



**FEATURES OF FORMATION AND PHASED IMPLEMENTATION OF  
DEMOCRATIZATION ELEMENTS IN UZBEK SOCIETY AT THE PRESENT STAGE**

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**ABSTRACT:** This article provides an overview analysis of the specifics of phased implementation of democratization elements in Uzbek society during the post-Soviet period, based on a comparison with generally accepted global practices, since the beginning of Sh.M. Mirziyoyev's first presidential term. The strengthening of society's influence on key processes in the country is examined in stages, starting from the formation stage under strict administrative and managerial control, continuing with measures to liberalize all aspects of social arrangements, and concluding with planned tasks to strengthen public oversight of state apparatus activities. The article separately addresses the features of reforming official information policy in the context of its importance as a tool for interaction and dialogue between the government and the electorate. It also touches upon the characteristics of state reform policy. The text outlines conditions for aligning citizens' legal competence with key democratic requirements of a constructive nature - positioning themselves as full-fledged citizens and utilizing mechanisms to protect their own rights and freedoms, as well as creating conditions for the free expression of their civic position and independent opinion.

**Keywords:** democratization, sovereignty, constitution, multi-party system, parliamentarism, modernization, civil society, rule of law, NTT, mass media, public oversight, public opinion.

"Today, our society has literally awakened. Now our people are directly assessing the actions of individuals holding various positions and learning to freely express their opinions." [1]

Sh.M.Mirziyoyev

The beginning of democratization in Uzbek society is undoubtedly linked to President Sh. Mirziyoyev's ascension to state leadership. One of his first landmark decisions was the removal of all border barriers, focusing on fostering good-neighborly relations with the outside world, including both the West and Islamic belt countries. For the first time since gaining independence, the head of state set a precedent by discussing with the public the accumulated pressing issues that had been hindering democratic development and impeding the country's reforms. The significance of these circumstances is comparable to the lifting of the "Iron Curtain" during the Soviet era. From this perspective, the importance of this event can hardly be overstated, as the Uzbek public, in harmony with the president's position, began to speak openly and without self-imposed restrictions about the urgent problems of state-building. Based on this, it can be unequivocally stated that the beginnings of democracy in Uzbekistan, in the form interpreted by the international community, manifested themselves precisely during that period of reforming the state structure. For the first time in Uzbekistan's history, a precedent was set for direct dialogue between the government and society without any intermediaries, including those of a "forceful nature" with censorship, which instilled hope among broad segments of the population for the possibility of reforming key aspects of the state structure.

A retrospective examination of the progressive democratization of Uzbek society reveals three significant stages, beginning with its formation, followed by its further development, and

culminating in the prospects for its expansion through the introduction of public institutions designed to play both a supervisory and partnership role in relation to the state apparatus. Sociological surveys, along with international assessments and scientific research findings, indicate that the nascent strengthening of public oversight as an element of democratization and the involvement of broader segments of the population in socio-political life began to manifest during the late period of the First President I. Karimov's rule, and, as mentioned above, were put into practice under the current head of state, Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The identified process continues to develop progressively, including through legislative means. A notable example is the draft Law "On Public Control," which was submitted for parliamentary consideration during I. Karimov's presidency and, after revision, was adopted under the current President through public discussion. The detailed examination in this article of these sequential factors in their historical dynamics allows for a comprehensive understanding of the approach and priorities of the "Uzbek Model" and the Action Strategy, while also demonstrating the consistent progression of reforms within the Development Strategy.

It is well known that the development of parliamentarism is an integral condition for democratic transformations and the development of self-awareness in society. In other words, an indispensable condition for the fundamental development of democratic institutions is the formation of parliament according to criteria that take into account the worthy representation of public institutions in legislative bodies and in cooperation with each other, in accordance with the leading world models and requirements of the time. The recent history of Uzbekistan's national parliamentarism is usually divided into three main historical periods:

first: 1991 - 1994;

second: 1995 - 2004;

and the third - from 2005 to the present.

