



**International Convention on  
the Elimination of All Forms  
of Racial Discrimination**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination**

**Combined thirteenth and fourteenth periodic  
reports submitted by Uzbekistan under article 9 of  
the Convention, due in 2022\* \*\***

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

\*\* The annex to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



## I. Introduction

1. The present combined thirteenth and fourteenth periodic reports of Uzbekistan on the implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Concluding Observations and Recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (hereinafter “the Committee”) of 27 January 2020 are submitted pursuant to the Committee’s guidelines for the preparation of documents specific to the Convention, under article 9, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which covers the period from January 2020 to September 2022.
2. The report was prepared on the basis of data provided by more than 40 legislative, executive and judicial authorities, law enforcement agencies and non-governmental non-profit organizations, in cooperation with educational and research organizations. On 21 October 2022, the report was discussed at a meeting of the Parliamentary Commission on Monitoring Fulfilment of Uzbekistan’s International Human Rights Obligations.
3. Implementation of the Convention was guided by the strategic programme documents approved by the President of Uzbekistan that have been adopted and put into effect in the country, namely: the action strategies in the five priority areas of development of Uzbekistan for the period 2017–2021; the National Human Rights Strategy of Uzbekistan; the State programmes Year of Active Investment and Social Development (2019), Year of Development of Science, Education and Digital Economy (2020), Year of Support for Youth and Promotion of Public Health (2021), and the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for the period 2022–2026 and the State programme for its implementation in the Year of Human Interests and Mahalla Development, dated 28 January 2022.
4. Over this period, the country adopted some 300 laws and over 4,000 enactments of the President and the Government aimed at the wide-sweeping reform of all spheres of life in the State and society, and the strengthening of guarantees and legal mechanisms for the protection of human rights for all categories of the country’s population, which grew to 35,821,029 in 2022. Parliament has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, four Conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) (No. 14, No. 129, No. 81 and No. 187) and the Protocol to the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). Ratification of ILO Conventions No. 155, No. 161 and No. 184 is under preparation.
5. In 2020, the following instruments were adopted: the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act and the Cultural Activities and Cultural Organizations Act; presidential decrees on the establishment of the Civic Chamber in the Office of the President of Uzbekistan, on the ratification of the National Human Rights Strategy of Uzbekistan, on development measures relating to education and child-rearing and to science in the new period of Uzbekistan’s development, on measures to ensure the genuine independence of judges and to strengthen the prevention of corruption in the judicial system, and on measures to introduce a system of safe, orderly and legal labour migration; and a government decision on the award of a badge for the protection of human rights, among other instruments.
6. In 2021, laws were adopted on the following matters: legal status of foreign nationals and stateless persons; ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the introduction of amendments and additions to the Citizenship Act; freedom of conscience and religious organizations; Presidential State Security Service; presidential decrees ratifying the blueprint for the development of civil society over the period 2021–2025; on additional measures to ensure openness in the activities of State bodies and organizations and the effectiveness of the implementation of public control; on additional measures to improve the system for detecting and preventing torture; and on additional measures for the effective organization of anti-corruption activities, among other instruments.
7. In 2022, laws were adopted, on 8 August 2022, on the State civil service and, on 18 January 2022, amending and supplementing the Consumer Rights Protection Act; and presidential decrees, of 28 January 2022, on the further improvement of the system of material support for categories of the population in need of social protection, and on the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for the period 2022–2026, among other instruments.

8. A process of constitutional reform was launched in 2022, in order to strengthen constitutional guarantees of human rights and freedoms, deepen the reforms under way and achieve the goals set out in the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy. The Constitutional Commission received 62,336 proposals to amend and supplement more than 60 articles of the Constitution. The preamble to the Constitution defines the aims of the State and society in ensuring peace and inter-ethnic and inter-confessional harmony and article 18 of the Constitution provides that human rights and freedoms shall be recognized and guaranteed in Uzbekistan in compliance with the universally recognized rules of international law and in accordance with the Constitution. Article 22 affirms that “the Republic of Uzbekistan shall guarantee the protection and patronage of its citizens both within and outside the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan”. The Constitutional Act amending and supplementing the Constitution of Uzbekistan has undergone extensive public discussion and will be adopted in a nationwide referendum.

9. In order to give practical effect to the laws and other enacted statutory instruments, Uzbekistan has adopted more than 20 strategies, State programmes, road maps and plans of action, including the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for the period 2022–2026, the National Human Rights Strategy and the road map for its implementation; these include a programme of priority measures, adopted with the aim of overhauling the human resources policy and the civil service system in Uzbekistan; a set of measures aimed at further improvements in such areas as education and child-rearing, and also science; a blueprint for the development of the health-care system, physical education and sport over the period up to 2025; a programme of measures for the period 2020–2025, to promote healthy eating habits among the population; a programme of additional measures for further development of the State youth policy in Uzbekistan; a programme of measures to prevent the introduction and spread of coronavirus in Uzbekistan; the State anti-corruption programme for 2021 and 2022; the Digital Uzbekistan 2030 Strategy and measures for its implementation, among others.

10. Measures have been taken to strengthen the institutional framework for ensuring effective State administration in the area of human rights and freedoms. The post of Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Children’s Rights has been established; new bodies that have been established include the Anti-Corruption Agency; the Agency for Youth Affairs; the Health and Social Services Agency; the Inter-Agency Council for Persons with Disabilities; the Ministry of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction; the Health and Epidemiological Welfare and Public Health Service of Uzbekistan; the National Anti-Corruption Council; the Ministry for Support of the Mahalla and Older Persons the State Committee for Women and the Family, and others.

11. In 2020–2022, Uzbekistan continued its active engagement in a constructive dialogue and exchange of information with United Nations special procedures and international treaty bodies in such areas as the consideration of national human rights reports, participation in international forums of the United Nations General Assembly and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the reception of international delegations to Uzbekistan to enhance the application of international human rights standards in Uzbek law.

12. In 2022, United Nations committees considered the sixth periodic report of Uzbekistan on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (eighty-first session, 15 and 16 February); the third periodic report on the implementation of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (seventy-first session, 22–24 February); and the fifth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols (ninety-first session, 31 August–1 September). In cooperation with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities, a law on the rights of persons with disabilities was drafted and adopted and, with the support of the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, specific measures were identified to ensure the rule of law in Uzbekistan and to make improvements in the judicial and legal sphere, amendments were made to the Constitution and new versions of the Courts Act and the Supreme Judicial Council Act were adopted. In 2021, an exchange of information took place at the request of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism,

regarding legal aspects of the provision of technical assistance and capacity-building in countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

13. Uzbekistan has given special attention to poverty alleviation and the provision of social security covering all persons in vulnerable situations irrespective of their ethnic origin. The Strategy for the Social Protection of the Population of Uzbekistan, which envisages raising State expenditure on social protection to 1.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2030, was adopted by presidential decree on 26 July 2022. Stepping up the social protection of citizens and poverty reduction have been identified as priority areas of State policy. The social protection strategy covers four areas of government activity: social assistance, social services, social insurance, ensuring access to social programmes in the labour market and the introduction of a nationwide database on persons in need of social protection.

14. At the initiative of the President, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution at its seventy-second session on education and religious tolerance, designed to prevent religious conflicts by ensuring universal access to education and overcoming illiteracy and ignorance. At the Assembly's seventy-fifth session, the President proposed specific initiatives to push forward the draft texts of an international convention on the rights of young people, a United Nations international code on the voluntary obligations of States in times of pandemic and other such instruments. In addition, in 2020, for the first time in its history, Uzbekistan was elected a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, which gave new impetus to the reforms being carried out in the field of human rights and freedoms, the adoption of the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy, and measures to attain the country's goals under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

15. In order to implement the General Assembly resolution of 18 June 2018, on strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian region, Uzbekistan held a number of international forums on the themes: "Central and South Asia: regional connections – challenges and opportunities" (Tashkent, 2021); "Regional cooperation of Central Asian countries within the framework of the Joint Plan of Action for the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy" (Tashkent, 2022); "Afghanistan: financial sustainability and economic development" (Tashkent, 2022), aimed at combating terrorist activities in Central Asia, the spread of drugs and organized crime, and other issues.

16. At the seventy-sixth session of the General Assembly, Uzbekistan put forward proposals for the organization of a global forum on human rights education; adoption of a General Assembly resolution on strengthening the connections between Central and South Asia; adoption of the 2022–2025 programme for the countries of Central Asia on combating drugs and crime; implementation of the General Assembly resolution declaring the Aral Sea region a zone of ecological innovations and technologies; organization of the sixth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in Uzbekistan in 2023, under the auspices of the United Nations; and drafting of a world environmental charter.

17. On 15 and 16 September 2022, the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit was held in Samarkand and was organized by Uzbekistan, in its capacity as Chair of the Organization. The summit was attended not only by member States of the Organization (China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), but also by observer States and guests of honour. Participants at the summit adopted more than 40 international regional agreements and other instruments, including the Samarkand Declaration of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which took stock of the Uzbek chairship of the Organization and defined further tasks and prospects for the Organization's development. Representatives of ethnic cultural centres of Uzbekistan took part in a cultural programme organized for the participants.

18. Parliamentary oversight of the activities of the executive and law enforcement agencies to enforce the law on human rights and freedoms has been strengthened. A commission has been set up on parliamentary oversight of compliance by Uzbekistan with its international obligations in this area, as have committees on combating corruption; judicial and legal issues; the protection of public health; and environmental protection.

19. Over the period 2020–2022, committees of the Legislative Chamber heard reports by the Ministry of Health on the prevention of corruption in the ministry’s system; on employment security issues; by the Minister of Employment and Labour Relations on measures to attain the country’s goals and targets under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; by the Ministry of Mahalla and the Family on support for women’s employment; and by the Ministry of Public Education on the use of budgetary funds in the system of public education bodies.

20. To strengthen parliamentary oversight, the Senate has established committees on judicial and legal affairs and corruption; on issues of information policy and the transparency of State bodies; on women and gender equality; on youth, culture and sport; on development of the Aral Sea region and its environment; and also national commissions on enhancing the role of women in society, gender equality and the family; on oversight of measures to attain the country’s goals and targets under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and on combating trafficking in persons and forced labour; a national anti-corruption council; a national women’s council; and a national council to work with international ratings and indices. Pursuant to a resolution of the Senate of 23 June 2020, a youth parliament has been established as a voluntary body designed to promote legal awareness and literacy among young people and their participation in law-making and parliamentary oversight. A comparable youth parliament has also been set up in the Legislative Chamber.

21. In 2020–2022, the Senate heard a report from the National Commission on Combating Human Trafficking and Forced Labour on preventing cases of trafficking in newborns and on addressing the causes of forced labour in agriculture; and from the National Women’s Civic Council on issues of domestic violence and preventing consanguineous marriage; a programme of measures for the period 2021–2026 to protect women from violence was approved; reports were heard on implementation of the project “Corruption-free sector” in the system of health care and public procurement and on the activities of the Anti-Corruption Agency, and from the Minister of Education, the Ombudsman and the Minister for Internal Affairs; and reports were also delivered by the Committee for Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries, and the Committee on the Environment and Development of the Aral Sea Region. The chambers of parliament are expanding their contacts with the Inter-Parliamentary Union with a view to discussing issues with member States of the Union arising in the political, economic, social and environmental fields, including the rights of vulnerable categories of citizens. In particular, it is now established practice to organize experience-sharing forums for women leaders and members of parliament. For example, a summit meeting on mitigation of the consequences of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), climate change and response to emergencies was held on 19 and 20 August 2020. On 8 and 9 September 2022, the fourteenth Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament was held in Tashkent with the participation of representatives of 17 different countries. The Summit resulted in the adoption of the Tashkent Declaration, entitled: “Parliamentary leadership: anticipating risks to better deliver sustainability and prosperity”.

22. In order to regulate inter-ethnic relations, the country has adopted more than 40 laws and other statutory instruments directly aimed at preventing discrimination against citizens and other persons living in the country on the grounds of national or ethnic origin, language or religion, ensuring inter-ethnic harmony and tolerance, and creating equal conditions and opportunities for the exercise of their rights, freedoms and legitimate interests.

23. The Committee for Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries, which has been in operation for only five years, has formed a national system of social partnership between the Committee, other State structures with 155 ethnic cultural centres, 38 friendship associations and associations of fellow citizens to strengthen the system of friendship and cooperation between representatives of all peoples and nationalities actively involved in social reforms.

24. With a view to encouraging their work and recognizing their activities to strengthen friendship and harmony in society, a law was adopted on the establishment of the Day of Friendship of Peoples, to be held on 30 July every year, and a government decision on the establishment of the Friendship of Peoples badge, which is awarded annually to representatives of ethnic cultural centres and other organizations. In 2021, 62 representatives

of different nationalities and 250 foreign partners were awarded the Friendship of Peoples badge on the Day of Friendship of Peoples, 30 July, and in 2022, 214 were awarded the Dustlik (Friendship) order; 4 persons the Sog'lom Avlod Uchun (For a healthy generation) medal; 2 persons the Mehnat Shuhrati (Labour glory) order; 2 persons the Shuhrat (Glory) medal; and 283 persons the Friendship of Peoples badge.

25. The High Commissioner on National Minorities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Kairat Abdrakhmanov, paid an official visit to Uzbekistan from 28 July to 2 August 2022. Welcoming the decision by the Uzbek Government to declare 30 July the Day of Friendship of Peoples, he took part in festivities to mark the Day.

26. Following the adoption on 27 January 2020 of the concluding observations and recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, based on its consideration of the combined tenth to twelfth periodic reports of Uzbekistan, and their broad discussion by State and public entities, a national plan of action was adopted for their implementation, approved on 15 October 2020 by a joint resolution of the Legislative Chamber and the Senate, containing specific mechanisms and procedures for the implementation of the Committee's recommendations.

27. In order to implement the national action plan, the chambers of parliament passed a decision to establish a monitoring working group comprising 27 representatives of the legislative, executive and judicial branches, law enforcement agencies, non-governmental organizations and the National Centre for Human Rights. The Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Chamber and the Deputy President of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis were assigned responsibility for monitoring implementation of the decision, and the National Centre for Human Rights was entrusted with reporting on its implementation.

28. In accordance with the Committee's recommendation 30, the concluding observations were translated into Uzbek and circulated to all key ministries and departments, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the hokimiyats (municipalities), provinces and city of Tashkent for discussion and application in their work, posted on the website of the Ministry of Justice, the Adolat (Justice) National Information Centre and the national legislation database (<http://www.lex.uz/does/5091690>). In accordance with recommendation 31, information on the implementation of subparagraphs (c) and (d) of paragraph 13 ("The situation of Lyuli/Roma") and paragraph 19 ("Confinement") was transmitted to the Committee on 24 November 2020.

29. The present report reflects detailed statistical and other data on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention and the Committee's recommendations, and also on further planned legislative, awareness-raising and other measures for its realization in Uzbekistan on the basis of the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy for the period 2022–2026.

## **II. Follow-up information on measures taken to implement the Convention and the Committee's concluding observations**

### **Article 1**

30. In the light of the Committee's recommendation concerning the definition of racial discrimination, the term "discrimination" has been progressively introduced into Uzbek legislation and legal scholarship. Thus, article 6 of the Labour Code of 1 April 1996, which is entitled "Prohibition of discrimination in labour relations", notes that "all citizens have equal opportunities in the possession and exercise of labour rights. The imposition of any restrictions or granting of advantages in the field of labour relations on the grounds of gender, age, race, ethnicity, language, social origin, property and official status, attitude to religion, beliefs, membership of public associations, or other circumstances not related to the occupational qualities of employees and the results of their work is inadmissible and shall constitute discrimination".

31. Article 6 of the Labour Code expands the list of grounds for discrimination by introducing such grounds as “age”, “property status”, “membership of public associations” and other circumstances unrelated to the occupational aptitudes of employees.

32. Article 3 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 15 October 2020 defines the concept of “discrimination on the basis of disability”, which means that any separation, exclusion, alienation or restriction on the grounds of disability, the purpose or result of which is to deny the recognition or exercise, on an equal footing with others, of the rights and freedoms of persons with disabilities in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or other field.

33. The Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability: “any separation, exclusion, alienation or restriction or preference of persons with disabilities, and refusal to create conditions for access to facilities and services for persons with disabilities, shall be prohibited. Special measures aimed at ensuring equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities and their inclusion in society and the State shall not be considered discriminatory against other citizens” (art. 6).

