



Pre-Sessions on 44th Periodic Review of Uzbekistan

Freedom of Expression

The following recommendations were supported at the previous UPR session on Uzbekistan:

- Bring legal provisions that restrict the right to freedom of expression and freedom of the media into line with Uzbekistan's international human rights obligations, including by allowing effective access to information, also online.
- Release all journalists detained on politically motivated charges.
- Allow the media to operate without government interference, and ensure access to all sources of information, including foreign sources and the Internet.
- Enhance efforts to create an environment in which journalists, human rights defenders and NGOs can freely operate in accordance with international standards.
- Ensure prompt, independent and thorough investigation into all reports of assaults on and harassment of human rights defenders, journalists and civil society activists, and bring those responsible to justice.
- Guarantee freedom of expression, assembly and association, and end the harassment of journalists, human rights defenders and those exercising their constitutional right to peaceful protest.

Developments since the last UPR:

- Dozens of bloggers and journalists detained, harassed and intimidated for their work.
- Amendments to the criminal code introduced since 2021, increase restrictions on freedom of expression and the media.
- Increasing use of laws on defamation and disseminating false information to persecute journalists and bloggers.

Proposals by Uzbek Forum for Human Rights:

- Immediately grant pardons to all journalists and bloggers who have been wrongfully imprisoned and ensure their swift release and rehabilitation.
- Decriminalize insult, defamation, and insulting the president online.
- Ensure a safe environment for journalists and blogger and desist from prosecuting them for their legitimate work.



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Freedom of Association

The following recommendations were supported at the previous UPR session on Uzbekistan:

- Make the registration process and requirements for independent NGOs working in the human rights sector more flexible.
- Review the June 2015 law on NGOs.
- Further promote the enjoyment of the right to freedom of association and the right to participate in public affairs and facilitate the registration and unhindered work of NGOs, including those focusing on human rights.
- Ensure that NGOs, human rights defenders, journalists and other members of civil society can freely exercise their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.
- Provide greater support to facilitate the work of civil society.
- Ensure that all civil society and human rights organizations can work without hindrance by lifting prohibitive registration requirements and burdensome programme approval regulations.

Developments since the last UPR:

- No simplified code for the registration of NGOs.
- Persistent rejections of registration applications by NGOs.
- Further restrictions on foreign funding of NGOs.
- Increased government oversight of and interference in NGO activities.
- Continued barriers to freedom of association.

Proposals by Uzbek Forum for Human Rights:

- Introduce a simplified registration process for NGOs.
- Expedite NGO registration applications and abandon burdensome requirements.
- Lift excessive barriers to access to foreign funding.
- Desist from interference in civil society activities.
- Permit an enabling environment for freedom of association.

Uzbek Forum for Human Rights is a Berlin-based non-profit organization dedicated to protecting human rights and strengthening civil society in Uzbekistan. For more information contact Umida Niyazova at umida.niyazova@gmail.com.
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