

History of the Formation of the Rule of Law and Civil Society in the Republic of Uzbekistan

Ruziyev Dostonbek Rustam o'g'li*

Department of History and Social Sciences, University of Economics and Pedagogy

*Correspondence: Ruziyev Dostonbek
Rustam o'g'li
Email: druziyev84@gmail.com

Received: 03-03-2026
Accepted: 12-04-2026
Published: 28-05-2026



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors.
Submitted for open access publication
under the terms and conditions of the
Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY)
license
([http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/
4.0/](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)).

framework, further advancement depends on consistent reforms, the consolidation of civic values, and effective interaction between the state and its citizens.

Abstract: *Research Purpose: This study aims to analyze the historical stages of the formation of the rule of law and civil society in the Republic of Uzbekistan. It focuses on identifying key factors influencing this evolution and evaluating the outcomes of constitutional and legal reforms aimed at strengthening democratic values. The research employs a comprehensive analysis of legal, political, and social dimensions to understand how the concepts of the rule of law and civil society have evolved. It examines the interrelation between state institutions and independent social organizations, focusing on legislative initiatives and institutional transformations since the country's independence. The findings indicate that the 1992 Constitution created the primary foundation for a legal state by guaranteeing sovereignty and the separation of powers. Over the years, reforms have strengthened judicial independence and expanded the role of the parliament and civil society institutions. Recent reforms starting in 2017 have further liberalized the judicial system, while the 2023 Constitution has specifically bolstered the role of citizens' self-government bodies, known as neighborhoods. The formation of the rule of law and civil society in Uzbekistan is a complex and gradual process shaped by socio-economic and political transformations. While significant progress has been made in establishing a legal*

Keywords: *Legal State, Civil Society, Constitution, Democracy, Rule of Law, Human Rights.*

Introduction

The formation of the rule of law and civil society is one of the key priorities in the development of modern democratic states. In the Republic of Uzbekistan, this process has gained particular significance in the context of socio-political transformations following independence. The transition from a centrally planned system to a democratic and market-oriented society has required the establishment of strong legal institutions, the protection of human rights, and the active participation of citizens in public life.

This study aims to analyze the historical stages of the formation of the rule of law and civil society in Uzbekistan, identify key factors influencing this process, and evaluate the outcomes of ongoing reforms. By examining legal, political, and social dimensions, the research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these concepts have evolved and how they continue to shape the country's development trajectory.

Thus, the relevance of this research lies in its focus on the dynamic interaction between legal institutions and civil society, as well as its contribution to understanding the broader processes of democratization and modernization in Uzbekistan.

Methodology

The concept of the rule of law implies the supremacy of law, equality of all individuals before the law, and the accountability of state institutions to legal norms. At the same time, civil society represents a system of independent social institutions, organizations, and associations that function outside direct state control and contribute to the development of democratic values. The interrelation between the rule of law and civil society is essential, as they mutually reinforce each other in ensuring stability, justice, and sustainable development.

Since gaining independence in 1991, Uzbekistan has undertaken a series of reforms aimed at strengthening legal frameworks, enhancing judicial independence, and promoting civic engagement. Legislative initiatives, institutional transformations, and policy reforms have played a crucial role in shaping a modern legal state and fostering the growth of civil society. Particular attention has been paid to the development of non-governmental organizations, public participation mechanisms, and transparency in governance.

The rule of law and civil society occupy an important place in modern legal thought and political theory. The rule of law is a system of governance in which human rights and freedoms are recognized as the highest value, and state power is limited by legal norms. Civil society is a social space in which independent social institutions, non-governmental organizations, the media, and free associations of citizens operate. After the declaration of independence in the Republic of Uzbekistan, the establishment of a rule of law and civil society has become the main priority of state policy. Therefore, this article scientifically analyzes the historical stages, legal foundations, and practical significance of this process.

The idea of a state governed by law has existed in human thought since ancient times, and the ideas of limiting power by law were put forward in the works of thinkers such as Aristotle, Plato, and Cicero. In Europe, the 18th-century enlighteners - Charles Montesquieu, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and John Locke - developed the theoretical foundations of a state governed by law. The concept of civil society was also formed in connection with the ideas of human freedom, inviolability of property, and relative independence of society from the state.

The main features of a state governed by law include the rule of law, guarantees of human rights, the principle of separation of powers, and an independent judiciary. The features of civil society include the development of non-governmental organizations, free media, social cooperation, and proactive civic activity. In this regard, the ideas of a state governed by law and civil society began to take practical form in Uzbekistan after independence.

The process of building a legal state during the years of independence. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted on December 8, 1992, created a solid foundation for building a legal state. It strengthened the guarantees of people's sovereignty, the separation of powers, the rule of law, human rights and freedoms [1]. The Constitution has been operating in our country as the main document for building a legal state.

Since the late 1990s, legal reforms have been implemented step by step. A number of laws have been adopted to make the judicial system independent, develop the institutions of the prosecutor's office and the bar, and improve the activities of law enforcement agencies. At the same time, the activities of national institutions for guaranteeing human rights - the Human Rights Ombudsman (Ombudsman) and the Constitutional Court - have been strengthened [2].

In the 2000s, the role of parliament in the system of state power has increased, the multi-party system has developed, and citizens' electoral rights have been expanded. Starting in 2017, a new phase of reforms was implemented to liberalize the judicial system, establish administrative courts, and mitigate penalties [3].