34. Article 3 of the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act of 2 September 2019 defined the concepts of “direct discrimination on the basis of sex” as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction, which is aimed at refusing to recognize the rights and freedoms of women and men in all spheres of society, including discrimination on the grounds of marital status, pregnancy, family responsibilities, and also sexual harassment and different pay for equal work and qualifications”; and “indirect discrimination on the basis of sex” as “the creation of a situation, provision or criteria that place persons of one sex in a less favourable position than that of persons of the other sex, including the propagation of gender inequality through the media, education and culture, and the imposition of conditions or requirements that may have negative consequences for persons of a particular sex”.

35. Article 28 of the Act establishes the right to appeal against instances of direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of sex. “If a person believes that he or she has been subjected to direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of sex, that person shall have the right to appeal to the authorized bodies or the court. In such circumstances, a person who has experienced direct or indirect discrimination on the basis of sex shall not be charged any State fee. When cases of the infringement of equal rights of women and men are considered by the courts, fees for the legal services rendered by lawyers shall be covered, upon their request, by the State, in accordance with the procedure established by law.”

## **Recommendation 7**

36. In order to determine the advisability of drafting and adopting legislation prohibiting racial discrimination, in accordance with paragraph 2 of the national action plan and paragraph 12 of the National Human Rights Strategy, a working group was set up, comprising representatives of the Institute for Legislative Problems and Parliamentary Research attached to the Legislative Chamber, the Institute of Legal Policy under the Ministry of Justice, the National Centre for Human Rights, the Supreme Judicial Council, the academies of the Office of the Procurator General and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other academic and educational institutions. The working group concluded that the practice followed in other countries in the legislative regulation of issues related to the protection of citizens consists in the adoption of basic laws of general application, which determine the policy of States to protect citizens from discrimination on widely accepted grounds and enshrine anti-discrimination measures in key areas of society (education, health, employment and others).

37. A study of the experience of member countries of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has demonstrated the need for the development and adoption in Uzbekistan of, first and foremost, a general framework law on equality and non-discrimination. A bill elaborated by the National Centre for Human Rights and the Ministry of Justice defines the meaning of such terms as “discrimination”, “direct discrimination”, “indirect discrimination”, “multiple discrimination”, “anti-discrimination expert appraisal”, “incitement to discrimination”, “positive discrimination” and others.

38. According to the bill, discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference relating to the rights and freedoms of a person or group of persons, and also support of discriminatory behaviour, on the grounds provided for in the law, which has the purpose or result of limiting or denying equal recognition and enjoyment of rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other sphere of public life.

39. The bill establishes a prohibition against discrimination. In particular, any direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds set out in article 18 of the Constitution, the law or an international treaty to which Uzbekistan is a party relating to: sex, race, skin colour, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, personal or social status, age, education, disability or other illness, marital or property status is prohibited.

40. The main forms of discrimination have been established, highlighting its worst manifestations: discrimination involving violence hazardous to a person's life or health; discrimination through the media or the Internet, intended for public dissemination of enmity and hatred; discrimination by public authorities and administrative bodies and their officials and civil servants; multiple discrimination; systematic discrimination against a group of persons; and incitement to discrimination.

41. In addition, the bill establishes the main areas of State policy and the duties of State bodies in the area of the protection of equality and non-discrimination, the ways in which non-governmental organizations may be involved in this process, and specific measures to prevent discrimination in education, labour relations, health care and medical services, social security, access to goods and services, housing, land and property.

## **Recommendation 11**

42. As part of the implementation of the Committee's recommendation on the need for Uzbekistan to adopt legislation on the rights of persons belonging to ethnic minority groups, a study was conducted with the participation of law enforcement agencies, national human rights institutions and academic and educational institutions. An analysis of international human rights standards and the experience of foreign countries has shown that, to date, there is no single and universally recognized definition of "ethnic minorities", so difficulties arise in determining the criteria for the adherence of a person or group to such a minority, nor has it been determined what constitutes the essential interests of minorities: special guarantees of general human and civil rights or the need for certain services in the areas of language and culture, which should be provided at the State's expense.

43. Uzbekistan complies with its international obligations with regard to non-discrimination against all persons under the jurisdiction of the State. Article 8 of the Constitution emphasizes that the citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan, irrespective of their ethnic background, constitute the people of Uzbekistan. Article 18 of the Constitution guarantees equal rights and freedoms and equality before the law without distinction as to race, ethnicity, language and religion, or any other grounds.

44. According to article 19 of the Constitution, the rights and freedoms of citizens, enshrined in the Constitution and laws, are inviolable and no one has the right to withhold or restrict them without passing through a court of law.

45. No public need for special legislation on the rights of ethnic minorities has been identified in Uzbekistan, since all legislative instruments enshrine the same rights and freedoms ensuring the equality of citizens before the law, irrespective of race, sex, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs or personal or social status (art. 5 of the Criminal Code, art. 16 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, art. 8 of the Code of Civil Procedure, art. 7 of the Code of Economic Procedure, art. 9 of the Code of Administrative Procedure and art. 272 of the Code of Administrative Offences). The country's national legal system lays down serious penalties for infringements of the equal rights of citizens. The Code of Administrative Offences establishes a penalty in the form of a fine for violating citizens' rights to free choice of language in child-rearing and education, imposing obstacles and restrictions on the use of



language, and disrespecting the State language or other languages of the ethnic groups and nationalities living in Uzbekistan (art. 42).

46. The State Language Act provides ample opportunity to create conditions for ethnic groups to use their languages in daily life. In particular, the law establishes that the State language of the Republic of Uzbekistan is Uzbek. But this shall not encroach on the constitutional rights of ethnic groups and nationalities living on the territory of Uzbekistan to use their native language. Citizens have the right to choose the language of inter-ethnic communication at their discretion.

47. The country provides conditions for all citizens to study the State language free of charge and to respect the languages of the ethnic groups and nationalities living on its territory and to develop those languages, ensures the establishment of preschool educational organizations functioning in the State language and, in areas densely populated by ethnic groups, in their languages, and grants the right to free choice of the language of instruction. General, vocational and specialized secondary and higher education is provided in the State language, and also in other languages.

48. The Cultural Activities and Cultural Organizations Act of 20 January 2021 establishes the right of the ethnic groups and peoples living in Uzbekistan to preserve and develop their culture, customs and traditions and to restore and preserve their cultural and historical environment.

49. Article 141 of the Criminal Code, “Infringement of the equal rights of citizens”, criminalizes the violation of the equal rights of citizens. Moreover, this constituent element of an offence is identified in chapter VII of the Criminal Code, which enumerates the types of offences against the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens. It should be noted that the grounds of discrimination given in article 141 of the Criminal Code are virtually the same as those in article 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

50. Article 156 of the Criminal Code, “Incitement to national, racial or religious hatred”, provides that intentional acts that impugn national honour and dignity or offend the feelings of citizens in connection with their religious or atheistic beliefs, committed for the purpose of fomenting enmity, intolerance or discord against groups of the population on national, racial, ethnic or religious grounds, and also the direct or indirect restriction of rights or the establishment of direct or indirect advantages on the basis of national, racial, ethnic or religious affiliation, are punishable by deprivation of liberty for periods of up to five years.

51. Article 153 of the Criminal Code, “Genocide”, establishes liability for deliberately creating living conditions calculated to bring about the total or partial physical extermination of a group of persons on national, ethnic, racial or religious grounds, the forcible reduction of childbearing or the transfer of children from one of these human groups to another, and also for ordering the commission of such acts.

## **Recommendations 5 and 19**

52. In order to improve the monitoring of the situation in the field of observance of human rights by State bodies, measures have been adopted in Uzbekistan to strengthen the legal basis for the collection of statistical information by all State entities. Thus, the Official Statistics Act was adopted on 11 August 2021, introducing the concept of official statistics and reviewing its basic principles; the national statistical system has been established, with an authorized body coordinating activities in the domain of official statistics; those with responsibility for official statistics (producers of official statistics, providers of administrative data, respondents, users, the Statistical Council) and their powers, duties and responsibilities have been defined; and the powers of the State Statistics Committee and the Cabinet of Ministers relating to the official statistics of more than 30 State bodies have been defined.

53. The Act includes requirements for the quality of official statistics and their evaluation; rules governing work with statistical data (managerial, individual and confidential) have been defined, along with rules for the dissemination and publication of official statistics. A legal and institutional framework has been established for the conduct of regular population

censuses for the collection of data relating to the ethnicity, national origin and languages of the peoples living in Uzbekistan.

54. The Population Census Act of 16 March 2020 stipulates that the population census shall be conducted at least once every 10 years. It defines the census programme, which includes the following questions: surname, first name, patronymic; date and place of birth; age; sex; ethnic background; nationality; place of residence (place of stay); languages spoken; education; marital status; number of children; household composition, housing conditions; employment; main source of livelihood; migration (internal and external). A presidential decree was issued on 5 February 2019 to ratify the blueprint for the population census in 2022, a programme of comprehensive measures for the population census and the Commission responsible for its implementation.

55. Pursuant to a decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of 11 November 2020 on measures for the preparation and conduct of a population census in Uzbekistan in 2023, the census was postponed from 2022 to 2023. From 1 to 25 November 2021, pilot censuses were conducted in four regions of the country (Xo'jaobod district of Andijon province, Yuqori Chirchiq district of Tashkent province, city of Khiva in Xorazm province and Yashnobod district of the city of Tashkent).

56. The decision approves the various forms of the population registration certificate, which provide statistical data on the ethnic composition and languages of the population, including indicators on migrants, refugees and stateless persons, along with relevant socioeconomic details.

57. Currently, a consolidated record of offences, their perpetrators and the progress of criminal cases, together with the results of the judicial consideration of criminal cases, is maintained in compliance with the regulation on the procedure for the maintenance of a consolidated information system of electronic criminal statistics, approved by joint decision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Office of the Procurator General, the Supreme Court, the State Security Service, the State Customs Committee and the National Guard.

58. Statistical data are generated from electronic statistical cards that contain information on the ethnic origin of the perpetrators or victims of crime. Upon completion of investigative actions by the investigating authorities, complete profile data on suspects and accused persons are entered into the standardized statistical card for the registration of persons who have committed offences (form 2), and information on victims is entered into the standardized statistical card (form 3) for registration in the consolidated statistical database of electronic criminal law statistics.

59. In order to collect statistical data in the judicial system, a statistical reporting form on the ethnic composition of the category of persons in this field was approved by a decision of the Presidium of the Supreme Court of 26 November 2020 and entered into the consolidated register of statistical reporting forms on the activities of the criminal courts. Statistical reports have been submitted by the Supreme Court to the National Centre for Human Rights every quarter since 2021.

60. Only 108 persons of Lyuli/Roma ethnicity are currently being held in custodial facilities (15 women and 93 men). Of these, 25 are in general regime colonies, 34 in strict regime colonies, 6 in special regime colonies, 23 in open prisons, 14 in a women's colony, 2 in a specialized hospital for the treatment of convicts, and 4 in remand prisons.

61. As at the end of the first five months of 2022, there were 70,305 persons under the supervision of the Probation Service and, as of 21 June 2022, there were 318 convicted persons of Lyuli/Roma ethnicity. Of these, a total of 127 persons were sentenced to punitive work, 182 persons were sentenced to restriction of liberty and 9 persons were placed on probation. In all, 132 persons were placed in employment, 4 were given training, lump sum financial assistance was paid to 77 (103,950,000 sum), passports were issued to 181 persons and medical assistance was provided to 73 persons.

## Article 2

62. The principle of equality is unequivocally enshrined in article 18 of the Constitution, which affirms that “all citizens of Uzbekistan have the same rights and freedoms and are equal before the law, without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs or personal or social status”.

63. A prohibition on infringing the principle of equality is reflected in virtually all major laws regulating human rights issues: in civil, civil procedural, criminal, criminal procedural, administrative, administrative procedural, electoral, family, labour and other legislation, in the laws on the courts, on education, on public health protection, on internal affairs bodies and others.

64. This trend continues in the country’s new laws, enacted over the period 2020–2022. Thus, the new version of the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act of 5 July 2021 states that “religion may not be used for the purpose of violent overthrow of the constitutional order, encroachment on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Uzbekistan, infringement of the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens, attacks on the health and morality of citizens, propagation of war and national, racial, ethnic or religious enmity, disruption of civil harmony, dissemination of slanderous and destabilizing fabrications, the sowing of panic among the people, or the perpetration of other acts aimed against the individual, society and the State” (art. 4).

65. In addition, according to the law, “any restriction of rights and creation of direct and indirect advantages of citizens depending on their attitude to religion, incitement to enmity and hatred or affronts to the feelings of citizens in connection with their religious or atheistic beliefs, and also the desecration of revered religious sites and places of worship shall incur the liability established by law” (art. 6).

66. The Presidential State Security Service Act of 6 July 2021 stipulates that: “the State Security Service of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall ensure the protection of the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of citizens, regardless of their sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs or personal and social status” (art. 8).

67. According to the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in the Republic of Uzbekistan Act of 4 June 2021, “foreign citizens and stateless persons on the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall be equal before the law without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs or personal and social status” (art. 5).

68. The Constitutional State of Emergency Act of 15 December 2021 establishes that extraordinary measures and temporary restrictions applied in a state of emergency must not contravene the international human rights treaties of Uzbekistan. Under no circumstances may the rights provided for in article 24 (Right to life), article 25 (Right to liberty and security of person), article 26 (Right to presumption of innocence and protection against torture), article 27, part I (Right to protection of honour and dignity, inviolability of the home and interference in private life), article 30 (Right to freedom of access to materials affecting human rights and interests), article 31 (Right to freedom of conscience and practice of any religion) and article 44 (Right to judicial protection of rights and freedoms), as enshrined in the Constitution (art. 26), be restricted.

69. The Courts Act of 29 July 2021 states, in its article 11, that “all citizens are equal before the law and the court without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, and personal and social status”.

70. Pursuant to the Constitutional Court Act of 28 April 2021, the Constitutional Court, as a permanent organ of the judiciary, considers cases concerning the constitutionality of enactments of the legislature and the executive, and also considers complaints from citizens and legal entities whose constitutional rights and freedoms they consider to have been breached by a law applied in a particular case that is at variance with the Constitution (arts. 3 and 4).

71. The State Civil Service Act of 8 August 2022 stipulates that “a candidate for a State civil service position shall be guaranteed equality of rights regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, language, social origin, beliefs, and personal and social status. Appointment to vacant positions shall be made on the basis of internal and external competitions held through the information system of a specially authorized body” (art. 29).

72. Protection of the rights of civil servants shall be based on the equal rights of candidates for judicial office regardless of their sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, convictions, and personal and social status (art. 29). According to article 21 of the Act, the main criteria for the appointment of candidates to their first posts as judges shall be an unimpeachable reputation, honesty, competence, sufficient life experience and absence of diseases and physical disabilities that hinder the administration of justice, and not their race or ethnicity.

73. Article 4 of the Citizenship Act of 14 March 2022 stipulates that Uzbek citizenship shall be equal for all, regardless of the grounds for its acquisition. Citizens shall be equal before the law without distinction as to sex, race, social origin, beliefs, or personal or social status. Uzbekistan is not only taking legislative measures to prohibit racial discrimination, but also strengthening safeguards to ensure that State bodies and organizations strictly fulfil their obligations to ensure the equality of citizens before the law and protect them from discrimination on any grounds.

### **Recommendation 13**

74. During the reporting period, sustained measures were taken in the country to identify problems faced by members of the Lyuli/Roma ethnic group, including Lyuli/Roma women, in obtaining identity documents and birth certificates for their children, in exercising their right to education, health services, employment, social security, housing and other socioeconomic rights.

75. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as of May 2021, there were 86,563 Lyuli/Roma in Uzbekistan, of whom 45,092 were women and 41,471 were men, and 46,422 were minors of the age of 16 and over; among them, 38,733 were passport holders; 25,925 were aged under 16 and, of those, 16,719 had a birth certificate. A total of 53,666 Lyuli/Roma were interviewed at their place of residence; 22 had residence certificates for stateless persons and 3 had residence permits for foreign nationals in Uzbekistan. Measures were taken to document 112 persons and identity documents were provided to: 256 persons without birth certificates, identity cards or birth certificates. Over the period January–May 2021, 660 births, 56 marriages and 21 deaths among the Lyuli/Roma were registered and officially processed by the district and municipal civil registry offices.

