

**HUMAN RIGHTS IN UZBEKISTAN: HISTORICAL DOCTRINES AND MODERN
REFORMS**

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This article analyzes the theoretical and legal foundations of human rights and freedoms, their historical roots in Eastern political and legal doctrines, and the context of modern reforms in New Uzbekistan. The study provides a comparative analysis of the concepts of just state governance and citizens' rights in Nizam al-Mulk's "Siyosatnama", alongside the early 20th-century ideas of the Jadidism movement regarding national legal statehood and the enhancement of human dignity. Furthermore, using the prism of public law, the paper substantiates the intrinsic link between these historical legacies and contemporary opportunities created for youth in Uzbekistan, specifically highlighting the strategic tasks defined in the President's Address to the Oliy Majlis and the People of Uzbekistan on December 26, 2025. The integration of historical traditions and modern constitutional norms is investigated through comprehensive legal research methodologies.

Keywords: *human rights, Siyosatnama, Nizam al-Mulk, Jadids, Behbudi, Fitrat, New Uzbekistan, 2025 Presidential Address, youth policy, measure of justice, dual education, judicial-legal reforms, legal consciousness.*

Introduction

Human rights and freedoms serve not only as the primary metric of a modern democratic state governed by the rule of law but also as a universal value shaped throughout the evolution of human civilization. Today, the sublime determinant principle of "For Human Dignity" is at the very core of the large-scale constitutional and institutional reforms implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan. However, interpreting the concept of human rights exclusively as a product of Eurocentric (Western) theories contradicts historical reality. The political and legal doctrines of Eastern thinkers deeply and systematically articulated issues concerning human rights, justice, and legal order centuries ago.

The relevance of this study lies in its syncretic comparative analysis of the "Siyosatnama" by Nizam al-Mulk—one of the most prominent manifestations of the Near and Middle Eastern school of statehood—and the legal views of the Jadids, representatives of the national awakening era, within the framework of modern legal modernization in Uzbekistan. In particular, the article incorporates the conceptual ideas presented in President State Shavkat Mirziyoyev's historic Address to the Oliy Majlis and the People of Uzbekistan on December 26, 2025. From the perspective of public law, this paper unveils the historical-genetic roots of state-individual relations, the legal status of youth, and the unprecedented opportunities offered to the new generation.

1. The Balance of State Apparatus and Citizen Rights in Nizam al-Mulk's "Siyasatnama"

Nizam al-Mulk, the grand vizier of the Seljuk Empire in the 11th century, stipulated in his masterpiece "Siyasatnama" (Siyar al-Muluk) that the stability and power of a state are directly determined by the extent to which the ruler or governors protect the rights of subjects (raiyat) and establish justice. From a public law standpoint, Nizam al-Mulk advocated for limiting the arbitrary powers of state officials and establishing rigid accountability mechanics.

Several key conceptual approaches regarding human rights and legality can be distinguished within the text:

First, Judicial Justice and Equality Before the Law. Nizam al-Mulk emphasizes that the supreme duty of the head of state is to personally hold public audiences twice a week to hear the grievances of the oppressed: *"The Qadis (judges) are the deputies of the king... if any person brings a lawsuit, no matter who they are, even if they are an official closest to the king, they must appear before the Qadi and stand on equal footing."* This functions as the historical precursor to "equality of arms" and the "right to a fair trial" in modern procedural law.

Second, Protection Against Executive Arbitrary Power. The author deems the oppression of the populace by tax collectors (amils) and local governors as the primary catalyst leading to state collapse. If officials encroach upon the property or honor of citizens, they must be severely punished, and any confiscated property must be unconditionally returned to its rightful owners. This provides an early institutional guarantee protecting human inviolability and property rights from executive abuse.

"A kingdom may endure with disbelief, but it cannot endure with oppression." > —
Nizam al-Mulk, "Siyasatnama"

Third, The Institution of Free Petitions. "Siyasatnama" thoroughly analyzes a specialized courier and intelligence (barid) network designed to eliminate barriers between the people and the ruler. The explicit purpose was to ensure that the voice of an ordinary citizen in the remotest corner of the realm reaches the center. The Virtual and People's Reception Offices operating in contemporary Uzbekistan serve as a modern institutional evolution of this very historical foundation.

2. The Jadidism Movement: Human Liberty, National Constitutionalism, and Enlightenment

Emerging in the early 20th century within the socio-political arena of Turkestan, the Jadids (Mahmudkhoja Behbudi, Munawwar Qari Abdurashidkhanov, Abdurauf Fitrat, Ubaydullah Khojaev, and others) fused human rights with national independence and democratic renewal. They initiated profound shifts in public law, drafting pioneering frameworks to transition state administration onto constitutional foundations.

