



CRIME FIGHTING ISSUES IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract: *Combating offenses and crime in Uzbekistan is of great importance in ensuring the country's social stability, protecting citizens' security, and strengthening the rule of law. The measures being implemented in this regard encompass not only strengthening the legal framework but also enhancing legal culture in society, preventing crime, introducing modern technologies, and applying international best practices in practice.*

Keywords: *Offense, crime, crime prevention, legal reforms, public safety, rule of law, law enforcement agencies, prevention, penal system, social prevention.*

Uzbekistan is aggressively tackling rising crime, particularly cybercrime (42% of reported cases in early 2025) and drug trafficking, by investing in AI, surveillance, and law enforcement reforms. Key efforts include, increasing salaries for police, enhancing digitalization, and improving neighborhood-level crime prevention. Challenges include high youth involvement in offenses, persistent corruption, and need for improved, independent, and rights-based investigation procedures.

Key Crime Fighting Issues in Uzbekistan

- **Rise of Cybercrime & Digital Fraud:** Cybercrime has become a critical issue, with over 58,800 cases recorded in 2024, mostly involving fraudulent access to bank cards. A new, dedicated cybercrime department within the Ministry of Internal Affairs is being established to combat this.
- **Technological Upgrades in Policing:** The government is pushing for the use of artificial intelligence and extensive surveillance cameras to detect drug distribution networks and other criminal activities.



- **Preventive Infrastructure & Staffing:** Reforms are focusing on strengthening local "prevention inspectors" with higher salaries, better housing, and improved training to combat crime at the neighborhood level.
- **Youth & Unemployment Factors:** A significant portion of crime is committed by youth and unemployed individuals, with 2024 data highlighting that 59.4% of preventable crimes were committed by youth.
- **Combating Organized Crime:** The government is developing its first National Strategy Against Organized Crime in collaboration with the UNODC to improve interagency cooperation.
- **Human Rights & Legal System Integrity:** Concerns remain regarding the independence of the judiciary, allegations of torture or mistreatment during investigations, and the need for greater transparency.
- **"Safe Neighborhood" Initiatives:** Despite improvements, "red zones" (areas with high crime rates) are still being addressed through increased patrols and community policing, resulting in 30.6% of neighborhoods reporting no crime.

It discusses the measures taken to ensure the rule of law, improve the law enforcement system, and prevent crimes in the country. Additionally, it highlights the significance of increasing legal awareness, reforming the penal system, and strengthening preventive measures against crime to ensure public safety.

The role of historical science is not only to study the past but also to draw lessons from its experience to solve contemporary issues. The history of combating offenses and crime in Uzbekistan should be studied as one of the crucial periods in ensuring social stability. This article examines the distinctive features of historical periods, past experiences, and their connection with ongoing reforms.

A decree issued by the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, on August 25, 1991, on the eve of independence, enabled the country to take full control of the crime situation and implement concrete independent measures for stabilization. Based on this document, considering the prevailing circumstances



and in order to protect the interests of the republic, the following measures were taken:

- The Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security Committee of the republic were placed under the legal jurisdiction of the Uzbek SSR;
- The primary duties of these structures were defined as ensuring the security of the republic and its citizens and protecting their interests;
- The internal troops under the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs stationed in the republic were placed under the direct subordination of the President of the Uzbek SSR;
- It was proposed to draft and present for discussion the law on the state independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan;
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Security Committee, the prosecutor's office, and judicial bodies of the Uzbek SSR, as well as internal troops stationed in the republic, units of the Turkestan Military District, and military forces, were freed from party influence. [1. 370371].

The preventive measures and actions taken to combat offenses and crime mentioned above yielded certain positive results in 1991. In particular, compared to 1990, a decline was observed in some types of crimes in the region: cases of intentional grievous bodily harm decreased from 5 to 2 (in Bukhara, from 3 to 2); cases of theft of state property were reduced by half, from 78 to 39 (from 23 to 18); and cases of vehicle theft decreased from 5 to 3.

At the same time, the number of rape crimes increased from 5 to 8, although in Bukhara region, this figure decreased from 4 to 2. Additionally, crimes committed under the influence of alcohol also significantly decreased (from 5 to 1)

However, even after the declaration of independence, the criminal situation in the republic could not be fully stabilized. During this period, the administrative system in both Tashkent and the regions, as well as in sectors such as production, distribution, and agencies responsible for state and public security, continued to



operate in line with the policies of the former Soviet Union. This circumstance also affected the process of combating crime, making it impossible to halt the rise in crime rates in the republic during 1991–1992. At the same time, some positive changes were observed. While the crime growth rate in the republic was 4.4% in 1990, this figure decreased to 0.5% in 1991. This indicates that the measures taken against crime had partially achieved their intended goals. However, much work remained to be done in strengthening law and order and addressing the socio-economic factors contributing to crime, which were among the state's key policy priorities

It should be noted that despite the aforementioned difficulties, the republic managed to halt the growth of some of the most serious crimes and even reduce their numbers during the first year of independence. Specifically, cases of severe bodily harm decreased by 6% in 1991 compared to 1990 and by 18.3% in 1992. Similarly, rape cases declined by 10.5% in 1991 and 17% in 1992. Robbery cases dropped by 15.2% in 1991 and 0.8% in 1992, while looting cases decreased by 5.7% and 6.3%, respectively. However, although homicide cases had initially decreased by 9.7% in 1991 compared to 1990, they rose by 1.7% in 1992

