



Development of public administration and reform of the local government system of Uzbekistan: based on democratic principles

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Abstract: This article is dedicated to the processes of development and reform of the public administration system in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The author emphasizes the need for the organization of state power in the country in accordance with the needs of its citizens. The article presents the provisions of the "Uzbekistan-2030" Strategy of Uzbekistan, signed on September 11, 2023, concerning updates and reforms in the public administration system. In particular, instructions were given on the formation and effective functioning of the local government system. The interrelationships of representative and executive bodies of state power on the ground and their place in the general system were studied. The article also analyzes the relationship between vertical and horizontal government systems and their impact on local governance.

Keywords: Strategy of Uzbekistan-2030, public administration, local government, representative bodies, executive power, vertical and horizontal relations.

Introduction: Every state, in ensuring the interests of its citizens, must establish a system of public administration that meets their needs and interests. This system operates in direct contact with the people, and government bodies are formed directly by citizens. Therefore, they act on the basis of a unified system, possessing common powers, and strive to fulfill the needs of the people while fully taking into account their interests. Since the people are defined as the main source of state power, the governance system should be aimed at serving the interests of citizens.

The reforms being implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan to improve the public administration system, particularly new initiatives aimed at reforming local government bodies, are focused on forming a system operating on the principles of democratic governance. Specifically, within the framework of the "Uzbekistan-2030" Strategy, approved by Presidential Decree No. PF-158 of September 11, 2023, the goal is to improve the legal and institutional relationships between local representative and executive bodies, enhance their service to the interests of the people, and strengthen transparency and public participation.

This article highlights the essence of these reforms, their legal basis, analysis of vertical and horizontal relations between local representative and executive authorities, as well as the organization of the governance system based on administrative-territorial units.

Relevance of the topic

Today, the issue of improving the public administration system in the Republic of Uzbekistan, particularly the reform of local government bodies, is recognized as one of the priority areas of state policy. The fundamental reforms being carried out in this direction are primarily aimed at establishing an effective governance system that serves the interests of the people. Notably, the "Uzbekistan-2030" Strategy, approved by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-158 dated September 11, 2023, extensively addresses the issues of enhancing the activities of local authorities based on democratic principles. Paragraphs 75 and 76 of the Strategy define the tasks of transforming local representative bodies into the true "voice" of the people, and revising the activities of local executive authorities based on the principle of "serving the interests of the population." This approach necessitates involving the public in the activities of local Kengashes, actively engaging civil society institutions, defining clear boundaries of powers and functions of territorial state bodies, and forming local executive bodies on a democratic basis.

METHODS

The following methods and approaches were employed in writing this scientific article:

Analytical method

The interactions among local government bodies, their legal foundations, and institutional structures were analyzed based on the "Uzbekistan-2030" strategy. Specifically, the current state of the existing system was examined through presidential decrees, constitutional amendments, and legislative acts.

Systematic approach

Government authorities were examined as components of a unified management system in both vertical and horizontal relationships. A systematic analysis was conducted on the interdependence of representative and executive bodies at the highest and local levels.

Comparative method

By comparing the relevant articles of the 1992 and 2023 Constitutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan, changes in the formation of local Councils (Kengashes) were identified, and their significance was elucidated.

Historical-legal method

The history of the formation and development of local government bodies was reviewed, and the evolution of constitutional and regulatory legal acts was analyzed.

Normative-legal analysis method

The existing legal framework was studied based on the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Presidential decrees, laws, including Decree No. PF-158 and the Law "On Local State Authority."

Logical-structural approach

The interactions between representative and executive bodies within the local government system were analyzed in a logical sequence and within the framework of intersystem connections.

RESULTS

An in-depth analysis of the reforms being implemented in the Republic of Uzbekistan to reform the local government system has revealed the following main results:

The "Uzbekistan-2030" Strategy reinforces the democratic principles of local governance.

Clauses 75 and 76 of Presidential Decree No. PF-158, adopted on September 11, 2023, stipulate the transformation of local representative bodies into the "voice" of the people and the organization of the executive branch based on the principle of "serving the interests of the population." This, in turn, serves to deepen the democratization of the local government system.

The local government system is based on the principle of unity, interconnected on both vertical and horizontal levels.

The two-tiered structure of Uzbekistan's state system, with representative and executive bodies operating in parallel at each level (national and local), forms their horizontal connections. At the same time, the direct managerial influence of higher state bodies on lower bodies constitutes a system of vertical relations.

For effective regulation of relations between local

government bodies, it is necessary to consider both vertical and horizontal interactions together.

According to research findings, it has been determined that analyzing the existing relations between representative and executive bodies in local governance is more effective when based on their close integration, rather than solely within a vertical or horizontal framework.

State governance is formed on the basis of the territorial principle, and this governance is determined by national, economic, and proximity principles.