At the beginning of 1995, a unicameral parliament - the Oliy Majlis - was formed, consisting of 250 deputies elected from single-mandate districts based on a multi-party system. Subsequently, based on the experience of a semi-professional unicameral parliament, the demands of the times, and global practice, parliamentary reforms were carried out. In the first round of elections held on December 26, 2004, 62 people's deputies were elected, and in the second round held on January 9, 2005, 58 deputies were elected to the Legislative Chamber. [2] Thus, a bicameral parliament was created, consisting of the Legislative Chamber (lower chamber) and the Senate (upper chamber).

Previously, the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted on December 8, 1992, defined the right of every citizen to protect their rights and freedoms through the courts, to appeal to the court against the unlawful actions of state bodies and officials, as well as the status and powers of public associations. These constitutional norms were enshrined in the Law "On Appealing to the Court Against Actions and Decisions Violating the Rights and Freedoms of Citizens." [3] According to it, every citizen has the right to appeal the decision in court if they believe their rights and freedoms have been violated by state bodies and structures with a different status.

As daily practice testifies, citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan widely enjoy this right, and humane principles are becoming increasingly commonplace in the activities of state structures and law enforcement agencies, which is also confirmed by surveys conducted among respondents who applied to interested bodies. Control over the quality of execution of citizens' requests and complaints is carried out within the framework of regular monitoring conducted in connection with the implementation of this law.

In the report of the First President I. Karimov at the joint session of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, held on November 12, 2010, special attention was paid to the need to further improve the process of implementing the adopted laws. For these purposes, conferences are regularly held on the topic of "Monitoring the implementation of laws: theory and practice" under the auspices of the established Institute for Monitoring Current Legislation under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. [4] The main

focus of its activities is on the study of law enforcement monitoring and enhancing its role in further improving legislation and law enforcement practice. First of all, legal foundations were created in this process. For this purpose, the Institute for Monitoring Current Legislation under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis for Human Rights (Ombudsman), the National Center of the Republic of Uzbekistan for Human Rights, the Center for Control over Compliance with Regulatory Legal Documents under the Ministry of Justice, the Courts, including the Supreme Court, operate. A research center for the democratization and liberalization of legislation and ensuring the independence of the judicial system has been established. A continuous system of control over the implementation of legal laws has been implemented in the chambers of the Oliy Majlis, the Prosecutor General's Office and executive bodies.

Based on the conducted research, there is reason to make the following preliminary conclusions: Firstly, due to the observance of the principle of "The State is the main reformer", government initiatives have acted as a trigger for the widespread introduction of elements of democratization of society, with the involvement of all interested parties;

Secondly, after overcoming the transition period, accompanied by ignoring democratic initiatives on the part of supporters of conservative administrative and managerial control, the concept of parliamentary control has received clear outlines.

Thirdly, as noted above, non-governmental non-profit organizations focused on the constructive implementation of reforms and dialogue with the authorities are increasingly showing progressive activity.

Fourthly, in accordance with international principles, partnership relations have been established with foreign scientific and technical organizations.

Fifthly, a national mechanism for working with regulatory documents has been created.

Sixthly, a plan of measures to increase the political consciousness of the population has been developed and gradually implemented, with an increase in the number of subjects of public control. And, finally, it has been possible to avoid any social upheavals, excessive interventions and socio-political crises to date, achieving the set objectives within the framework of dialogue and consensus in the transition period.

At the current stage of democratization of society, it is premature to draw premature conclusions regarding the vectors of further development of the situation in the designated direction. After some time, conditions will arise for the application of scientific research methods and calculations in relation to empirical observations. But even now it is possible to comment on the constructive results of the initiatives of the head of state Shavkat Mirziyoyev within the framework of public ones, which have been purposefully implemented since 2016. Thus, a radically innovative system for working with citizens' appeals in government bodies, submitted for public discussion, received approval and support among wide circles of the population, including the most vulnerable in socio-economic terms. In everyday life, it is known as the "Single Window" and for the first time in history, the electorate was given the opportunity to transparently challenge the decisions of government agencies. Later, a mechanism for working with citizens' appeals was formed, which was called the "Virtual Lobby of the President", which then organically transformed into the "People's Lobby". Another aspect worthy of attention is that the concept of "Public opinion", which previously had a shade of "tradition" in the commonly used sense, with the coming to power of Shavkat Mirziyoyev acquired an innovative character in the context of direct "virtual" communication with the people and became the platform of "My opinion". [5]

In the final part, we focus our thoughts on the new changes that have been introduced into the activities of the Oliy Majlis, political parties, citizens' self-government bodies and other STTs, in particular, subjects of public control.

