



# International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

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## Human Rights Committee

### 114th session

#### Summary record (partial)\* of the 3180th meeting

Held at the Palais Wilson, Geneva, on Thursday, 9 July 2015, at 3 p.m.

*Chairperson:* Mr. Salvioli

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Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant  
(continued)

*Fourth periodic report of Uzbekistan (continued)*

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\* No summary record was prepared for the rest of the meeting.

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*The discussion covered in the summary record began at 3.05 p.m.*

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 40 of the Covenant**  
(continued)

*Fourth periodic report of Uzbekistan (continued) (CCPR/C/UZB/4;  
CCPR/C/UZB/Q/4 and Add.1)*

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the members of the delegation of Uzbekistan took places at the Committee table.*
2. **Ms. Muratova** (Uzbekistan) said that her Government was making continuous efforts to ensure the best possible working conditions for the media and that a number of laws had been adopted to, inter alia, further democratize the mass media and ensure transparency within that sector. As at 1 June 2015, there were about 1,400 registered media outlets in the country, more than half of which were non-State entities. The number of Internet-based media outlets had doubled in recent years, and more than 95 per cent of those were non-State entities. There were some 11 million Internet users in the country. The State had made major investments in the development of mass media, including by providing support to independent media outlets. Journalists had the right to collect information and conduct research, and they enjoyed personal safety guarantees in the performance of their duties. They could not be punished for criticizing the Government.
3. As at 1 April 2015, there were 27 foreign media outlets accredited with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including the BBC World Service and Xinhua News Agency. An independent observatory monitored articles that were critical of the Government, and the number of such articles published in the regional press had increased from about 750 in 2012 to about 2,500 in 2014. In 90 per cent of cases, the State authorities had issued a response to those articles in the State-run media. The radio and television media made broadcasts in 15 different languages spoken by the linguistic minorities in the country.
4. Discrimination was prohibited, including in times of public emergency. A bill on states of emergency was currently being discussed in consultation with national and international experts and in the light of article 4 of the Covenant. When adopted, the bill would strengthen the legislative framework for protecting the rights of citizens during states of emergency.
5. **Mr. Jasimov** (Uzbekistan) said that torture was unambiguously prohibited in Uzbek law, including in the Constitution and in the Criminal Code. While there had been cases of officials violating that prohibition, the Government was working to establish mechanisms to combat torture. In all places of detention there were two post boxes where detainees could submit complaints directly to the Office of the Ombudsman or to the Procurator's Office. Pursuant to the Procurator's Office Act, procurators made frequent visits to places of pretrial detention, which also helped to prevent torture.
6. The courts were not permitted to accept evidence or confessions obtained through torture. Recognizing that national legislation was not perfect, his Government was open to future dialogue with the Committee on the subject. It was important, however, not to destroy the whole architecture of legislation in the effort to implement the State's obligations under the Covenant.
7. About 340 international observers had come to Uzbekistan to oversee the 2015 presidential elections, and none had raised the issue of the number of terms of office served by the President. A number of constitutional amendments had been adopted over the past decade, which had significantly reduced presidential powers and had reduced the length of presidential terms of office from seven to five years. It was the right of all sovereign States to establish such terms of office. His Government was of the view that, given the

circumstances, in the recent elections President Karimov had been standing for election to his first five-year term of office.

8. The action taken to tackle corruption in the agricultural sector was similar to that taken in other sectors of the economy. Special anti-corruption units had been established in the procuratorial bodies. In addition, a number of laws, such as the Act on Transparency in the Work of State and Government Bodies, had been enacted to address circumstances that might facilitate corruption. In addition, the Act concerning the Authorization of Commercial Enterprises enabled entrepreneurs to obtain permits without any personal contact with civil servants. The Office of the Procurator-General investigated cases of corruption and the courts handed down sentences against convicted offenders. In the past, harsher penalties had been imposed on officials who accepted bribes than on the persons who had offered the bribes. The law had been amended to ensure equal criminal liability for offenders. On the other hand, if the persons who offered bribes had been compelled to do so, they could avoid punishment if they disclosed the act of extortion within one month.