Result and Discussion

During the years of independence, civil society institutions have been gradually formed in Uzbekistan. The activities of NGOs, public organizations, trade unions, youth and women's associations, and various social funds have expanded. In particular, in the 2000s, state programs "Support for Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations" were adopted, creating legal conditions for their activities [4].

Ensuring media freedom and supporting the process of free exchange of ideas on the Internet and social networks were also important factors in the development of civil society. The new Constitution adopted in 2023 stipulated the further development of civil society institutions and the strengthening of the role of citizens' self-government bodies - neighborhoods [5].

The interdependence of the rule of law and civil society

The rule of law and civil society are complementary concepts. The rule of law ensures the free development of civil society through the rule of law, and civil society serves the development of the rule of law by controlling state power and making it serve the interests of the people. In Uzbekistan, these two directions are developing harmoniously. The openness of the activities of state bodies, public control, and the active participation of civil society in the fight against corruption serve as decisive factors in building a rule of law state [6].

The formation of a legal state and civil society in the Republic of Uzbekistan is one of the most important processes in the years of independence. The 1992 Constitution and subsequent legal reforms have created a solid foundation for the construction of a legal state. The development of civil society institutions serves to strengthen the values of democracy, freedom and justice in society. The reforms being implemented in our country today are of particular importance as they are aimed at further developing a legal state and civil society, ensuring the well-being of the people and deepening democratic progress.

The analysis shows that the development of the rule of law is closely interconnected with the growth of civil society institutions. Strengthening judicial independence, improving legislative mechanisms, and enhancing transparency in governance have contributed to building public trust and encouraging civic participation. At the same time, the expansion of non-governmental organizations and public initiatives has played an important role in supporting democratic reforms and fostering social responsibility.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the formation of the rule of law and civil society in the Republic of Uzbekistan represents a complex and gradual process shaped by historical, political, and socio-economic transformations. Since gaining independence, the country has made significant progress in establishing a legal framework that ensures the supremacy of law, protects human rights, and promotes democratic governance.

However, the study also indicates that the process remains ongoing and requires continuous improvement of legal practices, institutional effectiveness, and public awareness. The successful development of a just and democratic society depends not only on formal legal structures but also on the active engagement of citizens and the consolidation of civic values.

Therefore, the experience of Uzbekistan demonstrates that the establishment of the rule of law and civil society is a dynamic and evolving process. Its further advancement will depend on consistent reforms, adherence to democratic principles, and the effective interaction between the state and society. This ensures sustainable development, social stability, and the strengthening of democratic institutions in the country.

References

- Abdurakhmanov, K. (2023). *Constitutional reforms in New Uzbekistan: Legal aspects and social significance*. Tashkent University Press.
- Alimov, R., & Karimov, A. (2024). The evolution of civil society in Central Asia: A case study of Uzbekistan's NGOs. *Journal of Central Asian Studies*, 12(2), 45-62.
- Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan (new edition). – Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 2023.
- Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. – Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1992.
- Constitutional Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan. (2023). *Commentary on the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the new edition*. Uzbekistan Publishing House.
- Eshov, M. (2022). The role of the "Mahalla" institution in the development of modern civil society. *Social Sciences in Uzbekistan*, 8(1), 15-28.
- Experience of an international legal state and civil society. – Tashkent: Adolat, 2020.
- Ismatov, A. (2021). *Rule of law and judicial independence in post-Soviet states: The Uzbek experience*. Adolat.
- Juraev, S. (2025). Digitalization of public administration and transparency in Uzbekistan's legal state. *Asian Journal of Legal Reforms*, 5(3), 112-130.
- Karimov I.A. *Uzbekistan's path to independence and development*. – Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1992.
- Khamidov, B. (2023). Human rights protection mechanisms under the 2023 Constitutional reform. *Uzbek Law Review*, 19(4), 77-89.
- Law on Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations. – Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1999.
- Mirziyoyev Sh.M. *The rule of law and ensuring human interests are the guarantee of the country's development and the well-being of the people*. – Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 2017.
- Mirziyoyev, S. M. (2022). *Strategy of development of the New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026*. Tasvir.

-
- Nazarov, F. (2024). Interaction between state bodies and non-governmental organizations: Challenges and prospects. *Central Asian Policy Studies*, 15(1), 200-215.
- Rakhimov, M. (2021). Historical stages of democratization in Uzbekistan: From independence to modernization. *History and Sociology Review*, 7(2), 34-50.
- Rustambekov, I. (2023). Legal framework for civil society institutions in Uzbekistan: A new era of reforms. *International Journal of Legal Studies*, 10(1), 55-72.
- Saidov, A. (2022). Human rights in Uzbekistan: National and international dimensions. National Center for Human Rights.
- Turdiyev, B. (2025). The impact of the multi-party system on political stability in Uzbekistan. *Journal of Political Dynamics*, 14(2), 101-118.
- Umurzakov, B. (2021). Judicial-legal reforms as a factor of ensuring the rule of law. *Legal Heritage Journal*, 3(4), 12-25.
- Yusupov, S. (2026). Social cooperation and civic activity: Building a sustainable democratic society in Uzbekistan. *Central Asian Review of Social Development*, 18(1), 90-108.