The meeting of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev with the chambers of the Oliy Majlis, political parties and representatives of the environmental movement of Uzbekistan, which took place on July 12, 2017, became the starting point in the process of democratic reform of society. It

defined plans for the foreseeable future, critically discussed the priorities of the activities of the parliament, political parties and local councils in the prism of urgent problems and aspirations of vulnerable segments of the population. According to the statement of the head of state: "Democracy begins with parliament. We say: "Parliament is a school of democracy." Therefore, our national parliament must become a real school of democracy. In this regard, you, esteemed deputies and senators, must be an example for everyone. Here - on the rostrum of parliament - real debates, principled arguments must take place. Only then will the true face and position of each political party, each party faction in parliament become clear," he said. Regarding political parties, the following position was outlined: "Any political party can survive as a political force only if it keeps up with the times and responds to their pressing demands." Another significant manifestation was the adoption by the deputy corps of the proposal to maintain official pages on social networks and reflect in them the results of work on complaints from the electorate. For the same purposes, the official duty of the people's representatives was to monthly travel in the first ten days of deputies and senators to the regions and work with citizens' appeals in a public manner.

As part of democratic reforms, more than 9,200 NGOs are involved in protecting the rights and interests of citizens and legal entities, as well as achieving social, cultural and educational goals. [6] In this context, it is appropriate to comment on the Decree of the President "On measures to radically increase the role of civil society institutions in the process of democratic renewal of the country." According to our observations, this legal act has significantly contributed to the revision of the activities of public control entities, or more precisely, modernization has made it possible to transfer the relationship between citizens and the authorities to a regulated and transparent form.

From all of the above, there is reason to state the following:

1. For the first time in the history of our country (the Republic of Uzbekistan), the Advisory Council for the Development of Civil Society under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan has been created;
2. Measures are being taken progressively to create an effective space for cooperation and exchange of opinions on important issues of further development of the state and society;
3. A special role is given to the involvement of non-governmental non-profit organizations in the development of state programs and regulatory documents. New forms of state assistance to NGOs actively participating in the modernization of society are proposed;
4. Practical steps have been taken to completely eradicate bureaucratic obstacles to the implementation of democratic mechanisms;
5. With the participation of scientific and expert groups, the mechanism for the systematic study, generalization and analysis of public opinion on the state policy for the development of civil society and its practical results contributed to initiatives to organize fundamental and applied research in the field of civil society development;
6. In the Republic of Karakalpakstan, in the regions and in the administrative centers of the city of Tashkent, the practice of creating "Houses of non-governmental non-profit organizations" on the basis of state-owned facilities has been launched;
7. For the first time in history, an honorary badge "For contribution to the development of civil society" has been established;
8. In the course of explanatory activities in the regions in the part related to the Laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Public Control", "On Social Partnership" and "On Protection of Consumer Rights", a consensus began to emerge between executive bodies and public organizations, with a focus on achieving the final result;

It is possible to state with a certain degree of confidence about the clear manifestation of elements of democratization of society, when public opinion and public control position themselves as autonomous independent elements and are introduced into the evolutionary mechanism of liberalization of socio-political arrangement at the local level;

In the above-mentioned perspective, we will once again note the transformation of the concept of "Public Opinion", which previously had a nominal conditional character, without any tangible status, and only with the coming to power of Sh. Mirziyoyev began to be positioned as an integral element of state arrangement, with clearly expressed mechanisms of functioning in all possible forms. In essence, this acted as a platform for the final reflection in the form of the platform "My Opinion".

The introduction of the institute of public control is intended to ensure the comprehensive implementation of the key task, consisting of three points outlined in the Development Strategy of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2022-2026, ensuring the protection of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens, and further strengthening the role and role of civil society institutions.

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4. 5.5. In accordance with paragraph 34 of the State Program, approved by the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 22, 2018 No. PF-5308, a special web portal "My Opinion" was created.
5. 6. Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated May 4, 2018 No. PF-5430 "On measures to radically increase the role of civil society institutions in the process of democratic renewal of the country." Source: <https://lex.uz/docs/3721649>.