9. **Ms. Yakubjanova** (Uzbekistan) said that 124,839 foreign citizens and stateless persons were permanently resident in Uzbekistan in March 2015; 860 had been granted permanent residency in 2014.

10. Article 18 of the Constitution prohibited discrimination on grounds of sex, race, nationality, language, religion, social origin, convictions, and individual and social status. Although the word “colour” was not included, discrimination on that ground was outlawed by the reference to race. More than 700 laws contained provisions prohibiting discrimination. A National Plan of Action to implement the recommendations of the Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review Working Group had been adopted. One of the recommendations concerned the introduction into labour legislation of a definition of the concepts of direct and indirect discrimination in the workplace. The issue was currently being considered, specifically in connection with discrimination against women, and there were plans to hold an international conference on the subject.

11. Women participated in all sectors of political, cultural and social life. They accounted for 16 per cent of members of the Legislative Chamber of Parliament and more than 17 per cent of members of the Senate. Women occupied 14.3 per cent of leadership positions in executive bodies. They occupied the post of deputy chief administrator in 14 provincial administrations and accounted for 17.1 per cent of elected and appointed local authorities. At the international level, women accounted for 8.2 per cent of employees of overseas agencies and 3 per cent of embassy employees. In addition, more than 500 women’s NGOs were promoting gender equality.

12. All 130 ethnic groups had equal access to free primary and secondary education. There were 9,779 general education schools in Uzbekistan, of which 246 conducted lessons in Karakalpak, 110 in Russian, 172 in Tajik, 207 in Kazakh, 28 in Kyrgyz and 34 in Turkmen. About 1.7 million students were enrolled in secondary-level vocational education. They included 1,533,151 Uzbeks, 33,988 Karakalpaks, 46,415 Tajiks, 31,367 Kazakhs, 18,200 Russians, 9,328 Kyrgyz, 6,230 Tatars, 630 Armenians and 76 Roma. Some 253,412 students were enrolled in institutions of higher education. Karakalpaks accounted for 3.9 per cent, Russians for 2 per cent, Tajiks for 1.9 per cent, Kazakhs for 1.8 per cent, Tatars for 1.0 per cent, Koreans for 0.6 per cent, Kyrgyz for 0.3 per cent, Turkmen for 0.2 per cent, Jews for 0.02 per cent and Uighurs for 0.1 per cent. Lectures at institutions of higher education were also delivered in a whole range of languages.

13. **Mr. Jasimov** (Uzbekistan) said that the ethnic groups’ identity, languages, traditions and cultures were preserved by more than 40 cultural centres.

14. **Ms. Yakubjanova** (Uzbekistan) said that the United Nations Population Fund and international experts were helping to finalize a draft law on equality of opportunity for men and women.

15. With regard to same-sex marriage and article 120 of the Criminal Code concerning sexual intercourse between men, Uzbekistan did not intend to legalize same-sex marriage or to repeal article 120 because it shared the position of Muslim countries concerning LGBT issues. More than 28 million of the country's population of over 31 million were Muslims.

16. **The Chairperson** said that the Committee had not enquired about the legalization of same-sex marriage. It had focused on article 120 of the Criminal Code because it criminalized sexual relations between persons of the same gender and therefore breached the principle of non-discrimination set forth in the Uzbek Constitution.

17. **Mr. Jasimov** (Uzbekistan) said that the delegation had taken note of the questions concerning specific individuals and had studied the reports from civil society organizations. However, it required further information regarding some of the family names mentioned. It would then forward the questions to the Office of the Procurator-General and transmit written replies to the Committee within the next two days.

18. He reassured the Committee that its concluding observations would be disseminated to relevant bodies and that every effort would be made to implement the recommendations.

*The discussion covered in the summary record ended at 4 p.m.*