

**THE STATUS OF JUDGES AND JUDICIAL REFORMS IN UZBEKISTAN:
STRENGTHENING INDEPENDENCE AND ENSURING FAIR JUSTICE**

Author: Abdusamadov Dilmurod Farhod o‘g‘li

Affiliation: Independent Researcher,

Tashkent State University of Law

Email: abduamadov033@gmail.com

ORCID: 0009-0009-5864-4750

Abstract: *This article examines the adoption of the Law “On the Status of Judges” in Uzbekistan and its role in recent judicial reforms aimed at strengthening judicial independence, ensuring fair justice, and protecting citizens’ rights and legal interests. The study analyzes key provisions of the law, mechanisms for workload regulation, appointment and dismissal procedures, protection from external influences, and social guarantees for judges. International experiences from Germany, France, Russia, and Kazakhstan are incorporated to provide a comparative perspective and identify best practices for modernizing Uzbekistan’s judicial system. The article also discusses prospects for professional development, digitalization of judicial processes, and the promotion of gender equality in the judiciary.*

Keywords: *independent judiciary, judicial reforms, fair justice, Uzbekistan, judicial status, workload regulation, social guarantees, international experience, digital courts*

INTRODUCTION

Judicial independence is a fundamental human right that allows judges to make decisions free from external pressure, ensuring that citizens’ rights are effectively protected. This principle is enshrined in Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in international legal instruments ratified by Uzbekistan. Only an independent and impartial judiciary can provide citizens with confidence that their cases will be examined fairly, openly, and in accordance with the law.

In recent years, judicial reforms implemented under the framework of Uzbekistan’s Action Strategy have significantly democratized the judicial system, enhanced the independence of the judiciary, and strengthened mechanisms for the protection of citizens’ rights and legitimate interests. The President’s Address to the Oliy Majlis on December 29, 2020, emphasized the progress achieved over the past four years in improving the legal framework and implementing over forty legislative acts, decrees, and resolutions to ensure judicial efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

Judicial reforms and key mechanisms

The Law “On the Status of Judges” establishes a comprehensive framework for judicial activity, defining judges’ duties and responsibilities, regulating workload, and setting clear procedures for appointment, dismissal, and evaluation. Judges are now protected from any external influence, ensuring impartiality and independence in decision-

making. Social guarantees, including financial and career protections, are provided to prevent corruption and strengthen the judiciary’s credibility.

Workload management has been improved to ensure the timely and effective resolution of cases. This system not only increases judicial efficiency but also contributes to the quality and consistency of decisions. The appointment of judges is now based on merit, involving online examinations and a competitive selection process, which promotes transparency and the professional development of the judicial corps.

In criminal cases, the introduction of preliminary hearings, the reduction of detention periods during investigation, and the establishment of plea bargaining mechanisms enhance the protection of defendants’ rights while ensuring procedural efficiency. Economic and administrative cases are handled by specialized courts with streamlined procedures, further improving the efficiency and predictability of judicial decisions.

Principles of judicial process

Judicial proceedings in Uzbekistan now adhere to principles of transparency, impartiality, and equality of parties. Only the law guides judicial activity, and interference from state bodies or public organizations is strictly prohibited. Decisions are based solely on evidence and legal norms, ensuring fair adjudication. The introduction of digital case management systems has increased the accessibility of court proceedings, while the mandatory execution of judicial decisions strengthens the judiciary’s authority.

Gender equality is increasingly emphasized within the judiciary. The number of women judges has risen, with women comprising over 31% of the Supreme Court and 15% of all judges nationwide as of early 2021. This progress contributes to a more inclusive judicial environment and enhances public trust in the judicial system. Furthermore, a system allowing citizens to challenge unlawful actions and decisions by state bodies has been successfully implemented, with nearly 67% of administrative complaints upheld between 2019 and 2020.

International experience

Comparative international experience offers valuable lessons for Uzbekistan’s judiciary. In Germany, courts operate independently with strict procedural compliance. France emphasizes open hearings, guarantees of legal protection, and electronic case management. Russia prioritizes procedural equality and transparency, with court decisions published online. Kazakhstan ensures efficient, impartial, and timely adjudication through a unified electronic system. These practices inform Uzbekistan’s ongoing reforms, guiding the introduction of digital systems, professional training programs, and standards for transparency and fairness.

Prospects and future directions

Uzbekistan’s judicial system is steadily modernizing through digitalization, professional development programs, and the strengthening of specialized courts. Judicial decisions are increasingly grounded in evidence and law, and citizens’ rights are better protected. The Law “On the Status of Judges” lays the foundation for merit-based appointments, career progression, and social protection, ensuring the sustainability and credibility of the judiciary.

Future prospects include:

- Expansion of digital court systems and electronic case management.
- Continuous professional development for judges to handle complex cases.
- Enhancement of gender equality and diversity within the judiciary.
- Adoption of international best practices to align with global judicial standards.
- Strengthening public trust through transparency, accountability, and independent oversight.

CONCLUSION

Judicial reforms in Uzbekistan, anchored by the Law “On the Status of Judges,” have strengthened the independence and professionalism of the judiciary, improved transparency and fairness, and enhanced the protection of citizens’ rights. The introduction of merit-based appointments, workload regulation, and digitalization ensures efficiency and credibility. International best practices have guided these reforms, positioning Uzbekistan’s judiciary to meet global standards. These developments represent a critical step toward democratic governance, rule of law, and sustainable social trust in the judicial system.