76. Since January 2021, Public Opinion – a national centre – has conducted sociological surveys of Lyuli/Roma representatives living in all regions of the country, including Tashkent. While surveying citizens representing Lyuli/Roma, representatives of key ministries and agencies held meetings and discussions with Lyuli/Roma communities in Andijon, Bukhara, Jizzax, Qashqadaryo, Navoiy, Namangan, Samarqand, Sirdaryo, Surxondaryo, Tashkent, Fergana and Xorazm provinces and the city of Tashkent.

77. Sociological and monitoring studies have shown that the Lyuli/Roma living in Uzbekistan represent a separate ethnographic group, whose representatives are descendants of Lyuli/Roma of Indian origin who settled in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. They predominantly practice the Islamic religion and lead a traditional way of life: a secluded, isolated life, adhering to certain forms of livelihood. Interviewed representatives of local Lyuli/Roma indicated that they do not believe that their rights to lead a traditional way of life are being restricted by the State.

78. A stratified assessment was made of respondents’ satisfaction with their housing conditions. One third of respondents (30.5 per cent) are fully satisfied with their housing conditions; 26.8 per cent are partially satisfied, and 42.9 per cent are dissatisfied. The majority of respondents (94.6 per cent) want to improve the quality of their housing, but only 12.5 per cent of respondents have the opportunity to do so.

79. In assessing their financial situation, 41.1 per cent of respondents deemed it average, 25 per cent below average and 32.1 per cent considered themselves of low income. More than half of the survey participants (60.7 per cent) reported that they do not have enough money for food, clothes and medicines. Almost one fourth of respondents declared that they had no need for material support, while 62.5 per cent reported that they receive financial assistance from the State. Respondents who received material assistance received it from the mahalla (60 per cent) or from State bodies (48.6 per cent).

80. Among educated respondents, men outnumber women (47.8 and 36.4 per cent respectively), there are women who have not completed compulsory general education (41.7 per cent) and only men have secondary specialized education (36.4 per cent).

81. The majority (85.7 per cent) confirmed that the State does not restrict their children's rights to primary, secondary and general secondary education. Even though there is no discrimination by State bodies in access to education, more than half of the respondents have no education (58.9 per cent). According to the Ministry of Education, 10,856 children are at home, 14,471 in school, 444 in technical colleges, 157 in colleges and 441 in school facilities. According to data of the Ministry of Higher Education, there are 53 Lyuli/Roma students studying at two higher and seven specialized secondary vocational educational institutions. An action plan is being implemented to provide the Lyuli/Roma with educational coverage.

82. In all, 98.2 per cent of respondents received specialized medical care when they or their family members fell ill and 94.6 noted that their right to receive medical services in the country was not being violated.

83. According to the survey, 2,249 people have gone to work abroad, 2,382 are working in the public sector, 7,188 are engaged in animal husbandry, and one fifth (21.4 per cent) of all respondents are engaged in commerce. A small proportion of the respondents collect scrap metal and waste paper (3.6 per cent) and receive pensions (3.6 per cent).

84. The survey of the Lyuli/Roma demonstrated the need for measures to provide comprehensive socioeconomic support to Lyuli/Roma families, to allocate the necessary financial assistance to them to raise their standard of living, to ensure that all children and youngsters are enrolled in appropriate educational institutions, to create conditions to ensure their employment and job placement, to improve their housing conditions and to improve their access to medical and other services.

85. In order to improve the lives of the Lyuli/Roma people in the above-mentioned areas, on 31 December 2020, the Prime Minister approved a road map for the period 2020–2021, based on which a number of priority measures were implemented to identify the situation in each region where there are concentrations of Lyuli/Roma and to ensure their socioeconomic support through the payment of material assistance, pensions and allowances, the issuance of identity documents, birth certificates for children, the registration of marriages, improvement of their residential areas and other such measures.

86. For example, in Jizzax province there are 4,736 Lyuli/Roma, to whom, over a period nine months in 2021, more than 35 hectares of land for low-income citizens were allocated and 780 new apartments were built, housing 3,200 people. In order to provide employment for women in the new districts, 2 sewing workshops have been built, more than 10 kilometres of roads have been constructed, 8 kilometres of electricity lines and 3 kilometres of drinking water pipelines have been laid, and a school and a kindergarten have been built. The State has allocated 150 billion sum for this purpose.

87. More than 11,200 Lyuli/Roma live in Qashqadaryo province. In the first quarter of 2021, five low-income families in the Kamolot mahalla citizens' assembly were provided with food and clothing for their seven children, door-to-door visits were conducted by provincial administration staff, sponsors were appointed for eight households with poor living conditions, and 21 unemployed persons under 30 years of age were listed in the Book of Youth.

88. In April and May 2022, in Fergana province, low-income families in the Kokand mahallas were provided with assistance totalling 169.5 million sum, 23 citizens gained a source of income through employment in public works, 4 families living in Kokand were given groceries and 3 families received cash grants totalling 3 million sum, 25 people were

employed in permanent and temporary jobs, 2 persons received material assistance worth 1,050,000 sum, 70 people underwent in-depth medical examinations and 1 of these was admitted for treatment in the provincial hospital, 4 were admitted to a district hospital and 1 other received assistance in obtaining a disability classification.

89. In all, there are 5,505 Lyuli/Roma living in the Guliston mahalla citizens' assembly in Namangan, Namangan province. Of these, 2,452 are able-bodied citizens, of whom 172 are employed in government agencies and organizations, and 62 are engaged in unofficial employment in the Russian Federation. To date, citizens have received material assistance in the form of cash and groceries. Sewing courses are being held for 12 women and work is under way to help 70 women in difficult circumstances and 79 young people between the ages of 18 and 30, and about 10 of these have received loans on preferential terms. In July 2021, on the occasion of the Day of Friendship of Peoples, groceries were distributed to 80 low-income Lyuli/Roma in the district.

90. Over the period January–June 2021, assistance was provided to Lyuli/Roma in Samarkand province: to 28 Lyuli/Roma from Samarkand, 7 from the city of Kattaqo'rg'on, 3 from Bulung'ur district, 24 from Zhambay district, 3 from Ishtixon district, 2 from Tavaron village of Kattaqo'rg'on district, 14 from Akdar'ya district were assisted in obtaining passports.

91. In accordance with a presidential decree of 30 July 2021, on additional measures to support children from low-income and families in need of social protection, lump-sum grants were awarded in Shabnam (1 million sum for 2 families) and Nelova (1 million sum), and the mahalla citizens' assemblies of Alisher Navoiy (11 million sum for 5 families), Diyidor (2 million sum for 1 family), Lochin (2 million sum for 2 families) and Shirin (1 million sum for 1 family). Twenty-five people living in Shabnam district were vaccinated against coronavirus at their homes.

92. There are 1,710 Lyuli/Roma living in Tashkent province, of whom 890 are women and 820 are men and 320 are under 18 years of age. Over the period March–June 2021, 42 Lyuli/Roma citizens received practical assistance in obtaining passports, birth and marriage certificates.

93. There are 1,772 Lyuli/Roma living in Tashkent. In the Chashma mahalla, 21 houses have been refurbished. As an urban redevelopment project unauthorized buildings have been demolished, the irrigation system has been cleaned, roads repaired, and a playground built, at a combined cost of 867 million sum. Six children have been placed in pre-school organizations, a playground was refurbished, and 63.5 million sum were allocated by the *hokim* (regional chief administrator) on 27 April 2021 to create folksong, dance and costume clubs.

## Recommendation 15

94. Uzbekistan has taken measures to uphold the socioeconomic and cultural rights of the Karakalpak ethnic group and the use of their native language in public life and the media.

95. Currently, the Republic of Karakalpakstan is home to 1.9 million people, comprising Karakalpaks, Uzbeks, Russians, Kazakhs and Turkmen.

96. The President and the Government have adopted and are implementing a number of important instruments aimed at the socioeconomic development of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the development of the national culture and art of the Karakalpak people. At present, five projects have been financed from the Trust Fund to a total of \$9.1 million, which have led to the following results: drinking water has been provided to 3,500 people in five communities in Takhtako'pir district, assistance has been provided to six commercial farms in developing their production, the infrastructure of farms under the State Forestry Committee has been enhanced with the provision of 17 types of modern special equipment. The infrastructure and facilities of perinatal centres in Nukus, Beruniy and Kungrad districts have been upgraded with 42 types of modern equipment, five additional perinatal services have been provided and the number of services rendered has increased from 8,500 to 20,000 per year.

97. Considerable attention is paid to creating opportunities for the preservation and further development of national customs, traditions and the native language of ethnic groups living in Karakalpakstan.

98. By a decision of the Presidium of the Jokargy Kenes (Supreme Council) of the Republic of Karakalpakstan dated 3 November 2020, the Department for the Development of the State Language was established under the Council of Ministers of Karakalpakstan, and the Commission on Terminology was established under the Council of Ministers on 10 December 2020.

99. Karakalpakstan Television and Radio regularly broadcasts a series of programmes in the Karakalpak language, including *Tilge itibar*, *Ana tilinde soylemiz*, *Sheshenlik sheberligi* and *Til – millet ainasy*. It is planned to publish a multi-volume explanatory dictionary of the Karakalpak language, filled with new words, and to carry out grant-funded projects in support of the Karakalpak and Uzbek languages in Karakalpakstan. Karakalpak Language Day is held every year on 1 December. In Karakalpakstan, there are 3 State theatres and 2 State museums with 2 branches; 2 specialized schools of culture and art; 22 children's music and art schools; Aikulash, a Karakalpak State national folklore ensemble; the Makom ensemble; the Karakalpak branch of the State performance organization Uzbekkontsert; the National Library for Blind Persons and its 9 branches; 16 municipal and district departments of culture; and 58 cultural centres.

100. Karakalpakstan has 3 higher educational institutions, with 6 additional branches, 54 specialized secondary educational institutions, and 727 general education schools in which the Karakalpak language is taught as a State language.

101. Pursuant to a presidential decree of 11 November 2020 on measures for the comprehensive socioeconomic development of the Republic of Karakalpakstan for the period 2020–2023, work is under way to promote the development of the social infrastructure of the Republic, including the following accomplishments: construction of 38 State preschool educational organizations, 400 family preschool educational organizations and refurbishment of 35 preschool educational organizations. The construction of 7 general education schools and refurbishment of 101 schools has made it possible to keep the shortfall in the enrolment rate of pupils in general education secondary schools to below 1.1 per cent. The establishment of 32 medical institutions and private medical organizations has increased the capacity of medical institutions to 20,400 students and the number of beds to 7,100. The reconstruction of 21 cultural facilities has made it possible to improve the quality of cultural services, meet the cultural needs of the population and provide meaningful leisure activities. The inclusion of 181 schools in the “One Million Programmers” project and the introduction of more than 3,000 young people to the basics of computer programming have borne fruit in the training of advanced specialists in the field of digital technology, by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills.

102. It is planned to build and refurbish 39 sports facilities, providing conditions for sports activities for an additional 83,000 people and, on this basis, to promote the development of physical culture and sport among young people. Over the period 2020–2022, 1,359 projects worth 12.3 trillion sum were launched and 17,500 new jobs created, through the application of foreign direct investment worth \$523 million; 9 projects worth \$21.2 million in free economic zones and 81 projects worth \$28 million in small industrial zones are planned, with a view to increasing the number of foreign tourists to 80,000 and tourism exports to \$45 million, and the number of domestic tourists to 800,000, to building new hotels with 210 beds and increasing to 45 the number of tour operators and travel agents.

103. Measures are being taken to improve the living conditions and amenities of 45 mahallas and *auls* in difficult circumstances, to build mahalla centres, known as “mahalla markazlari”, in 12 district centres and 157 mahalla and aul administrative offices. The income of 15,500 families included in the so-called “Iron Book”, a State database of families in need, was boosted through the employment of 19,700 people and vocational training of a further 6,000.

104. The State Programme for the Development of the Aral Sea Region for the period 2017–2021 was ratified by the President on 18 January 2017, in order to improve the environmental and socioeconomic circumstances and living conditions of the population in

the Aral Sea region and to mitigate the consequences of the Aral Sea ecological disaster. At the Tashkent International Investment Forum, on 24–26 March 2022, a loan agreement on this project was signed between the Government and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Over the period 2018–2021, protective forests have been planted on the desiccated bed of the Aral Sea, providing green cover over an area of 1,625,000 hectares (including 458,000 hectares in 2020–2021).

105. On 29 July 2021, a road map was approved for the creation of an ecological innovation and technology zone in the Aral Sea region, containing a list of 71 activities and 65 projects; a special side event on the development of the Aral Sea region was held as part of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The measures being implemented were highly appreciated and financial support for the implementation of targeted projects in the region was confirmed.

106. In 2018, Uzbekistan ratified the Paris Agreement on climate change, and committed itself to reducing greenhouse gas emissions per unit of GDP by 2030 by 10 per cent from 2010 levels, in order to contribute to the global pledge to hold the global temperature increase to well below 2°C by the end of the century and to lower this indicator to 1.5°C. To achieve the goals of the Convention agreed upon at the twenty-sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention in Glasgow, on 10 and 11 November 2021, decisions have been adopted to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 35 per cent by 2030, to reduce methane emissions by 30 per cent by 2030 and to reform the health-care system; and declarations to end deforestation by 2030 have been adopted.

107. On 25 January 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a decree on additional measures to transform the Aral Sea region into an environmental innovation and technology zone. Following the adherence of Uzbekistan to the global initiative entitled “Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030” (P4G), a representative office of the Global Green Growth Institute was opened in the country. In order to promote the green rehabilitation of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, an office of Global Green Growth Institute was opened in Nukus in 2021 and a joint project on green rehabilitation of the Aral Sea region to overcome the Aral Sea crisis is being implemented in collaboration with the Institute over the period 2021–2024. The project is funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), with a total project cost of \$5.65 million.

108. Pursuant to the presidential decree on measures to implement the special resolution of the General Assembly of 18 May 2021, declaring the Aral Sea region a zone of ecological innovations and technologies, a national programme is being drafted for the development of the Aral Sea region over the period 2022–2026, and also a national programme for the radical upgrading of the environmental situation and socioeconomic development of the Aral Sea region.

109. The draft Constitutional Act amending and supplementing the Constitution of Uzbekistan includes in its article 40 the following provision: “The State shall take the necessary measures to protect and restore the ecosystem and ensure the sustainable social and economic development of the Aral Sea region”.

110. At 45 meetings of the Senate Committee on the development and environment of the Aral Sea region, more than 130 important issues relating to the implementation of priority tasks defined in the resolutions and decrees of the President on the integrated development of the Republic of Karakalpakstan were considered. In particular, a report was heard on the progress of measures for the integrated socioeconomic development of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and a Senate decision was adopted on 15 December 2021.

### **Article 3**

111. The historical development and State practice of Uzbekistan has never been characterized by the racial segregation and apartheid of people of colour, the separation of the white or indigenous population from other ethnic groups, including people of African descent, and their separate education and residence through various social barriers. Uzbekistan opposes racial discrimination and apartheid and establishes dependable legal



guarantees to protect the rights of every citizen against offences of this nature on the basis of the implementation of instruments adopted by the United Nations and other international human rights organizations.

### **Recommendation 28**

112. In accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 68/237 proclaiming the period 2015–2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent, Uzbekistan has monitored observance of the rights of people of African descent living in the country.

113. Over the 12 months of 2021, the Office of the Procurator General received no complaints or allegations of infringements of the rights of people of African descent. According to the respective units of the Bureau, the Department and the Office of the Military and Transport Procurators of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the provinces and the city of Tashkent, no appeals by people of African descent were received or considered in November and December 2021.

114. In order to implement the provisions of the national action plan, the Supreme Court has developed a draft statistical reporting form reflecting information on people of African descent, which is included in the consolidated register of statistical reporting forms for the criminal courts and which was discussed at a meeting of the Presidium of the Supreme Court on 26 November 2020 and approved by resolution No. RS-56–20.

115. The Committee for Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries cooperates with the Office of the Ombudsman, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and other relevant agencies to collect reliable information on breaches of the rights of people of African descent by investigating complaints lodged by citizens with various government agencies and developing proposals to address them. On 1 December 2021, the Committee held a round table on the theme “Africans living in Uzbekistan: rights and the rule of law”; on the recommendation of the participants in the round table, a draft plan is being drawn up for the organization of information activities on the rights of people of African descent in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the provinces and the city of Tashkent.

### **Article 4**

116. Uzbekistan continues to implement a policy of strict prohibition of ideas of the superiority of any one race or ethnic group of persons, which are aimed at justifying or promoting racial hatred in any form or sphere.

