

# UZBEKISTAN ANTI-CORRUPTION DIGEST

## LEGISLATIVE

# UZBEKISTAN CONSIDERS THE CORRUPTION AS ONE OF THE SERIOUS THREATS FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT

Ruslanbek DAVLETOV \*



\* Minister of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan

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It is noteworthy that Uzbekistan has started a new stage of its development under the leadership of Shavkat Mirziyoyev by introducing very decisive reforms, designed to tackle corruption issues.

Over the past four years, more than **9.000** people were convicted of various corruption crimes by General Prosecutor's Office of Uzbekistan.

As a result of active investigations, **2.9 trillion soums** (272 million

US dollars) was returned to the state and citizens, which is amount **90%** of the damage caused by corruption crimes.

This fact shows justification of the President Mirziyoyev's decision to sign the **Anti-Corruption Law**, which was one of the earliest laws, signed after his inauguration in January 2017. It also complies perfectly with his **Action Strategy**.

After that, Uzbekistan has realized two periodic State Anti-Corruption programs on 2017-2018 and 2019-2020.

Uzbekistan has not stopped introducing new reforms and measures by adoption of the aforementioned law. The following reform was to improve institutional framework to combat corruption. In this regard, the **National Anti-Corruption Council** and the **Anti-Corruption Agency** of the Republic of Uzbekistan was established in 2020.

The Government is trying to eliminate corruption factors by implementing sectoral attitude. For instance, last year a new legal reform was undertaken to change **the licensing and business permitting system**.

As a result of this measure, starting from January 2021, the followings were abolished:

- ✓ 70 (26 %) out of 266 types of licensing activities

- ✓ 35 (25 %) out of 140 types of permits.

Additionally, all procedures of licensing activities were digitization on the basis of unified **Electronic licensing system**.

Uzbekistan started the practice to analyze corruption risks in the application of regulatory legal acts, as well as identify norms leading to corruption in regulatory legal acts and their drafts, took measures to eliminate them and develop recommendations to improve legal basis of conducting reforms. The first result of this order can be shown by the fact that legal expertise was conducted over 226 legal acts and 292 corruption factors were found in them.

Recently the Government has initiated a **new package of complex** reforms, involved significantly essential measures to combat corruption and provide openness of the government bodies.

**Presumption of transparency of government**

*The first* reform, conducted in June 2021, was devoted to **ensure the openness of state bodies, as well as the effective implementation of public control**.

Uzbekistan introduces the principle of **presumption of transparency** of government, which means the openness of any information about activities of the government bodies.

In the framework of this reform the government has approved the **list of socially significant information including 200 various data in 33 directions** to be regularly published as open data by all state authorities and administrations. So far 12556 datasets have already been posted in this portal.

The reforms in this area have started to bring their results and positively affect the positions of Uzbekistan in **Open Data Inventory (ODIN)**. From 2018 to 2020 Uzbekistan rose **125 positions** in this data and now ranks 44 out of 186 countries.

In accordance with the established procedure, state bodies

and organizations will annually publish detailed reports concerning their activities on their official websites and inform about the place and time of their **discussion with the participation of the civil society**.

Also, state bodies and organizations, **starting from July 1, 2021**, have started to post information about their **any public procurements, costs of business trips of officials** and for the reception of guests arriving from abroad, **beneficiaries of entities**, who are granted tax and customs benefits and preferences as well as annual **cost estimates** and their implementation.

Currently, information about **21.110** budget procurement and **13.585** corporate procurement deals was published in the **Special informational portal of government procurement**. Open publication of this information is letting us improve the public control over this process and reveal some illegal activities of public officials.

Another very essential reform, which was enshrined by this document is **Openness Index** of the activities of state bodies and organizations, which will be announced at the end of each year in order to monitor and assess the openness of the activities of state bodies and organizations.

Last, but not least, **meetings of both chambers** of the Parliament and **court hearings** with the consent of the parties will be live broadcasted on TV.

We consider that public control over the activities of the governmental bodies is one of the effective tools to combat corruption if they are transparent and open for public.

**New anticorruption doctrine**

*The second* ambitious reform, conducted in the beginning of this month (JULY?) 2021, was directed to **increase the efficiency of the anti-corruption system and early prevention of corruption manifestations**, wide public involvement in this process.

In transforming public administration into a sphere free from corruption, based on opinions of the public the government has introduced the practice to conduct **Open electronic register of people found guilty of committing corruption crimes.**

People, who are included into this register will be prohibited the followings:

- admission to civil service;
- participation of business entities established by them and (or) with their participation in public procurement and a public-private partnership agreement as a participant (executor), as well as in tenders and competitive bidding related to the privatization of state assets;
- carrying out activities in leadership positions in organizations with a state share of more than 50 percent and state educational institutions.

Also, the Government will introduce **system of compulsory declaration of income and property** of civil servants, and heads of organizations with a state share of more than 50 percent, state enterprises and institutions, their spouses and minor children.

**Uzbekistan has stepped to establish criminal responsibility for illegal enrichment,** revealed in the process of declaring income and property as an implementation of article 20 UNCAC.

We are also planning to **toughen penalties** for corruption crimes up to a long term of imprisonment, as well as **restrictions** on the application of mitigating norms when serving a criminal sentence in relation to people who have committed corruption offenses.

Additionally, the decree has adopted **State program on combating corruption for 2021-2022,** which includes **44 new measures** and it is the third periodic program for realization the Anti-Corruption Law.

Today, Uzbekistan has mobilized all its efforts to renew our society and strengthen its democratic foundations, as well as to create an environment of intolerant attitude towards corruption, to drastically reduce corruption factors in state and public administration. We realize that there is a lot

of work to be done to reform this sphere and aware of our problems. We also know how to solve these problems. In this regard, we have clearly set goals for ourselves, we have a clear idea of where we should go and we will do everything possible on the way to reach our goals.

Additionally, it is our sincere belief that the adopted laws will positively effect on the life of our people and show their results in the future, which, in turn, will improve the image of our country in international arena as a new democratic and progressive one.

It is our sincere belief that all the aforementioned reforms will also serve as realization of the national SDG-16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.