



# HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL ELECTIONS

## 2021 CANDIDATE

## UZBEKISTAN

**Status** - Seeking Election

**No Previous Terms**

### **Key measures Uzbekistan should commit to implement as a Human Rights Council member**

The following measures were developed by the International Service for Human Rights.

#### **Human rights defenders and civic space:**

Human rights defenders in Uzbekistan experience serious difficulties carrying out their work and are subjected to ongoing intimidation and harassment. The current legislation, including Law of the RUz No. 763-I 14.04.1999 "On nongovernmental nonprofit organizations", Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers № 57 The Regulation on Procedure on State Registration of Non-Governmental and Non-Commercial Organizations (adopted on March 10, 2014), Decision of the Ministry of Justice, Regulation on Procedure of Coordination of NNOs' Activities (adopted on June 4, 2015), and other laws and by-laws, imposes burdensome procedures and requirements for mandatory registration of NGO and for reporting, requires de facto approval for NGO activities and for receiving foreign funds, and provides harsh sanctions for violation of law. Uzbekistan must bring existing legislation and practice on the operation of NGOs into line with international human rights standards.

Despite progress in recent years, freedom of expression and freedom of association are still seriously limited in Uzbekistan. Access to a majority of independent online resources related to political and social topics, particularly sites and platforms that discuss human rights abuses in Uzbekistan remains blocked. We urge Uzbekistan to lift restrictions on currently inaccessible resources, e.g. Ozodlik, the Uzbek service of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). We urge Uzbekistan to repeal the provision in the media law that defines websites as media outlets, requiring them to register with authorities.

#### **Minorities**

Uzbekistan is a multi-ethnic state with numerous ethnic minorities, however, there is hardly any formal education in native minority languages and no media in Tajik, Karakalpak, Korean, nor Kazakh. We recommend that Uzbekistan ensure the rights of ethnic minorities, including by introducing education in the languages of ethnic minorities and encouraging the media to disseminate information in minority languages.

#### **Migrants**

Uzbekistan is a source country of migrants in the region with millions of citizens of Uzbekistan working and living in other countries. We remind Uzbekistan of the obligation to ensure and facilitate the rights of its citizens-migrants

abroad, including promptly providing documents required for return, facilitating the voluntary or forced return of migrants, visiting migrants-citizens of Uzbekistan in migration-related detention, and avoid detaining child migrants in migration detention centres following their return. To ensure these obligations we urge Uzbekistan to sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of All Working Migrants and Members of Their Families (the CMW).

### **Gender, LGBTI+**

We welcoming the efforts to counteract gender discrimination. However, we are still concerned that other forms of discrimination on the other grounds, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), remain. Article 120 of the Criminal Code of Uzbekistan punishes “sexual contact between men without violence” with one- to three-year sentences, and up to 10 years with aggravating circumstances. In recent years the number of prosecutions under Article 120 have decreased. We call upon the government of Uzbekistan to repeal Article 120 and decriminalise consensual same sex relations between men as well as to ensure equality and non-discrimination on the basis of SOGI.