

FREE ELECTIONS ARE THE MAIN SIGN OF CIVIL SOCIETY

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Abstract: This article discusses the changes in the elections in the Republic of Uzbekistan after 2017 and their recognition by the world community.

Key words: Free elections, right to vote, election principles, equal right to vote, right to direct election; the right to secret ballot, pre-election campaign, election commissions, voting.

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The election is a symbol of the people's power, and first of all, it expresses the interest of the members of the society, as well as the voter-citizen. From the strategy of actions to development, the role of elections is incomparable.

According to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, "Recently, as a result of the elections held under the slogan "New Uzbekistan - new elections", a new political environment, necessary for bringing democratic reforms to a higher level, was created in our republic. 825 observers from about 50 countries and 10 international organizations took part in order to control that the elections were conducted in an open manner based on international standards. For the first time in Europe, we closely cooperated with the 316-person full-fledged mission of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe" [1]. The principle of periodicity and obligation of elections is also reflected in the legislation of Uzbekistan. For example, in Article 106 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, "A citizen of the Republic of Uzbekistan who is not younger than thirty-five years old, who knows the state language well, who has lived in the territory of Uzbekistan for at least 10 years before the direct election can be elected to the position of President of the Republic of Uzbekistan." The same person cannot be the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan for more than two consecutive terms. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan is elected by citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the basis of general, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot for a term of seven years. The procedure for electing the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan is determined by law" [2].

Otherwise, Article 91 of the Constitution states that "The Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan is the supreme state representative body and exercises legislative power. The Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan consists of two chambers - the Legislative Chamber (lower chamber) and the Senate (upper chamber). The term of office of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan is five years." [3] According to Article 5 of the constitutional laws on the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, on the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the term of office of the Legislative Chamber is five years. The term of office of the Senate is five years. These norms are reflected in Articles 61, 67 and 75 of the Election Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In accordance with the requirements of the above law, the election of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the representative bodies of state power must be held every five years. The precise definition and periodicity of such term of office usually corresponds to the world practice

and allows to implement the main directions of the pre-election programs, to see the practical results of the activities, and ensures the periodicity of renewal of state authorities.

In accordance with this democratic principle, on July 23, 2021, the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a decision "On setting the date of the election of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan and announcing the start of the election campaign." According to the decision, the election of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was scheduled to be held on October 24, 2021, and it was announced that the election campaign began on July 23 of this year. In this way, a free and fair, open and transparent election began in our country.

The right to free election is to make a decision about participating or not to participate in the election without any influence, violence, threat of violence or other illegal influence on the voters and other participants of the election process, to freely express their will during the voting process, and no how it allows for an uncontrolled, hidden vote. "According to Article 7 of the Election Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, free and secret voting is given in the election. It is not allowed to control the will of voters. Secret voting is ensured by creating appropriate conditions that exclude the possibility of controlling the will of the voter in any way. When filling out a ballot, the presence of other persons in the voting room, except for the voter, is prohibited" [4].

The right to free election allows the participants of the election process, the members of the election commission, to make decisions in the forms and legal ways allowed by the law, regardless of the election results and voting results, without fear of punishment or influence. In accordance with Article 11 of the Election Code, election commissions and their members perform their activities independently of any state bodies, public associations and officials. Interference with the activities of the election commissions is not allowed and such interference is a cause of liability according to the law. Election commissions and their members follow the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Election Code and other legal documents in their activities.

In order to implement the principle of fair elections, all the legal bases have been created in the electoral legislation of our country. As the principle of equal suffrage implies, every citizen has the right to participate in elections on an equal basis and every vote has the same force. Every citizen has one vote and has the right to exercise his right to vote on an equal basis with other citizens. Every voter can use the polling station and voting room equally and without hindrance to exercise the right to participate in voting. "The principle of openness and transparency of elections is given a special place in the legislation of Uzbekistan. In particular, according to Article 8 of the Election Code, election commissions conduct election preparation and conduct openly and transparently. Decisions related to the preparation and conduct of the election, ensuring and protecting the electoral rights of citizens are officially announced and brought to the attention of the general public in the manner and within the time limits stipulated by the election laws. Compliance with this principle creates conditions for national and international observation of elections. The legislation of Uzbekistan has strengthened the participation of national and international observers. The presence of international observers contributes to the openness and transparency of the election, compliance with the international obligations of the states" [5].

In order to implement this requirement in the Election Code, at the meeting of the Central Election Commission on July 23, 2021, a decision was made to establish the Press Center of the

Central Election Commission of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The charter of the press center was approved. On the same day, the opening and presentation ceremony of the Press Center was held. As defined in the decision, the Press Center organizes wide coverage of the process of the election of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the mass media, preparation and holding of briefings, press conferences related to the preparation and holding of the election, providing prompt information and delivery of information to journalists and the public on issues related to the election. is enough. Ensures maintenance of the "Saylov2021" web portal and other information resources for the delivery of information materials related to the election of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan to voters, candidates, observers and the general public.

Conducting elections in accordance with the principle of periodicity is a sign and condition of a democratic society. In fact, democracy cannot be imagined without elections that are held in accordance with universally recognized principles of suffrage and have a democratic tone. After all, democracy means people's power. Therefore, the people should directly or indirectly participate in the administration of the state. Open, free and fair elections should be held to form the state power, its bodies and institutions. All conditions and legal guarantees must be provided for citizens to freely express their will in such elections.

Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: "Everyone has the right to participate in the governance of his country directly or through freely elected representatives. Everyone has an equal right to enter the public service in their country."

So, how is the above right guaranteed in our national election legislation? For this, we first refer to our Constitution. As stated in Article 128 of the Constitution: "Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan have the right to elect and be elected to representative bodies of state power. Each voter has one vote. The right to vote, equality and freedom of expression are guaranteed by law. Until the end of the election of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Legislative Council of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, state representative bodies of regions, districts, cities in the year when their constitutional term of office expires - the third ten of October will be held on the first Sunday of the day, except for the cases of early elections provided for in this Constitution. Elections are held by secret ballot on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage. Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan who have reached the age of eighteen have the right to vote" [6].

According to Article 4 of the Election Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, "Elections of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, deputies of the Legislative Chamber and deputies of local councils are general. Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan who have reached the age of eighteen on the election day have the right to vote. "Citizens have equal right to vote, regardless of gender, race and nationality, language, religion, social origin, faith, personal and social status, education, type and nature of occupation." Article 7 of the Election Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan stipulates that free and secret voting in elections, control over the will of voters, and the creation of appropriate conditions that exclude the possibility of controlling the will of the voter in any way, are strictly defined. .

Conclusion: The creation of a modern electoral system of New Uzbekistan is a long-term evolutionary process and a product of comprehensive political dialogue. In general, many changes have been made to the electoral law aimed at improving the electoral process. Each, even a small change, was carefully considered, previous election campaigns were analyzed, and proposals for improving the legislation were developed based on the analysis. The electoral

system has been actively developing for several years, these changes served as a logical continuation of the country's political and legal development.

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