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## Research Article

# PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVING THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

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## ABSTRACT

The article is devoted to the prospects for improving the right to information in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The author analyzed the improvements in the right to information reforms within the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026. It has also been established that every person has the right to receive reliable and impartial information, recognizing its significance for the interdependence of the state and society.

## KEYWORDS

The Right to Information (RTI), fundamental human right, From an Action Strategy to a Development Strategy, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Legislation.

## INTRODUCTION

The Right to Information (RTI) is a fundamental human right and is an essential tool for promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance. It enables citizens to access information held by public authorities and ensures that they can actively participate in decision-making processes.

That's why, since ancient times, efforts have been made to obtain and disseminate information, recognizing the need for it as a fundamental human

right. In 1766, in Sweden, Jonas Nordin introduced the world's first legislation protecting freedom of the press and freedom of information. On 2 December 1766, was adopted, making Sweden the first country in the world with a legally guaranteed freedom of the press. The Ordinance, consisting of 15 paragraphs on eight pages, was printed by the royal printer, but due to his heavy workload, the publication was delayed several weeks into the following year, 1767. The original document, confirmed with the king's

signature, was also lost in the process, and today at the National Archives, there is only an earlier draft copy with corrections where the original should have been [ ].

In a democratic society, the Right to Information plays a pivotal role in empowering citizens and ensuring transparency within governmental processes. This fundamental right allows individuals to access information held by public authorities, promoting accountability and fostering an informed citizenry. The origins of the Right to Information can be traced back to the belief that an informed citizen is essential for a functioning democracy.

The right to information gives the public and civil society the ability to access information held by public bodies. It empowers them to hold leaders accountable, understand the world better, and safeguard other human rights. This right is a vital tool for making governments more transparent, especially in how they use public funds. This not only fights corruption but also contributes to building strong democracies where those in power are genuinely responsible. It's crucial to protect whistleblowers so they can share information of public interest.

Over the past 15 years, global progress on access to information, both in law and practice, has been significant. Nearly 120 countries around the world have adopted comprehensive RTI laws, encompassing nearly 90 percent of the world's population. These laws have been extensively used to enable people to achieve their social and economic, as well as their human rights. However, there remains a long way to go to instill genuine transparency and protect the right to information for all [ ].

In particular, the head of state, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, stated the citizens' views regarding the receipt and

distribution of information: "To further deepen democratic transformations in our country, important measures are being taken to ensure freedom of speech and the press, the right of citizens to receive and disseminate information, and the free expression of their opinions and views.

Yes, it is possible that some officials, who think of outdated stereotypes, do not like to work in conditions of openness and publicity, to learn to correctly perceive criticism of their activities. And yet, in spite of everything, we will consistently continue this course, which we consider to be one of the most important directions of state policy.

To this end, it is envisaged to strengthen the liability of officials of state bodies and organizations established by law for committing actions that impede the work of the media, the establishment of censorship, illegal interference in their activities, pressure on editorial staff, illegal confiscation of materials and necessary technical means from them.

In a word, all journalists and bloggers acting in accordance with the law will continue to be protected by the law and the President" [ ].

To achieve this objective, the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022-2026 was adopted on January 28, 2022, through the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. This strategy is designed to establish the essential political-legal, socio-economic, and scientific-educational foundations needed for the forthcoming reforms in our country over the next five years, guided by the principle of "From an Action Strategy to a Development Strategy" [ ].

Within this strategy, citizens' access to impartial information is recognized as an integral part of human

rights, and the necessary measures to ensure it are outlined.

Including, Goal 71 aims to transform a healthy outlook and creativity within society into a national movement through the broad dissemination of the idea “From Action Strategy to Development Strategy”, based on the principles of goodness and humanism.

This involves preventing the spread of false information by timely sharing objective information through the media and social networks.

Goal 74 aims to strengthen the atmosphere of interethnic harmony and religious tolerance in society by taking additional measures to provide state support for media outlets operating in foreign languages.

This includes comprehensive coverage of public policy in the field of interethnic relations.

Goal 89 focuses on further strengthening the rights of citizens in the realm of receiving and disseminating information.

This includes the development of a draft for a unified and systematized legal act regulating the information sphere. The goal also encompasses enhancing the culture of citizens in using information and communication tools, preventing violations of the right to privacy linked with the publication of personal and confidential data on the Internet, and establishing a system for preventing cybercrime.

Goal 98 aims to enhance the effectiveness of communication, with the objective of improving our country's image on the global stage.

This involves taking measures to develop and support the information agency “Dunyo” and expediting cooperation with leading global news agencies.

Furthermore, the goal includes preparing and implementing a set of measures to promote Uzbekistan's image worldwide, ensuring the effective continuation of disseminating objective information about the ongoing reforms and democratic renewal processes in our country. Financial resources will be allocated to the primary diplomatic representative offices of the Republic of Uzbekistan for conducting extensive information campaigns abroad, including the organization of material publications in prestigious foreign media about Uzbekistan.

Regular negotiations are planned with representatives of political-diplomatic, trade-economic, business, cultural, humanitarian, and analytical circles of European countries. These negotiations aim to provide them with objective information about events in Uzbekistan and the significant reforms undertaken. Additionally, measures will be implemented to strengthen cooperation for the objective coverage of reforms in the international media space.

Creating a favorable media environment for mutual cooperation between domestic and foreign media is also a priority. This involves studying and addressing existing problems in the field while determining prospects for collaboration.

To further these goals, relationships will be established and developed with leading foreign media outlets, fostering joint development of mechanisms, means, and channels for access to international information markets. This effort aims to promote a positive image of Uzbekistan and implement PR-partnership projects on the international stage.

By attaining the aforementioned goals, Uzbekistan can realize the following achievements:

### 1. Citizens' Access to Information:

The Right to Information grants citizens the ability to access information held by public authorities, allowing them to request and receive timely responses from governmental or relevant entities.

## 2. International Recognition:

This right is globally acknowledged as a fundamental human right, protected by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

## 3. Legislation and Laws:

Many countries have enacted specific laws guaranteeing the Right to Information. These laws establish processes for citizens to seek information, ensure transparency, and hold public officials accountable.

## 4. Scope of Information:

The Right to Information covers a broad spectrum, including government policies, programs, expenditures, environmental data, and administrative records. However, exceptions may exist to protect national security, privacy, and commercial interests.

## 5. Empowering Citizens:

This right empowers citizens to actively engage in public affairs, make informed decisions, and hold governments accountable. It contributes to preventing corruption, promoting good governance, and curbing the misuse of power.

## 6. Request Procedures:

Citizens typically request information in writing, specifying their needs and paying any necessary fees. Public authorities are obligated to respond within a

defined timeframe, either providing the requested information or providing valid reasons for denial.

## 7. Relation to Open Government Initiatives:

The Right to Information aligns with open government initiatives, aiming to proactively disclose information, enhance transparency, and involve citizens in decision-making processes. These initiatives foster a culture of openness and collaboration between the government and citizens.

## 8. Challenges in Implementation:

Despite its significance, effective implementation faces challenges such as limited citizen awareness, bureaucratic resistance, delays in information provision, and inadequate enforcement and penalties for non-compliance.

## 9. Global Recognition:

The Right to Information has gained widespread recognition as a critical component of good governance on a global scale.

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