117. Under the Cultural Activities and Cultural Organizations Act of 20 January 2021, peoples and ethnic groups living in Uzbekistan have the right to preserve and develop their culture, customs and traditions and to revitalize their cultural and historical environment (art. 19). The use of posters, emblems, banners and other items aimed at inflaming national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred, the propagation of cruelty and violence and discrimination against the rights of others is prohibited during cultural and mass events (art. 20).

118. Under the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act of 5 July 2021, religion may not be used for the purpose of forcibly changing the constitutional order, undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Uzbekistan, infringing the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens, or propagating war or national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred (art. 4). Freedom of conscience is aimed at strengthening peace and harmony between faiths, ensuring religious tolerance in society and countering the inculcation and dissemination of religious ideas and views that threaten public order, health and morals, and the rights and freedoms of citizens of Uzbekistan (art. 5).

119. Any restriction of rights and creation of direct and indirect advantages of citizens depending on their attitude to religion, incitement to enmity and hatred or affronts to the feelings of citizens in connection with their religious or atheistic beliefs, and also the desecration of revered religious sites and places of worship, shall incur the liability established by law (art. 6).

120. The production, import and dissemination of religious materials on the territory of Uzbekistan are carried out after a positive opinion is handed down by a religious expert appraisal, in order to prevent the dissemination in society of ideas and views that contribute to the breakdown of inter-confessional harmony and religious tolerance and that call for violence and arbitrary treatment on religious grounds (art. 10).

121. Pursuant to the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in the Republic of Uzbekistan Act of 4 June 2021, persons may be refused entry on to the territory of Uzbekistan if they are involved in the activities of international and foreign terrorist, extremist and other criminal organizations (art. 29).

122. The Political Parties Act of 26 December 1996, as amended and supplemented on 14 October 2021, prohibits “the establishment and activity of political parties with the purpose of violent overthrow of the constitutional order; undermining of the sovereignty, integrity and security of Uzbekistan and the constitutional rights and freedoms of its citizens; and the propagation of war and social, ethnic, racial and religious hatred, among other purposes”.

123. According to the Non-Governmental and Non-Profit Organizations Act of 14 April 1999, as amended on 10 September 2019, “State registration of a non-governmental non-profit organization may be denied if: the founding documents of such organization have the purpose of violent overthrow of the constitutional order, undermining of the sovereignty, integrity and security of the Republic of Uzbekistan, infringement of the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens, propagation of war and social, ethnic, racial and religious enmity, encroachments on the health and morality of citizens and other infringements of the law on non-governmental organizations” (art. 25).

124. The Mass Media Act of 15 January 2007, as amended and supplemented on 19 April 2018, prohibits “the use of mass media for the purpose of calling for violent overthrow of the existing constitutional order and territorial integrity of the Republic of Uzbekistan; the propagation of war, violence and terrorism, and also notions of religious extremism, separatism and fundamentalism; the dissemination of information inflaming national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred; and the perpetration of other acts incurring criminal and other liability in accordance with the law” (art. 6).

125. The Information Technology Act of 11 December 2003, as amended and supplemented on 30 March 2021, lays down rules for the dissemination of publicly available information on the World Wide web (Internet). Article 12-1 stipulates that “the owner of a website and (or) the page of a website or other information resource, including a blogger, is obliged not to allow the use of such website and (or) page of a website or other information resource on the World Wide Web (Internet), which hosts publicly available information, for the purpose of calling for violent overthrow of the existing constitutional order and territorial integrity of Uzbekistan; advocating mass disorder and violence against citizens, and also participation in meetings, rallies, marches and demonstrations held in violation of the established order, along with the coordination of these unlawful actions; the propagation of war, violence and terrorism, and also notions of religious extremism, separatism and fundamentalism; the dissemination of information inflaming national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred, and also maligning the honour and dignity or business reputation of citizens, allowing interference in their private life; the dissemination of information aimed at inducing citizens, including minors, to commit, or involving them in the commission of, unlawful acts that pose a threat to their life and (or) health or to the life and (or) health of other persons; and the perpetration of other acts incurring criminal and other liability in accordance with the law”.

126. The owners of websites and (or) website pages or other information resources, including bloggers, shall be obliged to verify the reliability of publicly available information before it is posted on their website and (or) website page or other information resource on the World Wide Web (Internet), which hosts publicly available information, and immediately remove the posted information if it is found to be unreliable.

127. The Combating Terrorism Act of 15 December 2000, as amended and supplemented on 21 April 2021, defined the concept of “terrorism”, which means violence, the threat of its use or other criminal acts that endanger life and personal health, cause the destruction

(damage) of property and other material objects and are aimed at forcing a State, international organization, natural or legal person to commit or refrain from the commission of certain acts, complicate international relations, violate sovereignty and territorial integrity, undermine the security of the State, provoke armed conflicts, intimidate the population and destabilize the social and political order, in order to achieve political, religious, ideological and other goals, the liability for which is prescribed by the Criminal Code (art. 2).

128. The Countering Extremism Act of 30 July 2018 sets out a definition of “extremist activity”, which means “activities to plan, organize, prepare or perpetrate actions aimed at violent change of the foundations of the constitutional order and violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Uzbekistan; the conduct of terrorist operations; incitement to national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred associated with violence or public calls for violence; the manufacture, storage, distribution or demonstration of materials containing a threat to public safety and public order, and also the manufacture, storage, distribution or demonstration of attributes or symbols of extremist organizations; the creation of mass riots motivated by political, ideological, racial, national, ethnic or religious hatred or enmity against a social group; public calls for the performance of actions specified in paragraphs 4–10 of the present article” (art. 3).

129. By a decree of 1 July 2021, the President ratified the National Strategy on Countering Extremism and Terrorism for the period 2021–2026 and the road map for its implementation over that period. The objectives of the Strategy are:

- (a) To determine priority areas for the activity of State bodies in countering extremism and terrorism;
- (b) To develop proposals to improve the legal and methodological and practical framework in this area;
- (c) To unite the efforts of State bodies, the general public and the international community aimed at countering extremism and terrorism;
- (d) To ensure inter-confessional and inter-ethnic harmony in society;
- (e) To devise a system of State measures to protect the population, especially young people, from involvement in extremist and terrorist activities;
- (f) To introduce effective mechanisms for countering the financing of extremism and terrorism, and others.

130. Social and legal protection and a high level of knowledge, in particular an understanding of the essence of the true values of national identity and the notion of the peaceful coexistence of religious confessions, are conditions vital to the fostering of intolerance among the population, especially young people, of the destructive ideas of extremism and terrorism.

131. As part of the Mehr (“Compassion”) programme, more than 400 women and children misguidedly involved in the activities of international terrorist organizations were repatriated to Uzbekistan from Afghanistan, Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic over the period 2019–2021 and provided with comprehensive assistance for social adaptation and reintegration. A number of foreign countries and international organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), provided substantial support for this undertaking. In accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 2396 (2017), special attention is paid to assisting women and children who are associated with foreign terrorist fighters and who may become victims of terrorism.

132. The State Security Service Act of 5 April 2018, as amended and supplemented on 25 December 2019, stipulates the duty of the State Security Service to detect, prevent and suppress destructive activities aimed at the propagation of national, ethnic and religious enmity, which pose a threat to State interests and security (art. 5).

133. According to the Prevention of Offences Act of 14 May 2014, as amended and supplemented on 1 June 2022, internal affairs bodies shall be empowered to identify persons involved in the activities of banned organizations and groups of religious orientation (art. 10); and citizens’ self-governance bodies shall take measures to suppress the activities of

unregistered religious organizations, ensure respect for the rights of citizens to freedom of religion, prevent the forced imposition of religious views and consider other issues related to the observance of the right to freedom of religion and religious beliefs (art. 21).

134. In accordance with the requirements of United Nations conventions, standards of the Financial Action Task Force, recommendations of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and best international practices, the following statutory instruments were adopted during the same period: a presidential decree of 28 June 2021, ratifying the strategy for the development of the national system of Uzbekistan to combat money-laundering, the financing of terrorism and the financing of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; a road map for the implementation of the tasks defined in the strategy; a list of ministries and departments engaged in efforts to combat money-laundering, the financing of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

135. Uzbekistan has concluded 75 bilateral agreements on cooperation in combating crime and terrorism and is party to 15 universal and 13 regional treaties in this area. Of the 13 regional instruments, 5 international treaties (1 within the Commonwealth of Independent States and 4 within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization) also regulate the fight against extremism.

136. In accordance with the road map for implementation of the blueprint for the State policy on inter-ethnic relations, a system has been set up to combat intolerance of the propagation and dissemination of notions of extremism, xenophobia and ethnic exclusiveness aimed at undermining inter-ethnic harmony (para. 13), to prevent the placement of such material on the media (para. 14) and to develop social partnerships with non-governmental organizations in this area (para. 15).

137. Over the period 2019–2022, more than 80 seminars and conferences have been held, books and scientific articles have been published, more than 20 ethnic cultural centres (Armenian, Azerbaijani, Bashkir, German, Greek, Kazakh, Korean, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Tatar, Turkmen, Ukrainian, Uighur and others) have participated in these activities; a “Friendship Garden” has been created in Tashkent; and Friendship Week is held annually as part of the celebration of the Day of Friendship of Peoples.

138. Within the framework of Friendship Week, more than 10,386 scientific, practical, cultural and educational events were organized across the entire country; on 25 June 2021, the chambers of parliament held a forum on the role of parliament in ensuring inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony; and, on 25 August 2021, an international conference was held on the topic with representatives of Central Asian countries.

139. Articles on strengthening inter-ethnic relations in Uzbekistan are published by the central and local media, including in the newspapers *Pravda Vostoka*, *Narodnoe Slovo* and *Tashkentskaya Pravda*; representatives of the ethnic cultural centres and citizens’ self-governing bodies appear on television channels; and the television channels *Madaniyat va Ma’rifat* (Culture and Enlightenment) and *Istoriya Uzbekistana* (History of Uzbekistan) publicize the experience and main areas of friendship, tolerance and mutual assistance among the peoples of Uzbekistan on the basis of the principles of equality and the intolerance of discrimination on any grounds, as enshrined in the Constitution and the law of Uzbekistan.

## Recommendation 9

140. As part of strengthening reliable guarantees for the protection of the rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly for citizens irrespective of their ethnic origin, the experience of OSCE countries, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America relating to the exercise by ethnic groups of their right to freedom of expression and participation in public life has been studied and a bill on rallies, meetings and demonstrations has been developed. This bill, drafted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, was submitted for public discussion on the draft legal instruments portal ([regulation.gov.uz](http://regulation.gov.uz)).

141. The bill establishes that all persons, regardless of their ethnicity, have the right to hold peaceful assemblies and express their opinions. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions

and Human Rights provided recommendations on this issue, which were taken into account by the drafters of the bill. It is planned to finalize the draft Meetings, Assemblies and Demonstrations Act on the basis of an analysis of foreign legislation, with the aim of protecting the rights and interests of ethnic groups in exercising their right to freedom of opinion and peaceful assembly, preventing racial discrimination and establishing appropriate legal liability for instances of racial discrimination in this area.

142. In order to protect the interests of ethnic groups in holding peaceful assemblies, provision is made for the right of their representatives to act as the organizers of peaceful assemblies, with the exception of the restrictions established by the Constitution and laws relating to foreign citizens and stateless persons permanently residing in Uzbekistan.

143. In accordance with article 56, paragraph 1 (k), of the Criminal Code, the motivation of racial or ethnic enmity or discord in the commission of an offence is recognized as an aggravating circumstance.

144. A number of articles of the Criminal Code provide for the recognition of motives of inter-ethnic or racial hatred an aggravating circumstances in the commission of an offence.

145. These include paragraph 2 (j) of article 97 (Premeditated murder motivated by inter-ethnic or racial hatred), paragraphs 2 (g) and 2 (h) of article 104 (Premeditated grievous bodily harm caused on grounds of inter-ethnic or racial hatred or religious prejudice), paragraphs 2 (g) and 2 (h) of article 105 (Intentional moderate bodily harm caused on the grounds of inter-ethnic or racial hatred or racial prejudice), article 125-1 (Infringement of the law on the age of marriage); article 127-1 (Mendicity), article 130 (Production, import, distribution, advertising, display of pornographic products), article 130-1 (Production, import, distribution, advertising, display of products propagating the cult of violence or cruelty), article 132 (Erasure, destruction and defacement of objects of tangible cultural heritage), article 135 (Trafficking in human beings), article 136 (Coercing a woman into marriage or preventing her from marrying), article 141 (Infringement of the equal rights of citizens), article 144 (Breach of the law on appeals by individuals and legal entities), article 145 (Violation of freedom of conscience), article 148 (Violation of the right to work), article 148-2 (Administrative coercion to work), article 156 (Incitement to national, racial, ethnic or religious hatred), article 192-1 (Violation of the right to private property), article 193 (Breach of environmental safety standards and requirements), article 216-2 (Breach of the law on religious organizations), article 223 (Illegal departure from or entry into Uzbekistan), article 229-2 (Contravention of the procedure for teaching religious doctrine), paragraph 2 (b) of article 235 (Use of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment for any reason based on ethnic, racial, religious or social discrimination), article 244 (Mass riots), article 244-1 (Production, storage, distribution or display of materials containing a threat to public security and public order), article 244-2 (Establishment or leadership of, or participation in, religious extremist, separatist, fundamentalist or other prohibited organizations) and article 244-3 (Illegal production, storage, import or distribution of religious materials).

146. Over the course of 2020, the number of persons convicted for these offences totalled 996 and may be broken down as follows:

- Men – 729 persons, women – 237 persons;
- Persons under 18 years of age – 4, aged from 18 to 30 – 444, aged from 31 to 40 – 292, aged from 41 to 50 – 157, aged from 51 to 59 – 59, aged 60 and older – 10;
- Uzbeks – 851 (88.2 per cent), Russians – 15 (1.6 per cent), Tatars – 4 (0.4 per cent), Kazakhs, 13 (1.4 per cent), Koreans – 4 (0.4 per cent), Kyrgyz – 11 (1.1 per cent), Tajiks – 31 (3.2 per cent), Turks – 1 (0.1 per cent), Chinese – 1 (0.1 per cent), Turkmen – 8 (0.8 per cent), Karakalpaks – 11 (1.1 per cent), Azerbaijanis – 1 (0.1 per cent), Uighurs – 4 (0.4 per cent); Lyuli/Roma – 4 (0.4 per cent), others – 7 (0.7 per cent).

147. Over the course of 2021, a total of 1,380 persons were convicted, broken down as follows:

- Men – 1,040, women – 340;

- Under 18 years of age – 14, aged from 18 to 30 – 716; aged from 31 to 40 – 393; aged from 41 to 50 – 163; aged from 51 to 59 – 76; aged 60 and older – 10;
- Uzbeks – 1,193 (86.5 per cent); Russians – 10 (0.7 per cent); Tatars – 12 (0.9 per cent); Kazakhs – 21 (1.5 per cent); Koreans – 3 (0.2 per cent); Kyrgyz – 14 (1 per cent); Tajiks – 76 (5.5 per cent); Turks – 1 (0.1 per cent); Turkmen – 11 (0.8 per cent); Ukrainians – 1 (0.1 per cent); Karakalpaks – 26 (1.9 per cent); Armenians – 1 (0.1 per cent); Azerbaijanis – 2 (0.1 per cent); Uighurs – 4 (0.3 per cent); Lyuli/Roma – 2 (0.1 per cent); Georgians – 2 (0.1 per cent); others – 2 (0.1 per cent).

148. Over the course of the first five months of 2022, a total of 701 persons were convicted, broken down as follows:

- Men – 580, women – 121;
- Under 18 years of age – 13; aged from 18 to 30 – 377; aged from 31 to 40 – 158; aged from 41 to 50 – 99; aged from 51 to 59 – 44; aged 60 years and older – 10;
- Uzbeks – 611 (87.2 per cent); Russians – 3 (0.4 per cent), Tatars – 1 (0.1 per cent), Kazakhs – 7 (1.1 per cent), Koreans – 1 (0.1 per cent), Kyrgyz – 17 (2.4 per cent), Tajiks – 36 (5.1 per cent), Turks – 1 (0.1 per cent), Turkmen – 2 (0.3 per cent), Ukrainians – 1 (0.1 per cent), Karakalpaks – 10 (1.5 per cent), Kazakhs – 7 (1.1 per cent), Lyuli – 1 (0.1 per cent), Georgians – 1 (0.1 per cent), others – 2 (0.3 per cent).

