

**PECULIARITIES OF THE CONCEPTS OF SECULAR AND SOCIAL STATE IN THE  
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**Annotation:** This article discusses the unique characteristics of the concepts of "social state" and "secular state" as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It highlights the state's commitment to social justice, equitable distribution of wealth, poverty reduction, and creation of equal opportunities. The secular state model emphasizes freedom of conscience and the separation of religion from the state. Additionally, the article analyzes constitutional reforms, the "Uzbekistan – 2030" development strategy, and advancements in the national social protection system.

**Keywords:** Social state, Secular state, Constitution, Human rights, Social justice, Uzbekistan 2030 Strategy, Democracy, Public administration.

**Аннотация:** В данной статье рассматриваются особенности понятий «социальное государство» и «светское государство» в Конституции Республики Узбекистан. Подчеркивается важность справедливого распределения ресурсов, обеспечения достойной жизни граждан, сокращения бедности и создания равных возможностей. В контексте светского государства раскрывается принцип свободы совести и отделения религии от государства. Также анализируются реформы, стратегия «Узбекистан – 2030» и развитие системы социальной защиты в стране.

**Ключевые слова:** Социальное государство, Конституция, Права человека, Равные возможности, Религия и государство.

**Annotatsiya:** Mazkur maqolada O'zbekiston Respublikasining Konstitutsiyasida ifoda etilgan "ijtimoiy davlat" va "dunyoviy davlat" tushunchalari yoritilgan. Ijtimoiy davlat sifatida O'zbekiston aholisi farovonligini ta'minlash, adolatli iqtisodiy va ijtimoiy siyosat yuritish, fuqarolarga teng imkoniyatlar yaratish va kambag'allikni kamaytirish kabi tamoyillar muhim o'rin egallaydi. Dunyoviylik tamoyili doirasida esa diniy erkinlik, vijdon erkinligi va davlatning dinlardan ajratilganligi asosiy e'tiborga olingan. Maqolada O'zbekistonning 2030-yilga qadar bo'lgan taraqqiyot strategiyasi, ijtimoiy himoya tizimi va konstitutsiyaviy islohotlar tahlil qilingan.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Ijtimoiy davlat, dunyoviy davlat, konstitutsiya, vijdon erkinligi, inson huquqlari, Ijtimoiy adolat, davlat boshqaruvi, fuqarolik jamiyati.

In today's Uzbekistan, a period marked by dynamic transformations, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, during a meeting with members of the Constitutional Commission on June 20, 2022, proposed the idea of consolidating the principle of "Uzbekistan – a social state" in the Constitution. This idea was further reinforced in the President's Address to the Oliy Majlis and the people of Uzbekistan, where the establishment of a social state was identified as a key strategic direction.

In essence, a **social state** is a model of governance based on the principles of **social justice**, aimed at ensuring a decent standard of living for all citizens, reducing social inequality, and supporting low-income families through the fair distribution of material resources. This model is currently in practice in many developed nations, such as the United Kingdom, France, Sweden, Italy, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Austria, Greece, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United States.

According to President Mirziyoyev: "A social state is, above all, about creating equal opportunities for realizing human potential, ensuring decent living conditions, and reducing poverty." Key features of a social state include:

- a) Provision of minimum living standards and access to essential consumer goods for those in need;
- b) Guaranteeing adequate wages, employment, and safe working conditions for individuals and their families;
- c) Protection from unemployment, access to quality education and medical care, equal opportunities for all, and comprehensive support for families, children, women, the elderly, and persons with disabilities;
- d) Ensuring access to essential resources such as clean drinking water, natural gas, electricity, and transportation, while prohibiting forced labor;
- e) Most importantly, no one should be left behind or abandoned with their problems.

In his book "**The Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan**", President Mirziyoyev elaborates on the key priorities of the "Uzbekistan – social state" principle, emphasizing the creation of decent living conditions, modern infrastructure, high-quality healthcare and education, social protection, and a healthy ecological environment for the population, while also strengthening the economy and promoting sustainable development in various sectors.

