



# Islam in Uzbekistan: Organization of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan

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**Abstract:** In Uzbekistan, religion is an integral part of the country's cultural and spiritual traditions and the basis of the spiritual maturity of the population. Today in Uzbekistan there are about 2300 religious organizations belonging to representatives of more than 130 nationalities and peoples and members of 16 religious denominations. People of different nationalities and religions live peacefully on the basis of the principle of tolerance. The government has been closely supporting the activities of each denomination. Muslim Board of Uzbekistan is one of the most influential non-governmental non-profit organizations in Uzbekistan. Ensuring the unity of believers and Muslims, clearly and correctly conveying Islamic rules to the people, creating facilities for obedience and worship, maintaining the ideological unity of Muslims, researching the historical heritage of our ancestors, carrying out charity work, and ensuring harmony in society. These are the main areas of activity of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan.

**Keywords:** religious office, state and religion in Uzbekistan, Muslim organizations, SADUM, madrasa, mosque, representative offices, religious education

## Introduction

If we return to history, then in Soviet times the policy of secularism and godlessness prevailed in Uzbekistan. At that time, the religion of Islam, the severe trials faced by believers, people of religious faith were subjected to severe persecution, they were imprisoned for no fault of their own, their lives were in danger all their lives, and the women of their families suffered countless times. experiences and suffering, his children also experienced. In Soviet times, when a totalitarian atheistic system was in power, the most important institutional situation was the Administration of Muslims of Uzbekistan (formerly Central Asia and the creation of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan, hereinafter referred to as the Spiritual Administration. It is for this reason that the organization of the organization, its systematic development, study of factors influencing the integration processes of Muslim countries (Altin, 2021).

After the entry of the Soviet state into World War II in 1941, attitudes towards religion and religious people, especially Muslims, changed on the territory of the Union. The issue of religion became an ideological and ideological weapon both for Nazi Germany, which

invaded the Soviet state, and for the Soviet government, which was preparing to defend its homeland (Mukhamedov, 2023). Since the Nazis were well aware that in this war weapons alone would not be enough, they, condemning the hegemony and atheistic policies of the communist system, sought to create political disunity among representatives of different nationalities and religions within the alliance, as well as promote a policy of religious patronage in the occupied territories they pursued (Carlisle, 2019). The Soviet government noticed this and did the opposite: it quickly realized the importance of involving people of different nationalities and faiths in the fight against Nazi forces, temporarily ending or easing the persecution of religion. In addition, such hegemonic countries as the USA and England, which claim to be fighters for democracy in the world, were forced to sharply soften religious policies in order to attract the population to the front on a large scale. At the height of World War II, the Soviet government demanded that the allied countries open a second front. But Western countries put forward several conditions for this. One of them was to give people religious freedom (Lubin, 2023). The leader of the Soviet state, J.V. Stalin, took into account his proposals and recommendations at meetings with the famous British religious and public figure, member of the World Peace Council Hewlett Johnson in Moscow, he had no choice but to stop the policy. "extermination of religious figures." Despite the fact that communist ideology was established in the country, the majority of the population was religious. At the same time, attempts were made to create a religious office among local believers and religious figures [1; 27].

So, in order for the Muslim population to support the Soviet regime, they first had to soften the harsh treatment meted out to them. As a result, winning a place in the hearts of the Muslim population turned out to be another condition that had to be fulfilled first before the Soviet authorities. In such conditions, the Soviet government tried to change its intolerant attitude towards Muslims and Islam (Zakirov, 2021).

## Methodology

The methodological basis of the study is the methods of analysis, synthesis and comparative historical method. The analysis method allows you to create an overall holistic picture with the identification of characteristic patterns and trends. The synthesis method is used as a process of practical or mental reunification of a whole from parts or the combination of various elements of a historical process into a single whole. Using the comparative historical method, the general and special in historical processes in different historical periods in different geographical locations are revealed. The research materials are presented in special scientific and educational literature and information websites of government agencies on the issues of ethnic policy and the sphere of interethnic relations. Also in the research work, state regulatory documents related to the object, decrees and decrees of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan were cited.

