BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg

LEGAL AND SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS IN UZBEKISTAN

Bahodirova Robiyakhon Lutfullo qizi
Emu University 2nd year of dentistry
Scientific supervisor: **Abduvakhobov Sarvarbek**
doi:https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23703449

Annotation. This article analyzes the legal, social and spiritual foundations of freedom of religion, conscience and the activities of religious organizations in the Republic of Uzbekistan. During the years of independence, the country has implemented consistent reforms to ensure religious tolerance, interfaith harmony, freedom of belief of citizens and legal regulation of the activities of religious organizations. The article covers the relations between religion and the state based on the Constitution of Uzbekistan, the Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" and the Concept of State Policy in the Religious Sphere.

Keywords: religion, religious organization, freedom of conscience, religious tolerance, interfaith harmony, secular state, legal guarantee, Uzbekistan.

Introduction

Throughout human history, religion has been a significant factor in the formation of a society's spiritual life, moral values, and social relations. It plays a major role in shaping people's worldviews, their life goals, and their perceptions of good and evil, honesty and justice. The territory of Uzbekistan has long served as a crossroads for various religions, cultures, and civilizations. Alongside Islam, the historical traces of Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and other religious traditions hold an important place in the country's cultural heritage.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan defines the nation as a sovereign, democratic, law-based, social, and secular state. It guarantees freedom of conscience for everyone, establishing that every citizen has the right to profess any religion—or no religion at all [1]. This provision reflects the state's commitment to neutrality in religious matters, the protection of citizens' freedom of belief, and the prevention of the forced imposition of religious views.

In Uzbekistan, the activities of religion and religious organizations are governed by a specific legal framework. The purpose of the Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" is to regulate relations in the sphere of ensuring freedom of conscience, as well as the activities of religious organizations [2]. This law defines the legal status, establishment, registration, operational guarantees, and obligations of religious organizations.

Main Body

In Uzbekistan, the relationship between religion and the state is based on the principle of secularism. A secular state is not a system that rejects religion; rather, it is a state that treats all religions and beliefs equally and protects the freedom of belief of its citizens through the law. Consequently, while the state in Uzbekistan does not interfere in the internal religious activities of religious organizations, it ensures that they operate within the framework of the law. The Constitution stipulates that religious organizations are separate from the state, that they are equal before the law, and that the state guarantees the freedom of their activities [1].

The role of religious organizations in the life of society extends beyond mere acts of worship. They play a significant part in the spiritual and moral upbringing of citizens, as well as in fostering values such as social solidarity, compassion, humanism, tolerance, and mutual respect. In the

context of Uzbekistan, in particular, religious-educational initiatives are viewed as a vital tool for protecting the youth from ignorance, fanaticism, extremist ideologies, and religious illiteracy. According to the current legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, a religious organization is established by the decision of its initiators in accordance with the procedures prescribed by law; its charter is adopted, and its governing bodies are formed during an inaugural meeting. A religious organization is considered established—and acquires the status of a legal entity—from the moment it is registered by the state [2]. This procedure brings the activities of religious organizations within a legal framework and clearly defines their rights and obligations.

Religious organizations may operate in the form of a central governing body, a religious educational institution, or a local religious organization. The most fundamental requirements for their operations include compliance with the law, respect for the rights and freedoms of citizens, and the prohibition of religious enmity, coercion, or unlawful propaganda. In this regard, the legal regulation of religious organizations not only guarantees religious freedom but also ensures the safety and stability of society.

The document adopted in 2025, titled "On Ensuring Freedom of Conscience for Citizens in the Republic of Uzbekistan and Approving the Concept of State Policy in the Religious Sphere," outlines the historical stages of reforms in the country's religious sector, as well as its current priority areas. It notes the adoption of the initial law in 1991, a new version of the law in 1998, and the enactment of a new Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" in 2021 [3].

The Committee on Religious Affairs holds an important institutional role in coordinating the activities of religious organizations in Uzbekistan. According to its current charter, the Committee is tasked with developing and implementing a unified state policy in the sphere of religious affairs, as well as coordinating the activities of executive government bodies in this area [4]. This ensures that state policy within the religious sphere is conducted in a systematic, lawful, and balanced manner.

The growing number and expanding activities of religious organizations indicate a strengthening environment of interconfessional tolerance in the country. According to data from the Committee on Religious Affairs, by the end of 2024, there were 2,145 mosques operating in the republic, with 14 new mosques having been state-registered during 2024. Furthermore, 198 non-Islamic religious organizations were active in the country, including an Evangelical Christian church that was registered in the Jizzakh region [5]. In the context of Uzbekistan, religious tolerance manifests not merely as a legal concept, but as a historical and spiritual value. The peaceful coexistence of representatives from various ethnic groups and religious denominations in our country is rooted in our people's long-standing traditions of tolerance, compassion, and mutual respect. Since the attainment of independence, these historical values have been solidified as a core component of state policy. Consequently, religious organizations have gained the capacity not only to address the devotional needs of their own adherents but also to foster a healthy spiritual environment within society, strengthen family values, and exert a positive influence on the upbringing of the youth.

At the same time, the freedoms enjoyed in the religious sphere must be balanced with legal responsibility. Attempts to exploit religion to propagate hostility, fanaticism, or extremist ideologies within society pose a threat to any state. Uzbekistan's policy in the religious sphere is founded precisely upon maintaining a balance between these two factors: guaranteeing freedom of conscience and ensuring societal security. This approach serves to protect the religious rights of citizens while simultaneously upholding the rule of law and social stability. The positive role of religious organizations in society is also manifested in their educational and enlightenment

activities. Religious-educational events, discussions, outreach efforts, the promotion of a culture of pilgrimage, the organized observance of religious holidays, and initiatives to enhance the religious literacy of the population constitute the social [contribution] of religious organizations...

Conclusion

In conclusion, the activities of religion and religious organizations in Uzbekistan are regulated based on the principles of a democratic state governed by the rule of law. The Constitution guarantees citizens' freedom of conscience and establishes that religious organizations are separate from the state and equal before the law. Furthermore, the Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" clearly defines the establishment, registration, rights, and obligations of religious organizations.

The experience of Uzbekistan demonstrates that religious freedom and the principle of a secular state are not mutually exclusive; rather, they are complementary mechanisms that ensure peace, harmony, and stability within society. When religious organizations operate within the framework of the law, they enrich the spiritual life of society and play a significant role in the upbringing of the youth, the strengthening of social cohesion, and the fostering of an environment of religious tolerance. Therefore, the primary objective of state policy regarding the religious sphere in Uzbekistan is to ensure freedom of belief for citizens, strengthen mutual respect and tolerance among various denominations, develop religious-educational activities on a legal basis, and maintain peace and stability in society.

REFERENCES:

1. Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. April 30, 2023. Lex.uz National Legislation Database.
2. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. ORQ-699 "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations." July 5, 2021. Lex.uz National Legislation Database.
3. Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. ORQ-1037 "On Ensuring Freedom of Conscience for Citizens in the Republic of Uzbekistan and Approving the Concept of State Policy in the Religious Sphere." February 25, 2025. Lex.uz National Legislation Database.
4. Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 521 "On Approving the Regulation on the Committee for Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan." August 20, 2025. Lex.uz National Legislation Database.
5. Committee for Religious Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Information "On Significant Activities Carried Out in 2024, and on Preparations for and the Proper Observance of the Month of Ramadan." February 28, 2025. Gov.uz Official Portal.