The territory of Uzbekistan is divided into administrative-territorial units. Three main principles play a key role in the formation of these units: national, economic, and the principle of bringing state power closer to the population. This approach ensures the territorial stability of the local government system, taking into account the specific characteristics of each region.

Constitutional reforms have strengthened the role of representative bodies at the regional level.

As a result of the 2017 constitutional amendments, local Kengashes (representative bodies) were also established in the districts of Tashkent city. This expanded the possibilities for parliamentary oversight of policies implemented by the executive branch (khokims) and strengthened public participation through local-level representation.

Within the framework of measures aimed at improving public administration in the Republic of Uzbekistan, a new initiative has been adopted, aimed, in particular, at reforming local government. In particular, on September 11, 2023, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-158 "On the Strategy "Uzbekistan-2030" was signed. Paragraph 75 of this decree provides for the transformation of representative bodies of state power in the localities into the true "voice" of the people, while paragraph 76 aims to update the activities of local executive authorities and develop territorial administration based on the principle of "serving the interests of the population". Also, the following tasks have been defined as the main indicators for measuring effectiveness to achieve these goals: creating the necessary conditions for ensuring public participation in the activities of local Kengashes, actively involving civil society institutions, defining clear boundaries of tasks and functions of government bodies at the regional and district (city) levels, as well as forming local executive authorities based on democratic principles.

At the same time, as noted in the paragraphs of the

above-mentioned Strategy, the bodies of state power with general powers in the exercise of state power can be divided into two types: first, representative bodies directly elected by the people, and second, executive bodies formed indirectly by representative bodies in the order of democracy.

In turn, since the state structure of Uzbekistan is based on a two-tiered system, it has two types of public authorities with general authority according to the vertical hierarchy. The first of these are the highest bodies of state power, and the second are local bodies of state power. The system of state authorities at the highest level includes the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan as the highest representative body and the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan as the highest executive body. The system of state authorities at the local level includes the Councils of People's Deputies of regions, districts, and cities (except for cities of district subordination) as a representative body of local authority with general powers, and the khokims of regions, districts, and cities as local executive bodies. It should be noted here that generally authorized state bodies are understood to be state bodies established within their territory with appropriate rights and obligations to manage all economic, social, cultural, and administrative-political spheres of public life. In turn, in the system of state authorities of each level, within this system, corresponding representative and executive bodies are formed and operate simultaneously in a horizontal order. Since these bodies are of the same level, they are understood as bodies of state power in a horizontal relationship. At the same time, since state authorities at both vertical and horizontal levels are an integral part of the unified system of state authorities, they are in constant and continuous state power relations with each other. An important conclusion follows from this: when studying the interaction of local government bodies, there is a need to consider their vertical and horizontal interaction simultaneously. In this case, vertical refers not only to the interaction of local government with the highest bodies of state power, but also to the interaction of existing regional, district, and city bodies within the system of local government bodies. This means that vertical interaction should not be limited to the concept of interaction between local and higher bodies. In this case, when applying such a concept, it is more correct, complete, and accurate to use the concept of the interaction of lower organs with higher ones at the level of each vertical level. This approach to concepts is due to the fact that local representative and executive bodies interacting horizontally at one of the vertical levels (region, district, or city) can be influenced by higher state authorities. Such a situation requires taking into

account the fact that when perfectly regulating the interaction of local representative and executive bodies on a vertical basis, higher bodies exert their managerial influence on lower bodies. In this regard, E. Khojiev emphasizes: "It is in vertical legal relations that the direct managerial influence of the subject of management on a particular object is carried out".

In turn, the organization and determination of the essence of the activities of local government bodies are based on the factor of the country's division into territorial units and are expressed in this. In particular, the division of the country's territory into administrative-territorial units creates opportunities and conditions for taking into account the existing features (national-cultural, economic, etc.), potential and opportunities of each region, their development, and the development of the whole country. This means that the territory of the country is, first of all, divided into territorial units on the basis of relevant principles, and in these territorial units, to ensure their management, appropriate local government bodies are created. Therefore, they are called not only territorial units, but also administrative-territorial units. The addition of the term "administrative" here means that state bodies have been established in this territory, and these territories are managed by the state, or mainly by the state. In turn, three principles are taken into account when dividing the territory of the country into territorial units. These are, firstly, the national principle, secondly, the economic principle, and thirdly, the principle of bringing state power closer to the population.