The priority areas of human rights in the Jadid doctrine included:

1. The Right to Education as the Cornerstone of Human Liberty. As Mahmudkhoja Behbudi asserted in his famous essays, *"To exist in this world, worldly*

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knowledge and science are mandatory." The Jadids maintained that for individuals to comprehend and defend their rights, they must first be literate and enlightened. Ignorance condemns humans to servitude and disenfranchisement.

2. **Gender Equality and Women's Rights.** Abdurauf Fitrat legally substantiated the position of women in society in his work "The Family or Family Management Procedures" (1914). He utilized both canonical (Sharia) and secular arguments to demonstrate that women must receive education, participate in social life, and hold equal rights to men within the family structure. From a modern point of view, a woman's enlightenment is directly correlated with the well-being of the family and the intellectual future of children.

3. **Political Rights and the Electoral Institute.** During the period of Turkestan Autonomy, the Jadids were the first to champion the principles of universal, equal, and direct suffrage. In their envisioned state structure, all citizens were to enjoy equal political rights regardless of religion, ethnicity, or gender.

3. Integration of Historical Traditions, Jadid Ideals, and the 2025 Presidential Address

The historic Address of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev on December 26, 2025, elevated reforms favoring human dignity, liberty, and youth prospects to an entirely new institutional echelon. The Head of State proclaimed: "**The interest of the Motherland, the interest of our people—is our ultimate goal,**" declaring 2026 as a year of breakthrough transformations across all spheres. The core of this address directly aligns with Nizam al-Mulk's concept of justice and the Jadids' educational ideals.

A) Judicial Reforms and the Measure of Justice

While Nizam al-Mulk posited that only justice and judicial independence can preserve a state, the 2025 Address outlined targeted objectives to bring the judicial-legal system closer to the people and bolster the guarantees of objective adjudication, ensuring robust mechanisms against administrative overreach.

B) Women's Rights and Social Protection

Mirroring Fitrat's vision, the 2025 Address placed the socioeconomic empowerment of women at the center of state policy. Initiatives include expanding female access to higher education, providing vocational training, backing entrepreneurial ventures, and establishing neighborhood-level systems to protect women against harassment and violence.

C) Vocational Education and Structural Shifts in Youth Policy

The Jadids' aspiration to educate youth via advanced international standards finds its full practical expression in the strategic goals of the 2025 Address:

- **Modernization of Technicums:** A comprehensive five-year program was approved to renovate and structurally upgrade vocational schools (technicums).
- **Dual Education and Stipends:** Starting from 2026, 100,000 students undergoing "dual education" (combining academic studies with industrial apprenticeship) will receive state stipends for the first time, with enhanced stipends reserved for high achievers.

- **International Standards:** Specialized medical technicums in every region will integrate the educational curricula of advanced countries (such as Germany, Switzerland, the USA, and Japan) to train bilingual, internationally certified nursing staff.

4. Modern Opportunities for Youth and Institutional Progress

With youth comprising nearly 60 percent of Uzbekistan's population, safeguarding their rights is a top priority. Chapter XXVI (Article 79) of the newly revised Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan explicitly mandates that the state ensures the personal, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of youth, encouraging their active participation in state and societal affairs.

These modern opportunities are visible across several tracks. Higher education coverage has scaled from 9% to over 38% in recent years. The Jadid dream of foreign education is fully operationalized through the state-funded "El-Yurt Umidi" Foundation. On the economic front, the "Youth Notebook" (Yoshlar Daftari) system grants subsidies and preferential loans to hundreds of thousands of young entrepreneurs. Furthermore, agencies like the Youth Affairs Agency support startups and young scientists. At TSUL, students regularly engage in legal clinics and international legal competitions (Moot Courts), demonstrating a significant leap in national legal culture.

Conclusion

In conclusion, human rights and freedoms are intrinsically woven into the historical fabric and statehood traditions of Uzbekistan. Nizam al-Mulk prioritized justice and the welfare of subjects in state administration, while the Jadids expanded these concepts through modern democratic, constitutional, and educational paradigms. The ongoing constitutional reforms in New Uzbekistan and the specific frameworks defined in President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's Address of December 26, 2025, represent the contemporary peak of this historical transformation. Providing cutting-edge international standards, dual education, and financial stipends to the youth constructs the intellectual foundation necessary for the Third Renaissance. These guaranteed rights, in turn, bestow an immense civic responsibility upon the younger generation of TSUL to drive the nation's future progress.

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