149. At the same time, the Higher Judicial College has prepared a draft law amending and supplementing the Code of Administrative Offences, in which article 32 (Circumstances aggravating administrative liability) and article 41 (Defamation) of the Code will be supplemented with a part II, stipulating penalties for administrative offences motivated by racial or ethnic hatred.

## Article 5

150. The principle of equality and non-discrimination on any grounds, including racial discrimination in all its forms, is fundamental to the upholding of human and civil rights and freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres.

### **Right to participate in elections on the basis of universal suffrage and to take part in the management of State and public affairs**

151. In accordance with the Electoral Code of 26 June 2019, elections in Uzbekistan are held on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot. Elections of the President, deputies of the Legislative Chamber and deputies of local kengashes are held by universal suffrage. Citizens of Uzbekistan who have reached the age of 18 on election day are eligible to vote.

152. According to article 29 of the Electoral Code, citizens shall be afforded the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the voter list in the premises of the constituency electoral commission, and also with their own details from the voter list available on the official website of the Central Electoral Commission. Citizens resident in foreign countries may do this through the official websites of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and foreign diplomatic missions of Uzbekistan.

153. According to article 31 of the Electoral Code, ballot papers shall be printed in the State language, and also, by decision of the respective district electoral commission, in the languages used by the majority of the population of that district. They are printed in Uzbek – for representatives of the Uzbek, Tajik, Kyrgyz, Kazakh and Turkmen ethnic groups; in Russian – for representatives of the Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Korean, Tatar, Azerbaijani and other ethnic groups; and in Karakalpak – for representatives of the Karakalpak ethnic group. Voters may choose which ballots they prefer to use in the voting process.

154. The dissemination of information about the programme and (or) election platform of a political party or presidential candidate, appealing for votes for their candidates and candidates for deputies, and election campaigning, which is carried out in the form of public debates, discussions, press conferences, meetings of citizens, interviews, speeches and the broadcasting of clips in the media, is conducted in the Uzbek, Karakalpak, Russian, Tajik, Kazakh and Turkmen languages.

155. In the 2021 presidential election, the number of voters included in the country's consolidated electronic voter list totalled 19,859,127. Of these, 9,459,273 (47.6 per cent) were male and 10,399,854 (52.4 per cent) female.

156. The composition of voters by ethnicity is the following: Uzbeks – 17,288,530 (87 per cent), Karakalpaks – 73,891 (0.4 per cent), Russians – 259,964 (1.3 per cent), Kazakhs – 395,461 (2 per cent), Tajiks – 849,061 (4.3 per cent), Kyrgyz – 142,619 (0.7 per cent), Turkmen – 113,411 (0.6 per cent), Koreans – 54,878 (0.3 per cent) and other nationalities – 681,312 (3.4 per cent).

157. No complaints were lodged by representatives of ethnic groups attesting breaches of their rights during the 2019 Oliy Majlis and 2021 presidential elections.

158. The fact that 10 per cent of deputies of the provincial councils of people's deputies, 38 per cent of members of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, and 13 per cent of deputies of the Legislative Chamber elected during the elections held in 2019 under the slogan: "New Uzbekistan – new elections" belong to the Karakalpak, Tajik, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Russian, Korean and other nationalities testifies to the fact that representatives of the various nationalities living in Uzbekistan are active participants in the country's sociopolitical processes.

159. During the 2019 elections to the Oliy Majlis, the Central Electoral Commission, the National Council for the Coordination of the Activities of Citizens' Self-Governing Bodies, the Centre for the Development of Civil Society and the National Association of Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations of Uzbekistan signed a memorandum of cooperation on the basis of which representatives of citizens' self-governing bodies and non-governmental organizations assisted constituency electoral commissions in compiling their voters' lists, while citizens were assisted in familiarizing themselves with the voters' lists and were advised on how to use them.

## **Recommendation 29**

160. The State provides system-wide support to non-governmental organizations and other civil society institutions. The social partnership between them has been strengthened, along with public oversight, and the legal framework regulating this area has been upgraded. Over the past few years, a total of 117 billion sum has been allocated from the State budget to support more than 1,270 projects of non-governmental organizations. Some 20 laws, presidential enactments and government decisions regulating the activities of non-governmental organizations have been adopted.

161. In the light of a study and analysis of foreign experience in the legal regulation of inter-ethnic relations, more than 40 legal and regulatory instruments have been adopted to enhance the country's legislation: these include two Acts, nine presidential decrees, eight presidential decisions, twenty decisions and orders of the Cabinet of Ministers and three decisions of the Oliy Majlis.

162. By a decree of 4 March 2021, the President ratified the blueprint for the development of civil society over the period 2021–2025 and, in 2021, the road map for its implementation and target indicators for the development of civil society over the period 2021–2025, established the Civic Chamber that reports to the President, the activities of which are aimed at representing the interests of non-governmental organizations, acting as a bridge between them and the State and introducing effective means of conducting an open dialogue with the population, and established the activities of the civic councils under State bodies.

163. The institution of a permanent representative of non-governmental non-profit organizations in the Legislative Chamber has been introduced, with the principal mandate of introducing social partnership and public oversight mechanisms in the discussion of draft laws and representing the rights and interests of non-governmental organizations.

164. In order to encourage representatives of non-governmental organizations which have made an admirable contribution to the formation and development of civil society, the protection of human rights and legitimate interests and the enhancement of the political culture and legal awareness of the population, a badge has been instituted, to be awarded "For contribution to the development of civil society". To date, the badge has been awarded to 126 activists in this field. The number of non-governmental organizations has increased by 20.7 per cent over the past four years, including 187 major national non-governmental organizations.

165. In 2021, non-governmental and non-profit organization centres were established in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, in Andijon, Qashqadaryo, Namangan, Surxondaryo, Tashkent and Fergana provinces and in the city of Tashkent.

166. Measures have been taken to increase the number of ethnic cultural centres in Uzbekistan; today there are 6 such centres in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, 5 in Andijon province, 12 in Bukhara, 5 in Jizzax, 6 in Qashqadaryo, 25 in Navoiy, 5 in Namangan, 11 in Samarqand, 5 in Sirdaryo, 8 in Surxondaryo, 29 in Tashkent province, 9 in Fergana, 6 in Xorazm and 23 in Tashkent. A total of 155 ethnic cultural centres are in operation, the objectives of which are defined in the Cultural Activities and Cultural Organizations Act of 21 January 2021. The ethnic cultural centres were established with a view to preserving and developing languages, cultures, customs and traditions and historical values, safeguarding cultural and spiritual heritage, maintaining inter-ethnic peace and harmony, harmonizing inter-ethnic relations, stimulating international cultural exchange and strengthening friendly ties between the different peoples living in the country.

167. In Uzbekistan, television and radio broadcasts and programmes are available in 12 languages; newspapers and magazines are published in more than 10 languages; and approximately 2,000 general education schools out of the country's more than 10,000 such schools provide instruction in seven languages: Uzbek, Karakalpak, Russian, Tajik, Turkmen, Kyrgyz and Kazakh. Sunday schools organized in the Armenian, Greek, Georgian, Korean, Polish, Russian, Tatar, Chinese, Jewish and other ethnic cultural centres in the country provide instruction for young people in their native language, traditions and customs, culture and art. In accordance with a Cabinet of Ministers order, more than 160,000 school books of different types are provided free of charge from the State budget to pupils in the 1,865 State general education schools in Uzbekistan where teaching is conducted in their native languages.

168. The Committee for Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries represents the interests of the ethnic cultural centres with State bodies, provides them with methodological assistance and assists the ethnic communities and peoples of Uzbekistan in preserving their culture, customs and traditions.

169. To ensure interdepartmental coordination of the activities of State bodies and civil society institutions in the field of inter-ethnic relations, a civic council was established under the Committee in 201 and, in 2020, civic councils were set up under the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, provincial *hokimiyats*, the city of Tashkent and districts (cities) to ensure inter-ethnic harmony, tolerance and solidarity. As a result, a holistic system has been created for the exercise of public oversight over the activities of government bodies responsible for implementing the blueprint for the State policy on inter-ethnic relations.

170. In accordance with a presidential decree of 4 May 2018, establishments known as "Friendship Houses" have been set up in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and provincial centres to house ethnic cultural centres on a free-of-charge basis. In 2019, the House of Korean Culture and Art, constructed jointly by Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea, was inaugurated with the participation of the presidents of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Korea. Over the past five years, the Government has allocated a total of 25 billion sum to support ethnic cultural centres. Since 2021, a system of monthly remuneration for the chairs of ethnic



cultural centres and their deputies has been in operation, funded from the Public Fund under the Oliy Majlis.

171. Over the years of independence, more than 500 activists from the ethnic cultural centres have been honoured with State awards, orders and medals, including 14 who have been awarded the distinguished title of “*O‘zbekiston Qahramoni*” (Hero of Uzbekistan).

### **Right to equal treatment before the tribunals and all other organs administering justice**

172. Under article 44 of the Constitution, all persons are guaranteed judicial protection of their rights and freedoms and the right to appeal to the courts against unlawful acts of State bodies, officials and public associations. According to article 3 of the Code of Civil Procedure, article 3 of the Code of Economic Procedure and article 4 of the Code of Administrative Procedure, any interested person has the right, in accordance with the procedure established by law, to apply to the court for protection of a violated or contested right or a legally protected interest. Persons who consider that they have been subjected to racial discrimination may apply to a court for the suppression of such discrimination and compensation for the material and moral damage that they have incurred.

173. In accordance with article 115 of the Constitution, article 13 of the Courts Act of 28 July 2021, article 20 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, article 11 of the Code of Civil Procedure, article 10 of the Code of Economic Procedure, article 12 of the Code of Administrative Procedure and article 273 of the Code of Administrative Offences, legal proceedings in Uzbekistan are conducted in Uzbek, Karakalpak or the language of the majority of the population of the given locality. Participants in the proceedings who do not speak or have insufficient knowledge of the language in which the proceedings are conducted are guaranteed the right to familiarize themselves fully with the case file, to make oral or written statements, give testimony and explanations, submit petitions and complaints, participate in court proceedings through an interpreter and the right to speak in court in their native language or another language that they know. Investigative and judicial documents to be served on the accused, defendant or other participants in the proceedings shall be translated into their native language or another language that they know. In accordance with article 51 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, the participation of a defence counsel is mandatory in cases involving persons who do not speak the language in which the proceedings are conducted.

174. According to the Supreme Court, in 2020, interpreters participated in court hearings in 315 criminal cases; 50 administrative cases; 293 civil cases, comprising 43 labour disputes, 114 family disputes, and 136 other disputes; and 4 economic cases. In 2021, they participated in 426 criminal cases; 67 administrative cases; 345 civil cases, comprising 39 labour disputes, 134 family disputes and 172 other disputes; and 18 economic cases. Over the first five months of 2022, they participated in 221 criminal cases; 42 administrative cases; 194 civil cases, comprising 18 labour disputes, 70 family disputes and 106 other disputes; and 11 economic cases.

175. Courts have considered claims in civil cases brought by representatives of the Lyuli/Roma ethnic group for the restoration of violated rights: in 2020: 26 claims, of which 18 (69 per cent) were satisfied; in 2021: 49 claims, of which 31 (63 per cent) were satisfied; over the first five months of 2022: 19 claims, of which 10 (53 per cent) were satisfied.

176. Exercise of the rights to compensation for damages suffered as a result of an offence including as a result of racial discrimination, shall be ensured in accordance with the general procedure under section 5 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. In particular, civil claims by citizens and legal entities for compensation for property damage caused directly by an offence or a socially dangerous act of a person of unsound mind, and also for compensation for funeral expenses or hospital treatment of the victim and the amounts paid to the victim in insurance compensation, or as a benefit or pension, are considered in criminal proceedings (article 275 of the Code of Criminal Procedure).

177. Persons who consider themselves to have suffered property damage from an offence or socially dangerous act of a person of unsound mind, or their representatives, shall be entitled to bring a civil action from the moment of initiation of criminal proceedings to the beginning of the judicial investigation. Persons who have not brought a civil action in criminal proceedings, and also persons whose claims have been left pending, shall be entitled to bring the action in civil proceedings (article 276 of the Code of Criminal Procedure).

178. Criminal proceedings in 2020 revealed that criminal acts covered by article 135 of the Criminal Code (Trafficking in persons) caused material damage amounting to 92,847,160 sum, of which 51,321,160 sum were reimbursed; in 2021, amounting to 598,236,896 sum, of which 415,000,336 sum were reimbursed; and, over the first five months of 2022, amounting to 127,531,850 sum, of which 27,610,000 sum have been reimbursed.

179. In addition, the guarantee of the right to compensation for damage suffered as a result of racial discrimination is enshrined in civil law (chapter 57 of the Civil Code, “Obligations arising from the infliction of harm”). According to article 985 of the Civil Code, harm caused by illegal actions (or inaction) to a citizen’s person or property, and also harm caused to a legal entity, shall be compensated by the person who caused the harm, in full, including lost profit.

180. In addition, where the guilt of the perpetrator is established, the victims are compensated for moral harm (art. 1021 of the Civil Code) in monetary terms. The amount of compensation for moral harm shall be determined by the court depending on the nature of physical and moral suffering caused to the victim, and also on the degree of guilt of the perpetrator in cases where guilt is the basis for compensation. Moral harm is compensated independently of any property damage that gives rise to compensation.

### **Right of access to public services**

181. As part of the country’s administrative reform aimed at improving the work of the State apparatus and civil servants, far-reaching measures are being taken to eliminate shortcomings in the State human resources system, to ensure broad access for citizens to the civil service on the basis of an open independent competition and selection of candidates, taking into account their business and professional qualities and the equality of citizens’ rights of access to the civil service without any discrimination, including on the grounds of sex, race, and ethnic and national origin.

182. A presidential decree of 3 October 2019 defines the concept of “State civil servant” as a citizen of Uzbekistan who performs his or her functions in the positions listed in the register of State civil service positions, and also citizens of foreign States and stateless persons who may occupy these positions on the basis of decisions of the President.

183. The Presidential Agency for the Development of the Civil Service is responsible for the implementation of a uniform State policy in the domain of personnel management and human resource development in State bodies and organizations. The priority tasks of this body are the broad involvement of young people and women in the State civil service on the basis of open and independent competitive selection, along with assistance in protecting the rights and legitimate interests of civil servants, creating decent conditions for their work and social protection.

184. A programme of priority measures has been ratified by decree of the President for the fundamental improvement of human resources policy and the State civil service system in Uzbekistan, in pursuance of which, for the first time in the practice of the country, a law on the State civil service was adopted on 8 August 2022, in the elaboration of which due account was taken of the recommendations of foreign experts and the opinion of the general public. The law defines the basic concepts, principles and guarantees of the rights of citizens in the area of access to public service.

185. Article 5 of the law enshrines the principle of equality of citizens’ rights of access to public service, and article 11 enshrines the rights of civil servants, including the right to appeal against unlawful decisions of a State body and actions (inaction) of officials. Article

21 stipulates that all citizens of Uzbekistan who meet the established qualifications shall be guaranteed equal opportunities to enter the civil service.

186. Chapter 6 (articles 27–32) of the law regulates the procedure and conditions for entering the civil service. Proficiency in the State language and compliance with other qualification requirements are prerequisites. Persons who have not reached the age of 18, who have been recognized by a court as having limited or no legal capacity, who have been deprived by a court of the right to hold certain positions, who have committed corruption offences, who have a criminal record for serious and especially serious offences, who have a health condition that does not allow them to hold a position, or who refuse to comply with the restrictions established by the State Civil Service Act may not be employed in the civil service.

187. Article 5 stipulates that the equal rights of all civil service candidates shall be guaranteed, without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs or personal or social status.

188. Guarantees of citizens' rights of access to the civil service are enshrined in a number of other laws: in article 16 of the Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Women and Men Act of 2 September 2019; articles 11 and 67 of the Courts Act of 28 July 2021, articles 7, 18 and 43 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 15 October 2020, and others.

### **Right to nationality**

189. The procedure for granting citizenship in the country is determined by the Citizenship of the Republic of Uzbekistan Act of 13 March 2020. According to article 4 of the Act, every person shall have the right to citizenship. No one may be deprived of citizenship of Uzbekistan, except in cases provided for by law or the in exercise of the right to change citizenship.