The national principle, when defining territorial unity and its scope, is based primarily on taking into account the cultural characteristics of the population historically living in this territory. Here, cultural identity refers to the historically formed lifestyle of the population, customs, traditions, spiritual and religious characteristics, language (dialects), clothing, art, cuisine, architecture, patterns, decorations, and other naturally formed historical rarities. The economic principle provides for taking into account the specifics related to the economy of the respective territory when determining the territorial unity and its scope. Such features are primarily aimed at taking into account factors related to nature and climate, geographical location, economic and cultural development, and the possibility of development. The principle of bringing state power closer to the population aims to create organizational conditions for ensuring the participation of the population in state governance through close interaction between the state and the population. Although there is no need to take into account national and economic principles

when applying this principle, it is possible to achieve full access to public services in the territory where the population lives by further streamlining territories with a large territory and population. An example of this is the constitutional reform in Uzbekistan in 2017. In particular, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Elections to District Councils of People's Deputies of the City of Tashkent" of August 29, 2017, excludes the words "as well as from districts that are part of the city" from Article 99 of the 1992 Constitution. As a result, if Article 99 of the 1992 Constitution stated that "Councils of People's Deputies in regions, districts and cities (except for cities of district subordination, as well as districts that are part of a city) are representative bodies of power," then now Article 120 of the new version of the 2023 Constitution applies the wording " (except for cities of district subordination)." Thus, it was established that local Councils should also be established in the districts that are part of the city. The purpose of the adoption of the aforementioned law is to "further strengthen the democratic foundations of state power, the role and significance of representative bodies in implementing socio-economic and socio-political changes." Accordingly, local Councils of People's Deputies are being established in all districts within cities, such as the city of Tashkent. Previously, since the formation of local Kengashes in the districts of Tashkent was not stipulated at the constitutional level, only the executive branch, headed by khokims, was headed in these districts. At the same time, the representative function for the population of the districts of the city of Tashkent was carried out centrally by the Tashkent City Council of People's Deputies. Under these conditions, the Tashkent City Councils of People's Deputies, consisting of 60 deputies, represented the interests of the 3 million residents of Tashkent (per 1 deputy there are 50 thousand people).

Such a situation did not allow for full consideration of the interests of the district's population and the specifics of the district when approving socio-economic programs aimed at the development of each district, the district budget, and the khokim. Now the local Kengashes of People's Deputies, created in these districts, have the powers established by Article 123 of the Constitution, in particular, the consideration and adoption of relevant local budgets, the implementation of control over their execution, the approval of programs for the socio-economic development of territories and social protection of the population, the approval of the khokim and the hearing of reports on his activities, as well as other powers provided for by the Constitution and laws. This will further develop the establishment of more effective feedback between the state and the population. It should be particularly noted

here that in developed democratic states, the principle of population reduction is widely applied when dividing the country's territory into local territories, thereby creating a multi-level territorial system (Germany, France, Italy, Spain, USA, etc.)

Analysis of the research results

The ongoing measures to reform the local government system in the Republic of Uzbekistan, particularly based on the "Uzbekistan-2030" strategy, necessitate a review of the interactions between representative and executive bodies. Clauses 75 and 76 of the Strategy envision the renewal of local Kengashes' role as the "voice of the people" and the executive branch based on the principle of "serving the interests of the people."

Analysis indicates that within the framework of the two-tier structure of state power (supreme and local), representative and executive bodies operate with horizontal and vertical interconnections. This requires a systematic and comprehensive approach to regulating their interactions.

Furthermore, as a result of constitutional reforms, the principles of democratic governance were strengthened, especially through the establishment of local representative bodies in the districts of Tashkent city. Concurrently, the stability of territorial administration is being ensured based on national, economic, and proximity-to-population principles.

Overall, the research findings substantiate the necessity for legal and organizational improvements in the relationships between local government bodies.

CONCLUSION

Improving the system of local government in the Republic of Uzbekistan and reorganizing it based on democratic principles is one of the important directions of the "Uzbekistan-2030" strategy. This strategy aims to strengthen the openness and participation in public administration by transforming representative bodies into the true "voice" of the people and basing the activities of local executive authorities on the principle of serving the interests of the population.

The study revealed that Uzbekistan's public administration system has a two-tiered structure, in which representative and executive bodies operate in horizontal and vertical relationships. This requires the effective organization of coordination and control mechanisms. Additionally, when regulating the activities of local authorities and determining their legal status, it is crucial to consider the country's administrative-territorial division, as well as national, economic, and proximity-to-population principles.

As a result of the constitutional reforms in 2017 and 2023, the establishment of local Councils in the districts of Tashkent strengthened the activities of representative bodies at the territorial level. District Councils are now authorized to adopt local budgets, approve socio-economic development programs, and discuss and approve the activities of hokims. This plays an important role in forming an effective mechanism for communication and accountability between the government and the population.

In conclusion, it can be said that the reforms aimed at clarifying the powers of local government bodies in Uzbekistan, coordinating their vertical and horizontal relationships, as well as bringing public administration closer to the population, will contribute to the formation of a more stable, democratic, and effective public administration system. This approach, based on the experience of developed democratic states and adapted to the national context, is one of the main factors in expressing the interests of the people in real life.

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