The support of 90.21% of citizens in favor of the new edition of the Constitution during the **referendum on April 30, 2023**, is commendable, as it reflects the national will to uphold human dignity. As the President noted,

"Human dignity means ensuring peace and security for every citizen, guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms, quality education, professional healthcare, targeted social protection, a healthy ecological environment, and decent living conditions through modern infrastructure."

A social state is also one that guarantees a **minimum level of well-being** to its citizens during times of market uncertainty, pandemics, or economic crises. Its foremost goal is to develop socio-economic and political relations that ensure the **rights and freedoms of citizens**, as well as improve the legal guarantees for governance.

The "**Uzbekistan–2030**" strategy also pays special attention to social protection and the safeguarding of human rights. One of its core ideas is to create a comprehensive social protection system that meets both the public's expectations and international standards, covering all **100 priority national development goals** of Uzbekistan.

This includes:

1. **Radical reform of professional social services**, ensuring full coverage of the needy through the "Unified Register of Social Protection" information system, which identifies low-income families and provides targeted assistance.
2. **Comprehensive support for the elderly**, with annual organized trips to historical and sacred places for over a million seniors. The scope of activities under these support programs is expected to increase by at least 30%.

3. **Ensuring stable employment** for the working population, including youth and persons with disabilities, aiming to reduce unemployment to 7%.

4. **Implementation of a guaranteed social insurance system** for women, including maternity leave, temporary incapacity, and insurance payments in case of workplace accidents or company closures.

Additionally, the **draft Presidential Decree** regarding the **implementation of the “Uzbekistan–2030” strategy during the “Year of Supporting Youth and Business”** is of great significance. This decree outlines systematic measures to bring about **positive changes in people's daily lives** and improve **public-oriented governance**, emphasizing the need for continued reforms in 2024.

One of the most important aspects of a social state is the practical implementation of the principle:

"The state agencies must serve the people, not the other way around,"

as stated by the President—an essential criterion of **social justice** in governance.

#### **Secularism in Uzbekistan's Constitution**

After gaining independence, **Uzbekistan declared itself a secular state**, meaning religion is separated from the state. However, religious people were **not excluded** from society, and thus, the attitude toward all religions, particularly Islam, underwent fundamental transformation. The relationship between the state and religious organizations was formalized on the basis of **freedom of conscience**.

This aligns with **international human rights standards**, including the UN Charter and the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948**. Thus, not only is **peaceful coexistence between religion and secular governance** possible, but religion can also contribute to **national development**.

The **Constitution of Uzbekistan** reflects this secular approach and meets the **legal standards of developed nations**. Article 35 of the new edition of the Constitution states:

“Everyone shall have freedom of conscience. Everyone has the right to profess any religion or not to profess any religion. It is not allowed to impose religious beliefs forcibly.”

This article reflects key principles of secularism:

- Respect for religious feelings;
- Recognition of religion as a **private matter** of individuals or their associations;
- Equal rights for religious and non-religious citizens, and protection from persecution;
- Cooperation with religious organizations to **promote moral and ethical values**;
- Prohibition of using religion for **destructive purposes**.

Uzbekistan's secularism and religious tolerance are based on the **principle of freedom of conscience**, enshrined in the Constitution and laws of the Republic. Notably, in **1991**, the Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations" was adopted. After amendments in 1993 and enforcement until 1998, the law was **completely revised** and a new version was adopted on **May 1, 1998**.

Further, the **new version** of this law was adopted on **July 6, 2021**, under **Law No. O'RQ-699**. Article 5 of the law ensures "freedom of conscience within the framework of a secular state system," while Article 7 declares:

“Religion is separated from the state in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Religious organizations and state bodies operate independently from one another.”

This clearly affirms **Uzbekistan's commitment to secularism** and religious neutrality in governance.

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