190. Article 1 of the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness provides that each State shall, in accordance with established procedures, confer its nationality on persons born on its territory or who would otherwise be stateless. Article 13 of the Citizenship Act reflects the provisions of the Convention; citizenship is acquired at birth, at the time of adoption and as a result of the acquisition and restoration of Uzbek citizenship.

191. Under the Citizenship Act, a simplified procedure for the admission of stateless persons to Uzbek citizenship is implemented. In particular, under article 20 of the Act, citizenship is granted to a stateless person under a simplified procedure if he or she has at least one relative in a direct ascending line residing in the territory of Uzbekistan and is a citizen of Uzbekistan; undertakes to abide by the Constitution of Uzbekistan; and speaks the State language to the extent necessary for communication in accordance with the procedure established by law.

192. Since December 2016, there has been a significant effort to reduce statelessness. Between 1992 and 2016, Uzbek citizenship was conferred on 482 stateless persons. According to 69 decrees of the President, from December 2016 to the present day, 16,722 stateless persons have become citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including: 179 in 2016, 1,064 in 2017, 2,760 in 2018, 6,318 in 2019, 6,401 in 2020, 4,567 in 2021 and 295 in 2022.

193. At present, in order to reduce statelessness, a new procedure has been established under article 6 of the Citizenship Act, under which stateless persons who arrived before 1 January 1995 and who have been registered and have a residence permit may be recognized as Uzbek citizens if they apply for Uzbek citizenship. To date, the Ministry of Internal Affairs has accepted documents from more than 20,283 stateless persons who arrived before 1 January 1995, registered and wished to become citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan, and passports have been issued to 14,740 (41.3 per cent) of them.

## Recommendation 21

194. The Legal Status of Foreign Nationals and Stateless Persons in Uzbekistan Act of 4 June 2021 defines the right of such persons to political asylum. Under article 8 of the Act, political asylum in Uzbekistan is granted to foreign nationals and stateless persons, taking into account the national interests of Uzbekistan on the basis of the generally recognized rules and principles of international law and in accordance with the present Act and other statutory instruments of Uzbekistan.

195. Political asylum is granted to foreign citizens and stateless persons permanently residing on the territory of other States, and also to members of their families, who seek asylum and protection from persecution or a real threat of persecution in the country of their citizenship or permanent residence for their social and political activities, religious beliefs, race or nationality, as well as from other instances of human rights violations, provided for by the rules of international law.

196. The procedure and conditions for granting political asylum in Uzbekistan are determined by a regulation ratified by presidential decree of 29 May 2017. Persons granted political asylum in Uzbekistan and their family members shall exercise the rights and freedoms of foreign citizens and stateless persons permanently residing in the country and observe their obligations, as provided for by the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in Uzbekistan Act.

197. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to date, no applications for political asylum in Uzbekistan have been received from foreign citizens or stateless persons. It should be noted that the question of accession by Uzbekistan to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness has been considered by the competent ministries and departments and an opinion has been prepared indicating that accession by Uzbekistan to those conventions would still be premature.

198. In the course of studying the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons on the recommendation of the Committee, it was found that its rules largely correspond to the requirements of the legislation in force in Uzbekistan. In article 1, the Convention defines the term “stateless person” as a person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law. Article 3 of the Citizenship Act defines a stateless person as a person permanently residing on the territory of Uzbekistan who is not a citizen of Uzbekistan and who has no proof of citizenship of a foreign State.

199. An examination of the consistency of the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness with existing national legislation revealed that, under the Convention, in order to be admitted to citizenship, an applicant must be aged between 18 and 21. The Citizenship of Uzbekistan Act stipulates that the applicant must be 18 years of age or older.

200. According to the above conventions, the rights and freedoms of stateless persons and their legitimate interests must be guaranteed by the State, which means that accession to the Conventions requires amendments to a number of laws and other enactments. In order to reduce the number of stateless persons, a bill is being drafted to amend the Citizenship Act.

### **Right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm**

201. Uzbekistan continues to pay attention to strengthening safeguards to protect citizens’ rights to personal security and to prevent all forms of violence, including torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, and also corporal punishment of children and other vulnerable categories of the population.

202. By a presidential decree of 10 August 2020, one of the main areas for the further improvement of judicial and investigative activities was identified as the introduction of mechanisms to prevent the commission of such acts, through the application and stiffening of liability for these acts. The decree provides for the active participation of a lawyer in a case from the moment of actual detention and recognition of a person as a suspect, and the

mandatory participation of a lawyer in the consideration of cases involving persons suspected of a particularly serious offence and persons against whom the imposition of a preventive measure in the form of remand in custody or house arrest is planned.

203. Personnel working for institutions that carry out pre-investigation checks, inquiries or preliminary investigations are prohibited from inducing persons to commit illegal acts and from accusing them of offences committed as a result of such inducement; from questioning persons, before they have been arraigned as suspects or accused, as a suspect or as a witness; from summoning for questioning the defendant, victim, witness and other participants in the trial within the framework of a case that has been sent to the court for consideration on the merits.

204. By a presidential decision of 26 June 2021, additional measures have been taken to improve the system for detecting and preventing cases of torture, namely, bringing the system for preventing torture in line with the rules of international law; making immediate referral to national human rights institutions; providing social, legal, psychological and medical assistance to victims of torture and involving non-governmental organizations in the detection and prevention of torture, together with the relevant State bodies.

205. Pursuant to the decision, public groups have been set up in the Office of the Ombudsman to carry out regular monitoring of the situation of persons held in the detention barracks, special holding areas and remand centres, penal institutions, disciplinary units and compulsory treatment facilities, and to draw up proposals for the prevention of torture.

206. The Ombudsman is obliged to submit an annual report (by 15 March) to the chambers of parliament on the work being done in this area; as of 1 December 2021, a procedure has been introduced for the establishment of a single electronic register of persons held in the above-mentioned places of detention; and the question of the accession of Uzbekistan to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture is under consideration.

207. On 7 August 2020, the Senate considered a report by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Procurator General's Office on the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Torture in the country, according to which 9,547 video cameras had been placed in 486 administrative buildings of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, 31 temporary holding facilities, 43 penal institutions, 11 remand centres and 13 special holding areas. During the first seven months of 2020, 5,116 inspections were carried out by the procuratorial services, 2,783 complaints were lodged regarding breaches of the law, 2,742 protests were filed to cancel unlawful enactments, disciplinary charges were laid against 1,229 persons and criminal charges against 473 persons, and the rights of 3,309 persons were restored.

208. During the period in question, the procuratorial authorities received 1,950 complaints of torture, 1,459 of which were followed up; in 1,684 cases, the complaints were not satisfied for lack of grounds; criminal proceedings were instituted in 77 cases, 67 were referred to other State bodies, and 122 cases are being investigated.

209. The Guarantees of the Rights of the Child Act of 7 January 2008, as amended and supplemented on 11 March 2020, classifies children victims of violence and exploitation, armed conflicts and natural disasters as socially vulnerable children living in difficult circumstances and in need of special protection and support from the State and society. All children are guaranteed judicial protection of their rights; in the event of a violation of such rights by parents or persons in loco parentis, the child has the right to apply independently to the guardianship and tutorship authority and other State bodies, which may not leave any such applications unexamined because the applicant has not attained the age of full legal capacity.

210. According to article 10 of the Act, all children have the right to personal inviolability and the State shall ensure their protection from all forms of exploitation and violence, including physical, psychological and sexual violence, torture, sexual harassment and others. The State shall be obliged to take measures to prevent violence and to provide the necessary educational, psychological, medical and legal support to exploited and abused children.

## Right to freedom of movement and residence

211. Under article 28 of the Constitution, citizens of Uzbekistan have the right to freedom of movement throughout the country and to enter and leave the country.

212. When traveling abroad, citizens are issued a biometric passport to enter any State regardless of their gender, race, ethnic origin and religion. Citizens between the ages of 15 and 18 may travel abroad unaccompanied, provided they have the notarized consent of parents, guardians (tutors) to the independent departure of a minor.

213. Issues related to the entry into and exit from Uzbekistan of foreign citizens and stateless persons are regulated by the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens and Stateless Persons in Uzbekistan Act of 5 June 2021 (arts. 28–31).

214. Foreign citizens may enter Uzbekistan on valid travel documents and, for countries with which Uzbekistan has established a visa regime, upon presentation of a valid Uzbek entry visa (including electronic visas), except as otherwise provided by the law and international treaties of Uzbekistan. Stateless persons permanently residing on the territory of other States may also enter Uzbekistan with valid travel documents upon presentation of a valid Uzbek entry visa, except for the case provided for in the third paragraph of article 28.

215. A foreign citizen or stateless person permanently residing in the territory of another State may be refused entry into the territory of Uzbekistan: in the interests of State security or the protection of public order; if the person is involved in the activities of international and foreign terrorist, extremist and other criminal organizations; if the person has knowingly provided false information about himself or herself, submitted forged documents or failed to submit the required documents; if during a previous stay in Uzbekistan the person was found guilty of an offence and punished by a decision of a court; if a person's right to enter the territory of Uzbekistan has been restricted for a certain period of time and this period has not yet expired; if the person is sick or has health disorders that endanger the safety and health of citizens and the relevant disease is included in the list ratified by the Ministry of Health.

216. Foreign citizens and stateless persons leaving Uzbekistan must have valid travel documents and present a valid Uzbek exit visa, except as otherwise provided by the law and international treaties of Uzbekistan. A foreign citizen or stateless person may leave the territory of Uzbekistan with an expired national passport, without a visa and without registration at the place of temporary stay in the following circumstances: they are expelled on the basis of a decision on the administrative expulsion of foreign citizens and stateless persons from Uzbekistan or have been held criminally liable; they arrived in Uzbekistan to stay for a certain period of time without a visa, or with an electronic, tourist, driver's or transit visa for a period during which they were placed in a medical institution as a result of an accident (injury or other serious illness) and were unable to leave the territory of Uzbekistan (as substantiated by a reports of the medical institution); or on other grounds provided for in article 30 of the Legal Status of Foreign Nationals and Stateless Persons Act.

217. Foreign citizens permanently residing in the territory of Uzbekistan may leave Uzbekistan on travel documents furnished with a stamp from the internal affairs authorities confirming their registration at their place of permanent residence (art. 30).

218. Foreign citizens or stateless persons shall not be permitted to leave Uzbekistan in the following circumstances: their departure is contrary to the interests of State security, until the circumstances preventing their departure are no longer in place; they are subject to contractual or commitment-related obligations preventing them from travelling abroad for permanent residence, until such obligations cease to have effect; criminal proceedings have been instituted against them, until a procedural decision is taken on the criminal case confirming that the proceedings have been completed; they have been convicted of a crime, until their sentence has been served or their early release; they fail to meet court-imposed obligations, until such obligations are met; they have knowingly provided false information about themselves when obtaining exit documents, until their situation is clarified; a civil action has been brought against them in the courts, until the court reaches a decision and enforces it.

219. By a decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of 28 December 2019, on measures to further simplify the order of permanent and temporary residence registration in Uzbekistan, the presence of citizens of Uzbekistan on the territory of the country is formalized by the regulations on the procedure for registration at the place of permanent residence and place of temporary stay of citizens, pursuant to which the words “permanent residence registration, cancellation of registration and registration at the place of stay” are replaced by the words “registration at the place of permanent residence and place of temporary stay”. Within 15 days of their arrival at a new place of residence, citizens must obtain permanent or temporary registration through the departments of migration and citizenship registration of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State service centres or the single portal of interactive state services.

220. Under article 7 of the Legal Status of Foreign Nationals and Stateless Persons Act, foreign nationals and stateless persons may reside permanently in Uzbekistan on the basis of registration at the place of permanent residence in accordance with the procedure established by law.

### **Right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion**

221. In Uzbekistan, the equal rights of citizens to freedom of conscience and religious organizations, irrespective of race, ethnicity, language or religion, are guaranteed under the Constitution, the Criminal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Code of Administrative Responsibility, and the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act of 5 July 2021.

222. The Committee on Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers is the authorized State body responsible for the implementation of measures to ensure freedom of conscience and consistent and uniform practice in the application of the law on freedom of conscience and religious organizations.

223. In all, there are 16 religious denominations operating in Uzbekistan (Islam, the Russian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Church of Full Gospel Christians, the Evangelical Christian Baptist Church, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the New Apostolic Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Voice of God Church, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Korean Protestant churches, Jewish religious communities, Baha’i Faith communities, a Buddhist temple and the Society for Krishna Consciousness). The leaders of all religious denominations are members of the Council on Denominational Affairs under the Committee on Religious Affairs, which is a public advisory body that coordinates the activities of religious organizations and brings together the leaders of religious denominations in Uzbekistan.

224. As of 1 July 2022, the Ministry of Justice and local justice bodies have registered 2,333 religious organizations, each of which enjoys the same conditions for the performance of religious rites and ceremonies in the places established for this purpose.

225. In 2022, religious organizations held the following festivities: Christmas celebrations at Orthodox and Armenian Apostolic churches; Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations, held by the Buddhist Temple; New Year celebrations according to the Baha’i Faith calendar (Nowruz); paschal holidays in Christian and Jewish religious organizations; Ramadan-Hayit celebrations by Muslims and Buddha’s Birthday by the Buddhist Temple.

226. As of 1 July 2022, there are 15 religious educational institutions operating in Uzbekistan: 13 Islamic (three higher educational institutions – the Tashkent Islamic Institute, the Mir Arab higher madrasa and the Hadith Scientific School, and 10 specialized secondary educational institutions: Kukaldosh, Sayyid Muhyiddin Maxdum, Hidaya, Imam Fakh al-Din al-Razi, Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Beruniy, Mir Arab, Khozha Buhoriy, Imam Termiziy, Hadichai Kubro and Zhuybori Kalon) and two non-Islamic (the Tashkent Orthodox Seminary and the Tashkent Christian Seminary).

227. Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, no international contacts took place between religious denominations on the organization of pilgrimages, international events of a religious nature and religious holidays. In 2022, umrah and hajj pilgrimages were organized for 36,910 and 12,045 citizens of Uzbekistan,

respectively. Over the period 2020–2022, no complaints were lodged by Uzbek citizens, foreign nationals or religious organizations concerning breaches of the Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations Act.

228. A presidential decree of 4 September 2019, on additional measures to improve activities in the domain of religious education, defined the following priority areas of cooperation in the sphere of religion: explaining to the general public, heads and employees of State and public organizations the main goals, objectives and principles of State policy in the sphere of religion; encouraging their activities and initiatives; and taking measures against violations of the guarantee of freedom of conscience, and other measures.

229. The Committee on Religious Affairs is entrusted with the following tasks: taking measures to prevent actions aimed at spreading ideas of religious fanaticism and extremism and fomenting hostility between different confessions; carrying out propaganda and agitation work to strengthen inter-confessional harmony and religious tolerance among members of the population; creating conditions for pilgrimages by citizens to foreign countries, and also by foreign citizens to Uzbekistan; bringing persons who have fallen under the spell of extremism, separatism and fanaticism, in particular women and young people, back to a healthy, normal life; carrying out educational work to strengthen the atmosphere of peace and harmony in society; and preparing proposals in these areas on the basis of best foreign experience.

230. The Ministry of Justice and the Supreme Court are obliged to publish on their official websites and in other media a list of organizations, websites, social networks and mobile messaging services recognized by a court as extremist or terrorist and whose activities are prohibited in Uzbekistan, and to ensure that the list is constantly updated.

## **Right to education**

231. Citizens' access to education regardless of their ethnic affiliation is guaranteed by the Constitution, the Education Act, the Preschool Education and Child-Rearing Act and other statutory instruments. According to article 4 of the Education Act, the main principles in the field of education are the following: recognition of the priority of education; freedom to choose the form of education; inadmissibility of discrimination in education; ensuring equal opportunities for education; and introduction of national and universal values in education and upbringing.

232. Under article 14 of the Education Act, the Ministry of National Education is the authorized State administrative body for general secondary and extracurricular education, which ensures respect for the constitutional right of citizens to education, regardless of sex, race or ethnic background. The Ministry of Preschool Education and the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education are responsible for the respective types of education in the country.

233. In order to determine the priority areas for the improvement of public education, presidential decrees were adopted in 2019 to ratify the blueprint for the development of the system of public education in Uzbekistan for the period up to 2030, and the road map for its implementation; the blueprint for the development of the preschool education system of Uzbekistan for the period up to 2030, its road map and the target indicators for the development of preschool education; the blueprint for the development of the higher education system of Uzbekistan for the period up to 2030 and the road map for its implementation, which aims to widen the coverage with education of all types of the categories of the population in need of social protection, including those with disabilities.