The dissertation is based on information obtained from the current archives of the Tashkent Islamic Institute and records of the first years of independence stored in the library of the institute.

## Result and Discussion

The religious administration of Central Asia and Kazakhstan was first created in 1943, and during the most difficult times of World War II, the attitude of the inhabitants of the former union towards Islam began to change in a positive direction. Instead of atheism, Muslim tolerance saved the Uzbeks. At the request of the local population, a group of activists led by His Holiness Eshon Bobohan asked permission from the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Uzbek SSR, Yuldosh Okhunboboyev, to create an organization that would unite Muslims. Okhunboboev negotiates this matter with Moscow and manages to obtain permission. In 1943, Eshon Bobohan met with Joseph Stalin in Moscow. Stalin tells him to call a congress of Muslim scholars to propose ways to help them achieve victory in the war [2].

In general, during the times of the former union, there were 4 Islamic religious organizations, such as the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in Tashkent, the Administration of Muslims of the RSFSR in Ufa, the Administration of Muslims of Azerbaijan in Baku and the Administration of Muslims of the Caucasus [3; 16].

Thus, at a congress of 160 people, it was decided to create the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan and elect Eshon Baba Khan as mufti. The organizational structure of the collegium will be a committee (11 people), an audit commission (5 people) and judges for the republics. In those years, it became possible for representatives of Muslims to make pilgrimages, the Mir Arab madrasah began to function again (1945), the Regulations on Mosques were developed, a library of religious administration was founded, and international relations expanded [4; 155].

Since 1957, His Excellency Ziyovuddin Khan ibn Eshan Bobohan was elected mufti of the board. On the initiative of the new mufti, copies and translations of the Holy Quran, a collection of hadiths of Imam al-Bukhari "Al-Jami' al-Sahih" were published on the territory of the USSR, and in 1971 the Tashkent Islamic Institute named after Imam Bukhari, created in the building of the Namazgoh mosque in Tashkent, opened the way to education. In 1929, the system of religious education was completely stopped in Uzbekistan. Almost forty years later, His Holiness Ziewuddin Khan ibn Eshan Baba Khan managed to restore the system of religious education in an official form [5; 62].

The central directorate of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan is located in Tashkent, and in the other four republics there were "kaziets", that is, representative offices (Takhirov, 2023). The end of the 80s - the beginning of the 90s of the twentieth century was a rather difficult period in the history of the religious administration of Muslims in Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Before the division of the Soviet state, judges in the republics began to independently manage their affairs. Since 1990, the Gaziyuts have left the jurisdiction of the religious administration and founded their own independent religious institutions. As a result, it became necessary to change the name of the religious administration centered in Tashkent.

In 1990, the judiciary of Kazakhstan was separated from the religious administration and the Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan was created. By decision of the V

Congress of Muslims of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Karakalpakstan, held on February 27, 1992, it was named the Movarunnahr Muslim Administration [6; 18]. According to the Regulations approved at the meeting of Muslim scientists of Movarunnahr on December 4, 1995, the name "Administration of Muslims of Movarunnahr" was changed to "Administration of Muslims of Uzbekistan". This change was approved by certificate No. 05 of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated August 12, 1998 [7; 3].

The Muslim Board of Uzbekistan is an official non-governmental religious organization that unites the country's Muslims, provides them with spiritual guidance and patronage, and has great influence. The highest governing body of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan is the Council of Ulema. The Council of Ulema by open vote elects the chairman of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, the mufti, for a period of five years.

The highest governing body of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan is the Ulema Council, the highest executive body is the Supreme Council, headed by the mufti. Support is provided by deputy muftis and legal advisers, as well as heads of departments. The department has appointed its representatives in the regions and the Republic of Karakalpakstan and, together with them, implements all activities related to the religious life of Muslims.

The Muslim Office of Uzbekistan helps Muslims in a clear and correct interpretation of Islamic rules through mosques, collects and studies rare manuscripts and books related to the history of Islam, and organizes pilgrimages to holy places. Today (as of April 10, 2024), there are 2,132 mosques under the jurisdiction of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan. More than 5 thousand imams, deputy imams and muezzins serve the population in mosques.

