities of the Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights (Ombudsman) in 2024, 2025, <https://ombudsman.uz/en/docs/ozbekiston-respublikasi-oliy-majlisining-inson-huquqlari-boyicha-vakilining-ombudsmanning-2024-yildagi-faoliyati-togrisidagi-m-a-r-u-z-a>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to improve the efficiency and transparency of the activities of judicial community bodies, as well as further strengthening guarantees of judicial independence”, 24.11.2025, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/7852951>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the approval of the Digital Prosecutor's Office 2030 Strategy and measures for its effective implementation”, 03.11.2025, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/7813709>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On additional measures to improve access to justice by introducing artificial intelligence technologies into the work of courts, as well as improving the logistical support of the judicial system”, 21.08.2025, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/7696571>

Uzbekistan, President of the Republic of Uzbekistan decision “On additional measures to introduce modern mechanisms of legal protection of the rights of citizens and business entities”, 30.01.2025, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/7350794>

Uzbekistan. President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Issues of Further Strengthening the Makhalla System Discussed, 26.09.2023, <https://president.uz/en/lists/view/6695>

Uzbekistan, Указ Президента Республики Узбекистан, от 11.09.2023 г. № УП-158, 11.09.2023, <https://lex.uz/docs/6600404#6605093>

Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On additional measures to transform internal affairs agencies into a people's professional structure and to orient their work toward closer interaction with the population”, 21.01.2023, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/6364839>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On additional measures to further expand access to justice and improve the efficiency of courts”, 16.01.2023, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/6358985>

Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to further improve the forensic activities of internal affairs agencies with the widespread introduction of the achievements of modern science”, 08.02.2022, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/5851539>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026”, 28.01.2022, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/5841077>

Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to introduce a qualitatively new system of training professional personnel for internal affairs agencies”, 15.04.2021, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/5377624>

Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On additional organizational measures to further improve the activities of internal affairs agencies in the field of public safety and crime control”, 02.04.2021, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/5353869>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to raise the activities of internal affairs agencies in the area of public safety and crime control to a qualitatively new level”, 26.03.2021, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/5344121>

Uzbekistan, Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to ensure the true independence of judges and increase the efficiency of preventing corruption in the judicial system”, 07.12.2020, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/5696731>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to further strengthen guarantees for the protection of individual rights and freedoms in judicial and investigative activities”, 10.08.2020, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/4939472>

Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the implementation of a qualitatively new system for managing the forces and resources of internal affairs agencies in the field of crime prevention and combating crime in the Tashkent region”, 30.05.2019, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/4355770>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to fundamentally improve the system of business protection and optimize the activities of prosecutor's offices”, 15.03.2019, <https://lex.uz/docs/4242834>

Uzbekistan, The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Nations, President's address warmed people's heart, 11.12.2018, <https://www.un.int/uzbekistan/news/president%E2%80%99s-address-warmed-people%E2%80%99s-heart>

Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to implement an effective system of management, control and work with personnel of internal affairs agencies”, 24.08.2018, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3877322>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to further improve the judicial system and increase trust in the judiciary”, 13.07.2018, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3822469>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On additional measures to strengthen guarantees of the rights and freedoms of citizens in judicial and investigative activities”, 01.12.2017, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3432428>

Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to radically improve the procedure for working with personnel of internal affairs agencies and the organization of their service”, 30.11.2017, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3430638>

Uzbekistan, Address by H.E. Mr. Shakvat Mirziyoyev President of the Republic of Uzbekistan at the General Debate of the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, 19.09.2017, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/72/uz_en.pdf

Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to radically improve the activities of internal affairs agencies in the field of maintaining public order and ensuring public safety”, 22.05.2017, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3202970>

Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to radically improve the activities of internal affairs agencies in the field of crime investigation”, 01.05.2017, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3180663>

Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to radically improve the activities of crime prevention units of internal affairs agencies”, 01.05.2017, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3175734>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On strengthening the role of the prosecutor's office in implementing socio-economic reforms and modernizing the country, ensuring reliable protection of human rights and freedoms”, 18.04.2017, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3177798>

Uzbekistan, Resolution of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On organizational measures for further improvement of the activities of internal affairs agencies”, 17.04.2017, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3165011>

Uzbekistan, Decree President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to radically improve the efficiency of the internal affairs agencies, strengthening their responsibility for ensuring public order, reliable protection of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens”, 10.04.2017, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3159825>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On measures to radically improve the structure and increase the efficiency of the judicial system of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, 21.02.2017, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3121085>

Uzbekistan, Decree of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the Action Strategy for the Further Development of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, 07.02.2017, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3107042#3109624>

Uzbekistan, Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, <https://constitution.uz/en/clause/index#section20>

Uzbekistan, Criminal Code of The Republic of Uzbekistan, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/111453>

Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “About courts”, <https://www.lex.uz/en/docs/5534923>

Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan On the Supreme Council of Judges, <https://www.lex.uz/en/docs/3153668>

Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the Prosecutor's Office", <https://www.lex.uz/en/docs/106197>

Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “About the internal affairs bodies”, <https://lex.uz/en/docs/3027845>

Uzbekistan, Ministry of Internal Affairs, <https://gov.uz/uz/iiv>

Uzbekistan, Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On the commissioner of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan for human rights (Ombudsman)”, <https://www.lex.uz/en/docs/7223451>

Uzbekistan, The Anti-Corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan, <https://anticorruption.uz/en>

Interviews

Interviews in 2017 and 2019

Anonymous source D, interview 2019

Anonymous source E, interview 2019

Anonymous source F, interview 2019

Anonymous source G, interview 2019

Uzbekistan, Representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, meeting 2019

Anonymous source A, interview 2017

Anonymous source B, interview 2017

Anonymous source C, interview 2017

Interviews in 2025-2026

Development Strategy Center, meeting 2026

Edward Lemon, interview 2025

Freedom for Eurasia, interviews 2025-2026

IOM, meeting 2026

Joanna Lillis, interview 2026

Journalist A, interviews 2026

Journalist B, interview 2025

Journalist C, interview 2025

Kristian Lasslett, interview 2026

Luca Anceschi, interview 2026

NGO representative A, interview 2026

NGO representative B, interview 2026

Ombudsman for Human Rights, meeting 2026

Representatives of an international organization, meeting in 2026

Researcher A, interview 2026

Researcher B, interview 2026

Researcher C, interviews 2026

Western Embassy, meeting 2026

Uzbek Forum for Human Rights, interview 2025

Uzbek Mahalla Association, meeting 2026