234. As part of the implementation of recommendation 17, the State Inspectorate for Quality Control of Education under the Cabinet of Ministers monitored the Education Act and more than 200 other statutory instruments.

235. Today, instruction in the public education system is conducted in seven languages. Lessons in schools are delivered in Uzbek, and also in Russian, Karakalpak, Tajik, Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Turkmen.



236. In particular, 5.3 million pupils are enrolled in 8,883 Uzbek-medium schools; 634,000 pupils in 81 Russian-medium schools; 126,000 pupils in 241 Karakalpak-medium schools; 70,000 pupils in 270 Tajik-medium schools; 56,000 pupils in 389 Kazakh-medium schools; 8,000 pupils in 52 Kyrgyz-medium schools; and 9,000 pupils in 43 Turkmen-medium schools.

237. In accordance with article 6 of the Preschool Education Act, every child has a right to preschool education. The State guarantees the right of every child to undergo one year of compulsory preparation for general school education in public preschools in the year before entering general education.

238. Based on the implementation of 107 statutory instruments defining the long-term and short-term prospects of the preschool education system, the coverage of children aged 3–7 with preschool education increased from 27 to 70 per cent (from 708,000 to 1,959,000 children). Thanks to the development of preschool education, the number of preschool educational establishments increased from 5,211 to 28,842. Alternative forms of preschool education are being developed, and mobile and playgroup-based educational approaches are being extensively introduced. In order to ensure healthy and safe nutrition for preschool-age children, 1,176 preschool educational institutions in the country and 83 enterprises for 237,922 students have set in place arrangements for healthy nutrition through outsourcing. All necessary facilities are provided for children with special needs; for example, in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and in Tashkent and Qashqadaryo provinces, multidisciplinary specialized preschool organizations have been established in conjunction with the Imkon (Opportunity) rehabilitation centre, at which all conditions for children with disabilities are catered for.

239. There are 86,000 groups in the preschool system providing education in the medium of Uzbek, Russian, Karakalpak, Tajik and Kazakh and attended by 1,959,021 children. The Ministry of Preschool Education, with the support of the National Television and Radio Company of Uzbekistan (broadcasting in Uzbek and Russian), has organized a programme of morning exercises, transmitted under the title “First Steps”, and television programmes on the ancient cities of Uzbekistan (in Uzbek), the English language (in English), the basics of mental arithmetic, and sessions with a speech therapist. The “First Steps” television programme also includes cooking master classes, and the “Creativity” programme lessons in drawing and appliqué and dance master classes. Television programmes on mental arithmetic and elementary mathematics, and speech therapy classes are organized as additional educational aids for children in the 6–7 age group.

240. As of 1 September 2021, in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, in order to widen the coverage of higher education, public organizations and educational and child-rearing systems using native languages have been established for ethnic groups in each province by the Council of Ministers and the provincial administrations, together with the Ministry of Higher Education. In accordance with article 33 of the Education Act and article 6 of the State Language Act, the right of persons living in the Republic of Karakalpakstan to free choice of language of instruction is upheld. Educational institutions at all levels provide education in the medium of seven different languages (Kazakh, Turkmen, Tajik, Kyrgyz, Karakalpak, Russian and Uzbek). As of 2020/21, there are currently 371 Karakalpak-medium schools in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, catering to 125,767 pupils.

241. The history of Karakalpakstan is taught in all general education schools in Karakalpakstan along with the subject “History of Uzbekistan”, and the regional departments of ecology and environmental protection organize classes in general education schools on the development of the Karakalpak people and the environmental situation in the region and seminars on environmental education for local secondary school teachers.

242. In order to create all necessary conditions for the development of the language and culture of all the ethnic groups and nationalities living in Uzbekistan and to expand the coverage and provision of information in foreign languages (languages of different nationalities), the television and radio company has set up an editorial office for information and educational programmes, which currently broadcasts a total of 12 twice-monthly television programmes. These include: “Ranginkamon”, in Tajik; “Didar”, in Kazakh; “Jinsan”, in Korean; “Naopyr”, in Karakalpak. The programme “Uzbekistan – the home we

all share” is about the lifestyles and traditions of the various nationalities and ethnic groups living in the country and is broadcast twice a month.

243. The radio stations Uzbekiston, Mahalla and Yoshlar also broadcast in the country's native languages. The radio station Uzbekistan broadcasts the following programmes: “Arayli ungyr”, in Kazakh, four times a week; “Crystal spring”, in Tatar, three times a week; “Kutlug Makan”, in Uighur, three times a week; and “Maurit”, in Karakalpak, once a week. The radio station Mahalla broadcasts three times a week in Tajik and Kyrgyz, and the radio station Yoshlar broadcasts four times a week in Turkmen.

244. In order to increase the use of the Uzbek language and create appropriate conditions for representatives of the various nationalities living in the country to learn the State language, Uzbek language training centres have been set up in the country and abroad, and cultural and educational activities are being carried out to create conditions and opportunities for the development of the languages of all nationalities and ethnic groups living in the country.

245. The right to participate in cultural and scientific life, including physical culture and sport, is exercised in Uzbekistan on the basis of the blueprint for the further development of ethnic cultures and the programme of measures for implementation of the blueprint, the Cultural Activities and Cultural Organizations Act of 20 January 2021 adopted as part of that programme, and the blueprint for the development of physical culture and mass sport in Uzbekistan for the period 2019–2023 and the programme of measures for its implementation.

246. The blueprint for the further development of ethnic cultures sets out the tasks of ensuring the equal participation of citizens, irrespective of their national or ethnic origin, in cultural life and the enjoyment of cultural services, preserving national and universal values and ethnic and cultural traditions and supporting folk art, and providing State support to national cultural organizations on the basis of their equality of rights and respect for human rights.

247. According to article 14 of the Cultural Activities and Cultural Organizations Act, all citizens have the right to enjoy the achievements of culture and to participate in the cultural life of society; to engage in creative activity on a professional or non-professional (amateur) basis as members of creative ensembles or independently; freely to choose the areas of their cultural activities in accordance with their needs, interests and abilities and the available opportunities.

248. The Ministry of Physical Education and Sport promotes the physical health of the population regardless of gender, age, national or ethnic origin and other circumstances. Its activities are based on the blueprint and programme for the development of physical education and sport for the period 2019–2023, aimed at involving children, teenagers, young people, women and the elderly in regular physical education and mass sport in educational institutions, government structures and work teams.

249. The Science and Scientific Activity Act of 30 October 2019 promotes various forms of participation of citizens and non-governmental organizations in the scientific field by putting forward proposals on the development of science and technology, exercising public oversight of activities in this sphere and publicizing information about science and scientific activities, and also identifies ways in which young people can be attracted to science and support provided for scientific associations of young people.

250. Persons engaged in scientific activity have the right freely to choose this activity on an individual and collective basis, to disseminate the results of their scientific research in the media, provided that they do not contain State or other secrets protected by law, and are also obliged not to harm human life and health and the environment and to respect intellectual property rights.

251. Scientific research, taking into account the principle of freedom of scientific creativity enshrined in the Act, is conducted in the State language and other languages of the peoples and ethnic groups living in Uzbekistan. Management of activities in the scientific domain is entrusted to the Ministry of Innovative Development and the Academy of Sciences.

## Article 6

252. In Uzbekistan, the legal protection of citizens, including against discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, language and religion, is ensured by enhancing the effectiveness of extrajudicial and judicial means and methods provided for in the Constitution, the Procurator's Office Act, the Internal Affairs Bodies Act, the Appeals of Individuals and Legal Entities Act, the Code of Civil Procedure, the Code of Administrative Procedure, the Courts Act, the Constitutional Court Act, the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) Act, the presidential decree on the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for the Rights of the Child, the Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Lawful Interests of Business Entities Act, the Legal Profession Act, the Non-Governmental Non-Profit Organizations Act, the Public Oversight Act and others.

253. Under article 35 of the Constitution, everyone has the right, either alone or in community with other persons, to submit petitions, proposals and complaints to the competent State organs, institutions or people's representatives. Petitions, proposals and complaints must be considered in the order and within the time limits established by the Appeals of Individuals and Legal Entities Act (new version) of 3 December 2014, as amended and supplemented on 29 January 2018, which sets out a clear procedure for the consideration of appeals to State bodies and State institutions, and also to their officials. Appeals may be submitted orally, in writing or electronically in the State and other languages. Heads of State bodies shall hold personal consultations with individuals and legal entities in special organizational units, and may arrange on-site personal and public meetings with citizens by visiting neighbourhoods (apartments) and other premises. Oral appeals may be submitted not only at personal meetings, but also via helplines, hotlines, videoconferencing and the virtual reception centres of State bodies.

254. The People's Liaison Offices and the Presidential Virtual Liaison Office established in the country engage in direct dialogue with the population, create conditions for the exercise of the constitutional right of citizens to appeal, systematically monitor and oversee the consideration of such appeals, and make proposals for bringing to justice persons who have infringed the procedure for considering appeals.

255. The law establishes guarantees of the right to appeal, including the inadmissibility of discrimination in the exercise of the right to appeal. According to article 16 of the Act, there may be no discrimination in exercise of the right to appeal on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, personal and social status of a natural person, and also of the forms of ownership, location (postal address), organizational and legal forms and other circumstances of legal entities.

256. When considering appeals, employees of State bodies, organizations and their officials may not disclose information about the private life of individuals or the activities of legal entities without their consent, or information constituting State secrets or other secrets protected by law, and other information, if such disclosure infringes the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of individuals and legal entities. The retrieval of data on individuals and legal entities not related to the appeals is prohibited. If individuals so request, no information may be disclosed about their identity (art. 19).

257. Article 20 prohibits the persecution of individuals, their representatives and members of their families, or of legal entities, their representatives and members of the families of their representatives in connection with their appeals to State bodies, organizations and their officials in order to exercise or protect their rights, freedoms and lawful interests, and with the expression of their opinions and criticism in the appeals.

258. According to article 33, when considering appeals, State bodies or organizations and their officials shall be obliged to perform the following: to provide the appellant with the opportunity to peruse documents, decisions and other materials affecting the appellant's rights, freedoms and legitimate interests; to inform the appellant in writing or by electronic means about the results of the consideration and the decision taken immediately after consideration of the appeal; to explain the procedure for appealing against the decision taken on the appeal, if the individual or legal entity does not agree with it; to monitor implementation of the decision taken as a result of consideration of the appeal; to take

immediate measures to suppress illegal actions (or inaction); to identify causes and conditions, within the limits of their authority, contributing to infringements of the rights, freedoms and lawful interests of individuals and legal entities; to suppress, in accordance with the established procedure, harassment of individuals, their representatives and members of their families, or of legal entities, their representatives and members of the families of their representatives in connection with their appeals; and to take measures to provide compensation, in accordance with the procedure established by law, for material damage or for moral harm, if it is caused as a result of infringement of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of an individual or legal entity.

259. According to article 12 of the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) Act of 27 August 2004, as amended and supplemented on 14 March 2019, the Commissioner shall be entitled to consider a complaint both at the request of the appellant and on his or her own initiative if there is information about the violated rights or in defence of persons unable to have independent recourse to legal remedies. The Commissioner shall be entitled to clarify the circumstances of a case, to visit organizations without hindrance, to request the necessary information, to make submissions on eliminating infringements and bringing to justice those responsible, and to file applications and lawsuits with the courts in the interests of citizens. Officials shall be obliged to provide the Commissioner with the necessary documents and materials.

260. By a law of 14 March 2019, an article 197-4 was added to the Code of Administrative Offences stating that failure by officials to comply with their obligations to the Commissioner shall be deemed to be obstruction of the Commissioner's work, entailing an administrative penalty of between three and seven times the relevant official's salary. According to this law, the administration of penal institutions shall submit to the Commissioner appeals from inmates within a time frame of 24 hours and telegrams immediately. In addition, the Commissioner is assigned the task of preventing torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment through regular visits (monitoring) to places of detention.

261. A presidential decree of 9 August 2021 established the post of Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Children's Rights (Children's Ombudsman), whose tasks include participating in the elaboration and implementation of a strategy for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other instruments on children's rights and monitoring the incorporation in Uzbek law of international standards on children's rights. The Commissioner shall be entitled to consider appeals by children and their legal representatives, and by individuals and legal entities concerning infringements of the rights and legitimate interests of children. The Legislative Chamber is considering a bill on the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Children's Rights (Children's Ombudsman).

262. According to article 3 of the Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Lawful Interests of Business Entities Act of 29 August 2017, the Commissioner for the Protection of Business Entities' Rights shall be an official who provides guarantees for the protection of the rights and lawful interests of business entities and ensures observance of those rights and interests by government agencies, including law enforcement and regulatory authorities.

263. Article 8 of the Act defines the following rights of the Commissioner: to examine the strict implementation of the law on the observance of the rights and lawful interests of business entities by State bodies; to monitor the legality of inspections of business entities; to make proposals for comprehensive measures to prevent illegal interference in the activities of business entities; to issue warnings in writing to officials of State bodies and other organizations about the inadmissibility of any infringement of the law on observance of the rights and lawful interests of business entities; to make submissions to the heads of State bodies and other organizations on the suppression of revealed breaches of the law, and other actions.

264. One of the important functions of the National Centre for Human Rights is to consider complaints from citizens concerning violations of their rights. Thus, in 2021 the Centre examined 1,386 appeals, of which 379 were received in person (29.8 per cent), 892 (70.1 per cent) submitted by various means of communication, and 7 from the Centre's virtual front office, and of these: 596 (46.9 per cent) related to personal rights of individuals, 561 (43.9

per cent) to socioeconomic rights, 85 (6.68 per cent) to political rights and 33 (2.58 per cent) to cultural rights.

265. In addition, the Centre examined 298 appeals relating to the activities of investigative bodies, 276 to the activities of judicial bodies, 230 to the activities of local public authorities and 63 court decisions. The Centre assisted in restoring the rights of citizens referred to in 64 appeals, provided practical assistance in the exercise of rights in 94 cases, provided consultations to clarify the provisions of the law in 198 cases, and in 186 cases the grounds for the complaints were not substantiated.

266. At present, the role of the Bar in providing professional legal assistance to the population in all categories of cases has been considerably enhanced, and a draft law on free legal assistance has been drawn up on the provision of free legal assistance not only in criminal cases, but also in administrative and civil cases for representatives of socially vulnerable categories of the population: children, orphans and children deprived of parental care, women victims of human trafficking and violence, and others. The draft law provides for the provision of free legal assistance not only in criminal cases, but also in administrative and civil cases. The State Duties Act of 7 January 2020 exempts non-governmental organizations from the payment of State duty when lodging appeals in court against decisions of State bodies, and also business entities, the elderly, persons with disabilities and other categories of citizens.

267. Under article 44 of the Constitution, all persons are guaranteed judicial protection of their rights and freedoms and the right to appeal to the courts against unlawful acts of State bodies, officials and public associations. The Courts Act of 29 July 2021 states, in its article 11, that “all citizens are equal before the law and the court without distinction as to sex, race, ethnicity, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, and personal and social status”.

268. A law was passed on 8 February 2021 introducing new provisions into the Constitutional Court Act, granting the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman), the Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Children's Rights, the National Centre for Human Rights, the Presidential Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights and Lawful Interests of Business Entities, and citizens and legal entities the right to apply to this judicial body for a review of the constitutionality of a law if they consider that the law breaches their constitutional rights and freedoms, is at variance with the Constitution and is being applied in a specific case whose consideration by the court has been completed and if all other remedies have been exhausted.

269. Under article 26 of the Act, constitutional proceedings are conducted in the official language of Uzbekistan. Participant in court proceedings who does not speak the State language may speak and give explanations in their native language and use the services of an interpreter.

270. As stipulated in article 73, decisions of the Constitutional Court are final and not subject to appeal. A statutory instrument or part thereof recognized by decision of the Constitutional Court as being at variance with the Constitution of Uzbekistan shall cease to have effect. A State body which has adopted an instrument of the kind referred to in the second paragraph of article 73 shall bring that instrument into conformity with the Constitution of Uzbekistan within a period of no more than one month, in accordance with a decision of the Constitutional Court. State bodies that have taken decisions on the basis of a statutory instrument recognized as being at variance with the Constitution of Uzbekistan must review those decisions within one month.