Currently, the Office of Muslims of Uzbekistan is in charge of representative offices located in territorial units (regional, city representative offices), 2,132 mosques, 10 secondary specialized Islamic educational institutions (madrassas), 3 higher religious educational institutions, and publishing houses. There are a charitable public foundation "Waqf", fatwas and research centers, 5 specialized scientific schools. In addition, religious educational institutions and scientific schools offer educational courses "Koran Karim and Tajwid" for our compatriots.

The religious position was held in different years by Sheikh Eshon Bobokhanov (1943–1957) [8; 65], Sheikh Ziyovuddin Khan Bobokhanov (1957–1982) [9; 144], Shamsiddinkhan Bobokhanov (1982–1989) [10; 150], Sheikh Muhammad Sadiq Muhammad Yusuf (1989–1993) [11; 53–55], Mukhtarzhan Abdullah Bukhari. (1993–1997), Abdurashid Bakhromov (1997–2006), Usmonkhan Alimov (2006–2021), Sheikh Nuriddin Khaliknazar (2021–2021).

Through their efforts, a lot of work has been done in the areas of restoring national values, religious education, pilgrimage and umrah, establishing ties with Muslim countries, publishing and fatwa of the Tashkent Islamic Institute under the leadership of the Muslim Office of Uzbekistan at the Higher Mirarab University. Madrassas, the School of Hadith Studies and 10 special secondary Islamic schools, including 2 women's madrassas, use their

capabilities. More than 2000 students study here. In addition, the Center for Islamic Civilization, the Imam Bukhari and Imam Termizi International Research Centers serve to study and popularize our rich scientific and historical heritage.

The creative publishing house “Shamsuddin Khan Bobokhanov” operates under the authority of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan. Also, the magazines “Hidayat” and “Mominalar” and the newspaper “Islam Nuri” are published as periodicals of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan.

## Discussion

Among the works carried out on this topic during the years of independence, several books and articles by Professor S. Azamkhozhaev [12:77], doctors of historical sciences B. Bobojonov and A. Mominov, A. Salmonov, one can list the studies conducted by Y. Dzhakhongirov and R. Yusupov under the guidance of Professor I. Alimov. In addition, Seyfitdin Ershahin from Germany, in his huge article and dissertation on religious control over the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, paid almost no attention to the periodic publications of the department, and in his research he covered the activities of several scientists of that time, and briefly, however, Unfortunately, he gave inaccurate information [13; 2-19]. Maria Elizabeth Lowe from Denmark, Adib Khaled from Pakistan [14; 272], John Schoberlein, Ahmed Nur Fouad and also Russian specialists have done a lot of work in this direction, in particular, a number of documents have been published.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the activities of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in Uzbekistan in 1943-1991 had a certain significance in the revival of Islamic traditions in the cultural and educational life of the country's Muslims. The oppression and tension of the Soviet system influenced the internal and external activities of the Spiritual Department. In this process, one of the important changes in the life of Muslims can be seen as official permission for the activities of Islamic educational institutions. The leaders of the spiritual administration took an active part in organizing the educational activities of religious educational institutions. This is evident from the fact that a number of measures have been taken to increase the number of students, improve the quality of education, and train them in foreign Islamic universities. A study was conducted of the basic principles of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, its role and significance in the republic.

The Muslim Board of Uzbekistan unites the Muslims of our republic, satisfies their needs in faith in Islam, ensures their religious unity and solidarity, and also satisfies the needs of Muslims in acquiring religious knowledge, provides them with spiritual guidance and is an official religious and independent organization that has special influence in modern times. society.

Existing and currently operating religious organizations are divided into types depending on their level and nature. The Muslim Board of Uzbekistan is one of the Islamic organizations, a non-governmental, non-profit organization and makes independent



decisions. It maintains relations with the Islamic World Congress, the Islamic World League and the International Association of Islamic Banks.

At the same time, the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan manages the activities of mosques and religious educational institutions of our republic in order to create the necessary conditions for meeting religious needs and harmoniously organizes their activities. In addition, one of the important areas of activity of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan is to improve the good relations of the Muslims of our republic with each other, as well as with representatives of other nationalities and religions.

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