In 1992, the collapse of the former Soviet Union caused a number of objective difficulties in all spheres of social life in its former republics, including Uzbekistan. Economic instability, the mismatch between existing laws and contemporary demands, as well as social and moral crises, led to an increase in certain types of crimes in the republic. At the same time, problems and shortcomings in law enforcement agencies' efforts to combat crime contributed to a sharp rise in organized crime and the overall crime rate. As a result, in 1992, the crime rate increased by 5.6% compared to 1991

During this period, juvenile crime rates also increased. In 1991 and the first two months of 1992, contract crimes accounted for 73.9% and 82.4%, respectively (78.4% and 68.7% in the



Bukhara region). Additionally, crimes related to the theft of citizens' personal property remained at a high level, making up 68.1% and 48.6% (63.6% and 53.1% in the Bukhara region), respectively

During the period under review, not only did the number of crimes increase, but the number of adults involved in criminal activities also grew. For instance, in 1991, crimes committed by adults rose from 302 to 442 individuals, marking a 40.3% increase. In the first two months of 1992, this figure increased from 79 to 84 individuals, reflecting a 6.3% rise. The involvement of school students in crimes also increased, rising from 97 individuals in 1991 to 115. Similarly, crime rates among vocational school students grew from 106 to 129 individuals (and from 23 to 27 in 1992)

In 1993, the signing of the Resolution "On Combating Organized Crime" in the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as the approval of the Cabinet of Ministers' "Temporary Regulation on the Procedure for Service in Internal Affairs Bodies," marked a new chapter in maintaining public order and combating crime in the country. According to the Temporary Regulation, the composition of ordinary and managerial personnel in internal affairs bodies, as well as the procedures for service, were defined. Additionally, the Crime Prevention Department was established within the internal affairs system.

On April 12, 1999, the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted the resolution "On the Concept of Maintaining Public Order and Ensuring Security in Tashkent City." This resolution was aimed at preserving peace and stability, protecting national independence, and implementing fundamental reforms in the system of public order and security. Based on this concept and at the initiative of the First President of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov, a series of reforms were carried out to establish a new system ensuring public order and security in society.

Based on this decision, the main forces and resources of the internal affairs bodies were directed towards residential areas where the population lives. In 2001, police support points were established in all 444 neighborhoods of Tashkent, and the



activities of nearly 1,200 prevention inspectors were organized. According to the decision, the patrol-post and prevention service system of the internal affairs bodies in Tashkent was fundamentally and systematically revised. For the first time in the country's history, police support points were established in Tashkent, and one prevention inspector began serving every 2,500–3,000 people. The measures taken soon began to yield positive results.

The adoption of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On the Prevention of Offenses" on May 14, 2014, contributed to further strengthening the liberalization and democratization of the activities of internal affairs bodies in the field of offense prevention. It also aimed at organizing more effective cooperation in crime prevention, increasing the participation of civil society institutions in this area, and enhancing the effectiveness of public oversight in offense prevention.

Throughout 2015, significant efforts were made in Uzbekistan to ensure the rule of law, strengthen legality, protect citizens' rights and freedoms, safeguard the legally protected interests of society and the state, and prevent offenses. As part of these initiatives, measures were taken to ensure the legal protection and moral-ethical education of minors, as well as to shield them from the influence of religious extremism. Specifically: 7,760 legal awareness events were conducted, including 923 in mass media; Over 22,900 prosecutorial oversight documents were implemented; 28,550 individuals were held disciplinarily and administratively liable. As a result of these measures, juvenile delinquency rates decreased. Additionally, to prevent early marriages, ensure medical examinations for girls, and promote a healthy lifestyle, over 3,500 awareness campaigns were held, leading to the prevention of more than 540 early marriages.

In 2016, the prosecution authorities of Uzbekistan carried out significant work to prevent crime and offenses. Special attention was given to strengthening interagency cooperation, coordinating investigative and operational search activities. To achieve these goals: 1,008 coordination meetings were held among law enforcement agencies; 62 citizens were rewarded for their active participation in



upholding the law and assisting in apprehending criminals; Over 68,000 awareness campaigns were conducted to prevent crime and offenses [9]. Special attention was given to ensuring legality in the preliminary investigation of criminal cases by prosecution authorities. In particular, in 2017, prosecution bodies conducted investigative actions on 13,389 (17,174) criminal cases, which is 3,785 cases (22%) fewer than the same period of the previous year. Out of these, 8,027 (11,310) cases involving 12,240 (19,497) individuals were sent to court, marking a 3,283-case (29%) decrease compared to the previous year. During the same period, the investigation of 1,088 (1,372) cases was suspended, including: 739 (808) cases under Article 364, Part 1, Clause 1 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) due to the absence of an identified suspect, 328 (539) cases under Clause 2 of the same article due to the unknown whereabouts of the suspect. These suspended cases accounted for 8% (7%) of the total investigated cases. Additionally, during the reporting period, the investigation of 1,083 (406) cases was closed, including: 616 (263) cases under Article 83 of the CPC (grounds for rehabilitation), 466 (143) cases under Article 84 of the CPC (grounds for termination without resolving the issue of guilt)

In conclusion, the history of combating offenses and crime in Uzbekistan clearly demonstrates the significance of legislation in ensuring societal stability. The measures taken in each period, the challenges encountered, and the achievements attained serve as valuable lessons for the ongoing reforms today. Historical experience shows that an effective fight against offenses can be ensured through the consistent development of the legal system, the enhancement of citizens' legal awareness, and the establishment of a just legal environment in society.

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