### **Recommendation 23**

271. Monitoring of the activities of State bodies, including law enforcement agencies and the courts, in examining complaints has shown that, notwithstanding improvements made to the system for raising legal awareness in society and the establishment of the Adolat National Legal Information Centre and regional legal consultation centres, which provide all segments of the population, including ethnic groups, with legal information, including the texts of

statutory instruments, there has been no significant increase in complaints of racial discrimination.

272. From data provided by the Supreme Court, it may be seen that the civil courts have considered complaints from Uzbek citizens alleging violations of the rights of persons belonging to the ethnic groups living in Uzbekistan. Courts have considered claims in civil cases brought by representatives of the Lyuli/Roma ethnic group for the restoration of violated rights: in 2020, 26 claims, of which 18 (69 per cent) were satisfied; in 2021, 49 claims, of which 31 (63 per cent) were satisfied; over the first five months of 2022, 19 claims, of which 10 (53 per cent) were satisfied.

273. In the period from 2020 to mid-2022, the Ombudsman has not received any appeals from persons of the Lyuli/Roma ethnic community on the issue of acquiring citizenship of Uzbekistan. Other ethnic groups were contacted on this issue: there were 70 such appeals in 2020; 28 in 2021; and 5 in the first six months of 2022. Complaints on various social and economic matters were submitted from the Republic of Karakalpakstan: 3888 in 2020; 515 in 2021; and 157 over the first six months of 2022.

274. In 2021, the Ombudsman received only one submission from a person of African descent: an appeal for leniency from a Cameroonian national convicted of fraud. The Ombudsman took this appeal under advisement and considered it jointly with the Office of the Procurator General and the Supreme Court. According to information from the procuratorial offices, the internal affairs agencies, the Ministry of Justice and other State bodies, no complaints of racial discrimination were submitted or considered.

## Article 7

275. Uzbekistan is taking concerted measures to combat prejudice leading to racial discrimination, the spread of radical religious views, the involvement of young people in violence, extremism and terrorism, and the preservation of moral and family values.

276. The National Strategy on Countering Extremism and Terrorism for the period 2021–2026 and the road map for its implementation, approved by presidential decree of 1 July 2021, set out the main areas of activity of the State and society in improving legislation and disseminating information about the protection of human rights and freedoms and raising the legal awareness and legal proficiency of citizens and civil servants; promoting ideas of patriotism, tolerance, opposing the spread of extremism and terrorism; and boosting the participation of civil society institutions and the media in activities in this domain.

277. Such matters as raising the legal awareness of citizens and civil servants, promoting a culture of human rights and the rights of the peoples and ethnic groups living in the country are regulated on the basis of the Legal Information (Dissemination and Access) Act of 7 March 2017, Protection of Children from Injurious Information Act of 8 September 2017 and the presidential decree of 8 February 2017 on measures for the radical improvement of the system for the dissemination of legislative enactments, among others.

278. These legal enactments guarantee the right of citizens to enjoy broad access to legal information through exercise of their right to freedom to seek, receive and disseminate legal information and the obligation of State bodies and officials to ensure that everyone has access to such information.

279. A list has been compiled of information products prohibited for distribution among children. This includes any such products that encourage children to harm their health or commit suicide and their advocacy of such actions; that justify violence and cruelty; that contain materials of a pornographic nature; that call for the propagation of destructive ideas in society, and others.

280. Within the framework of the Countering Extremism Act of 30 July 2018 and the Convention on Countering Extremism, adopted by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on 9 June 2017, to which Uzbekistan is a party, priority tasks have been identified in pursuit of the following aims: to strengthen propaganda activities against the spread of extremist ideology, including in the media and the Internet; to strengthen the cultural traditions of

cultural, moral and patriotic education; and to raise the professional level of employees of the competent authorities, among other such tasks.

281. The presidential decree of 9 October 2019, on radical improvement of the system of legal awareness-raising and promoting a culture of legality in society, draws attention to the need to communicate to the population the essence and meaning of the laws that are adopted and to foster the ability of citizens to apply them in their everyday life. A blueprint for enhancing a culture of legality in society and the road map for its implementation have been approved, and the Ministry of Justice has been designated as the coordinating body in this area.

282. By a presidential decree of 9 January 2019, the national legal Internet portal Advice.uz was created, on which legal information may be obtained by means of a special online consultancy service, and by a decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of 6 September 2019, the non-governmental organization Madad (Assistance) was created, which provides online free legal assistance to the population.

283. The adoption by the General Assembly of a resolution on education and religious tolerance, on an initiative launched by the President of Uzbekistan at the seventy-second session of the United Nations General Assembly, was a landmark event in the domain of religious education. In particular, the law enforcement agencies, together with public and religious organizations, have implemented a number of measures related to early prevention among the population, in particular young people, and to preventing citizens from falling under the spell of terrorist and extremist organizations. The work in this sphere was carried out in accordance with the principle of combating ignorance with enlightenment.

284. In particular, over the period from 2020 to 2022, 19,187 awareness-raising and prevention activities were carried out (6,604 in 2020, 8,483 in 2021 and 4,100 in 2022), of which 6,974 were related to terrorism and extremism (1,873 in 2020, 2,887 in 2021 and 2,214 in 2022). During those events, 1,083 handouts (booklets, brochures, and so forth) were provided to participants (719 in 2020, 285 in 2021 and 79 in 2022) and 437 educational videos were screened (201 in 2020, 169 in 2021 and 67 in 2022).

285. In March 2020, a project on promoting cross-border multilateral dialogue for tolerance and peace in Central Asia was launched. The project, funded by the European Union, is implemented by a consortium led by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation together with three national partners – the Yuksalish nationwide movement of Uzbekistan, the BIOM environmental movement of Kyrgyzstan) and the Tajik non-governmental organization Gender and Development. The project aims to raise and strengthen the capacity of local civil society institutions, in particular those of young people, to promote cross-border dialogue on strengthening friendship, inter-ethnic harmony, ethnic and religious tolerance, and on preventing radicalism and extremist manifestations in the border regions of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. One of the platforms for dialogue was the Centre for Friendship, Inter-Ethnic Harmony and Tolerance, established at Fergana State University in February 2021.

286. Tashkent State University of Law is attended by members of 16 peoples living in Uzbekistan (Azerbaijanis, Koreans, Russians, Tajiks, Tatars, Turks, Turkmen and others). The University's Department of International Law and Human Rights has developed a module on human rights for second-year students in the Faculty of International Law and Comparative Jurisprudence, within the framework of which the human rights of ethnic groups are studied separately, including migrants, refugees, foreign nationals and stateless persons, along with such issues as combating torture and discrimination, the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action.

287. The Department of International Law and Human Rights of Tashkent State University of Law periodically prepares analytical information on accession by Uzbekistan to international treaties and also makes proposals for national legislation. In particular, the department analysed the advisability for Uzbekistan of acceding to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons.

288. The study of international legal instruments on racial discrimination is a priority at the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs; their content is brought to the attention of students and cadets in lectures and seminars and in distance education courses on international law.

289. Advanced training courses have been organized at the Academy of Public Administration attached to the Office of the President for the staff of State and voluntary organizations working in the area of inter-ethnic relations.

290. Since the 2019/20 academic year, higher education institutions have launched bachelor's degree courses in anthropology and ethnology. In order to involve specialists in ethnology and anthropology in the study of inter-ethnic relations through applied ethnographic research, an applied ethnology laboratory was set up at the National University of Uzbekistan in May 2020, and a chair in anthropology and ethnology was instituted in August 2020.

291. A number of publications on issues of inter-ethnic harmony in Uzbekistan were issued over the period 2020–2022: there were 290 such publications in 2020, 406 in 2021 and 133 in 2022. An album entitled *Uzbekistan – Our Shared Home* has been published in Uzbek, Russian and English on the work carried out in the area of inter-ethnic relations and the activities of the Committee and of the ethnic cultural centres and friendship societies, and a magazine entitled *O'zbekiston* has been launched, to be published four times a year with a circulation of 1,000 copies.

292. An ethno-religious atlas of Uzbekistan has been developed, containing information on the composition of the population, population dynamics and the geographical location of ethnic groups and religious organizations.

293. In order to implement the comprehensive measures planned by internal affairs bodies in the area of public order protection, prevention of offences and combating crime, and to ensure that the population is kept promptly informed about the prevailing situation in the country, the press services of the internal affairs agencies organized a total of 154,875 media announcements (6,989 videos and video clips) in 2021, which is 17 per cent more than those (132,275) in the same period in 2020. Of these, 14,100 were broadcast on television, 7,031 on the radio, 4,951 published in newspapers and magazines and 128,793 posted on the Internet.

294. In order to ensure the openness and accountability of the activities of internal affairs agencies, 602 events (briefings, press conferences, press tours and others) were held in 2021, with the participation of senior officers of the main departments and directorates, and 2,350 media appearances were organized.

295. The activities of the Ombudsman, including those relating to discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion and social origin were covered in the media: in 2020, there were 85 such reports, of which 12 were on television, 3 on the radio, 10 in newspapers and magazines, and 60 on Internet sites; in 2021, there were 1,326, of which 211 were on television, 91 on the radio, 52 in newspapers and magazines, 796 on Internet sites and 172 on the messaging service Telegram; in the first half of 2022, there were 585, of which 87 were on television, 102 on the radio, 13 in newspapers, 231 on websites and 152 on Telegram.

296. The Committee for Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries, together with ethnic cultural centres and other partners, has held more than 28,000 events of various kinds at the national level to ensure the implementation of the Uzbek State policy blueprint in the domain of inter-ethnic relations, and the widespread celebration of State and national holidays such as Nowruz, the Day of Remembrance and Honour on 9 May, Independence Day, the Day of Friendship of Peoples on 30 July, and the Day of Tolerance on 16 November, with an audience of some 6 million people. A total of 1,819 scientific and practical conferences and seminars, 4,048 round tables, 2,878 competitions and exhibitions, 1,063 forums and festivals, 19 international conferences and other cultural and educational events have been organized.

297. The Vatandoshlar public fund, organized pursuant to a presidential decree of 11 August 2021, has set up practical arrangements to further rally Uzbek compatriots living



abroad around their historical homeland, and for the support of Uzbeks living abroad and the public associations that they have created. In order to develop friendly ties with foreign countries and Uzbeks residing abroad, some 2,500 online and offline meetings, cultural and educational events, conferences, forums, round tables and gatherings have been held jointly with compatriots abroad, partner organizations and voluntary associations in Uzbekistan.

298. Friendship societies and ethnic and cultural centres established in the country to strengthen inter-ethnic relations and friendship between peoples have organized meetings and discussions with the population: 54 in 2020, 46 in 2021 and 21 in 2022, and have broadcast statements in the media, in particular on central television: 43 in 2020, 58 in 2021 and 31 in the first months of 2022.

299. Issues related to implementation of the Uzbek policy on inter-ethnic relations receive regular coverage in the media – on television and in radio broadcasts, on the Internet, in films and in publications in newspapers, magazines, books and other outlets. The many materials on this topic included the following: 658 posts, 209 reposts, 7,574 reactions (likes and other emojis), 220 articles, 1,845 mentions on television and radio, 607 print items, total of 2,173 comments, 1.9 million views.

300. Issues of countering the spread of notions of extremism, xenophobia, national exceptionalism and other views alien to society are publicized and widely discussed in the media, with the participation of relevant government agencies, non-governmental organizations, ethnic cultural centres and media representatives. The materials on this topic included the following: 485 posts, 142 reposts, 5,694 reactions (likes and other emojis), 68 articles, 102 mentions on television and radio, 448 print items, total of 1,878 comments, 1.6 million views.

301. The national television channels *Mening Yurtim*, *Yoshlar*, *Mahalla* and others broadcast the programmes *Mening ovozim* (My voice), *Nuqtai nazar* (Point of view) and *Otalar so'zi-aqilning so'zi* (the word of the fathers is the word of the mind), in which, with the involvement of relevant specialists and experts, discussions are held on issues related to upgrading the spiritual and moral nurturing of young people and explaining to citizens the true nature of the pernicious activities of extremist and terrorist groups.

302. The editorial office of the *Dustlik* information and educational programmes which are broadcast on the Uzbekiston television channel is working to promote the language, customs and traditions of the peoples and ethnic groups of Uzbekistan and to provide information about them in foreign languages, including the languages of the various nationalities living in the country. These programmes include: *Tarim* (in Uighur), *Chansen* (in Korean), *O'zbekiston – umumiy uyimiz* (in Uzbek), *Diydar* (in Kazakh), *Ranginkamon* (in Tajik) and *Shanarak* (in Karakalpak).

303. In compliance with the provisions of paragraph 8 of the presidential decree on measures to further develop the Uzbek language and improve language policy in the country, and the road map and programme for its implementation over the period 2020–2022, ratified on 20 October 2020, a series of programmes is being broadcast with titles such as *Respect for the language*, *Communicating in our native language*, along with others such as *Madaniyat va ma'rifat* (Culture and enlightenment), *Qoraqalpog'iston*, *Sirdaryo* and *Samarqand*. The State television and radio channels organize programmes for the teaching of Uzbek and the mother tongues of ethnic groups living in the country.

## Recommendation 24

304. The question of ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families is under consideration in Uzbekistan. A study of the Convention has led to the identification of factors preventing Uzbekistan from acceding to this Convention: since the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Korea and certain European countries, which are the main countries where Uzbek citizens work, have not ratified this Convention, the application of the Convention in these countries is not yet possible. The Convention establishes a number of rules intended to ensure that migrant workers enjoy equal rights with nationals of the State

of contractual employment in the following areas: access to education, vocational guidance services and employment; provision of housing; social and medical services; participation in relevant programmes, and others. Accession to this Convention will require the development of national legislation on labour migration and the upgrading of national mechanisms regulating labour migration.

305. In this connection, the Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, in collaboration with other government agencies, prepared an opinion, considered by the Cabinet of Ministers, which concluded that it was premature for Uzbekistan to ratify the Convention. In considering the advisability of acceding to the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the State authorities noted that the Convention defines the term “domestic worker” and provides for a mandatory minimum of legal guarantees for this category of persons – nationals of States parties and migrants; its provisions are aimed at preventing the forced labour exploitation of domestic workers, which means that ILO Convention No. 189 is of great interest to Uzbekistan and requires the necessary preparatory work for its ratification.

### **Recommendation 25**

306. Uzbekistan has considered the advisability of ratification by parliament of the amendment to article 8, paragraph 6, of the Convention. The Supreme Court, the Office of the Procurator General, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Security Service, the Ministry of Finance, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Institute for Legislative Problems and Parliamentary Studies of the Legislative Chamber took part in the study of this issue and concluded that accession by Uzbekistan to this amendment would not impose any additional obligations on the country to improve its legislation and is not contrary to its national interests.

### **Recommendation 26**

307. Uzbekistan had taken steps to study the question of its accession to article 14 of the Convention on the acceptance and consideration of individual complaints by the Committee. The National Centre for Human Rights studied the experience of other countries on this issue and a memorandum on an analysis of the situation in this area was circulated on 17 March 2022 to a number of competent authorities. A round table was then held with these representatives on 26 May 2022 to discuss the conclusions of the ministries and departments concerned on the advisability of accession to article 14 of the Convention for the purpose of recognizing the competence of the Committee for the consideration of individual complaints. A consolidated expert opinion was adopted in the form of a conclusion, that accession to article 14 of the Convention would take place after the adoption of the Equality and Non-Discrimination Act.

### **Recommendation 27**

308. As part of the follow-up to the Committee's recommendation on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, Uzbekistan has held events on these international instruments. For the first time in the country's history, to mark the twentieth anniversary of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, in 2021, with the support of the OSCE Project Coordinator, these instruments were translated into the State language, published in Uzbek and Russian and distributed to ethnic cultural centres and State bodies dealing with inter-ethnic relations.

309. In addition, on 29 June 2021 a round table was held at the National University of Uzbekistan on implementation of the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action in Uzbekistan. Following their discussions at the round table, the participants recommended the development of a national action plan for the implementation of the Durban Declaration and Action Plan in Uzbekistan based on the study of foreign experience in this area. In particular,

the experience of Spain, whose national plan of action is a national strategy to combat racism and xenophobia, and the experience of Argentina and Brazil, whose plans reflect a public policy to protect the rights of each ethnic group that has been the target of discrimination, were deemed useful. With the assistance of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the OHCHR publication *Developing National Action Plans against Racial Discrimination: A Practical Guide* has been obtained and forwarded to the Committee for Inter-Ethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries.

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