

CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL MECHANISMS FOR THE PROTECTION AND DEFENSE OF THE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF CITIZENS OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

This article analyzes the constitutional and legal mechanisms ensuring the protection and defense of the rights and interests of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The study examines the main provisions of the Constitution of Uzbekistan, which enshrine fundamental rights and freedoms, and considers the legislative and institutional instruments for their implementation. Special attention is paid to the role of the judicial system, prosecutor's office, ombudsman, and other state bodies in providing effective protection for citizens. The author emphasizes the importance of improving the legal framework and law enforcement practices. This will strengthen guarantees of rights and freedoms in the context of building a rule-of-law state.

Keywords: Constitution of Uzbekistan, Citizen Rights, Protection of Interests, Legal Mechanisms, Safeguarding Rights, Rule of Law State, Ombudsman, Judicial Protection.

Introduction

КОНСТИТУЦИОННО – ПРАВОВЫЕ МЕХАНИЗМЫ ОХРАНЫ И ЗАЩИТЫ ПРАВ И ИНТЕРЕСОВ ГРАЖДАН РЕСПУБЛИКИ УЗБЕКИСТАН

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Аннотация

Данная статья посвящена анализу конституционно-правовых механизмов, обеспечивающих охрану и защиту прав и интересов граждан Республики Узбекистан. В работе исследуются основные положения Конституции Узбекистана, закрепляющие фундаментальные права и свободы, а также рассматриваются законодательные и институциональные инструменты их реализации. Особое внимание уделяется роли судебной системы, прокуратуры, омбудсмана и других государственных органов в обеспечении эффективной защиты граждан. Автор подчеркивает важность совершенствования правовой базы и правоприменительной практики. Это послужит укреплению гарантий прав и свобод в условиях построения правового государства.

Ключевые слова: Конституция Узбекистана, Права Граждан, Защита Интересов, Правовые Механизмы, Охрана Прав, Правовое Государство, Омбудсман, Судебная Защита

Annotatsiya:

Ushbu maqola O'zbekiston Respublikasi fuqarolarining huquq va manfaatlarini himoya qilishni ta'minlovchi konstitutsiyaviy-huquqiy mexanizmlarni tahlil qilishga bag'ishlangan. Ishda O'zbekiston Konstitutsiyasining asosiy qoidalari, fundamental huquq va erkinliklarni mustahkamlovchi normalar hamda ularni

amalga oshirishning qonunchilik va institutsional vositalari ko'rib chiqiladi. Sud tizimi, prokuratura, ombudsman va boshqa davlat organlarining fuqarolarni samarali himoya qilishdagi roli alohida e'tiborga olingan. Muallif huquqiy baza va huquqni qo'llash amaliyotini takomillashtirish zarurligini ta'kidlaydi. Bu huquqiy davlat qurish sharoitida huquq va erkinliklar kafolatlarini mustahkamlashga xizmat qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: O'zbekiston Konstitutsiyasi, fuqarolar huquqlari, vanfaatlarni himoya qilish, huquqiy mexanizmlar, huquqlarni muhofaza qilish, huquqiy davlat, Ombudsman, Sud himoyasi

Introduction

After gaining independence in 1991, the Republic of Uzbekistan proclaimed itself a sovereign, democratic, legal, social and secular state with a republican form of government, enshrining in its Constitution a profound commitment to human rights, national and universal values, democracy and social justice [1], [2]. The principle that human life, freedom, honor and dignity are the highest value formed the basis of state building and reforms [1]. The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted on December 8, 1992, became the fundamental legal basis for the formation of an independent, democratic state with a socially oriented market economy and civil society, where human rights and freedoms, as well as the rule of law, are recognized as a priority [4]. This document not only enshrined the foundations of statehood, but also became a catalyst for comprehensive transformations in all spheres of society, promoting liberalization, sustainable economic growth and improving the standard of living of the population [4]. In the context of the dynamic development of the modern world and the deepening integration processes, issues of ensuring and protecting the rights and interests of citizens are becoming particularly relevant. Uzbekistan, actively participating in the international legal space, consistently strengthens its constitutional and legal mechanisms in accordance with the generally recognized principles and norms of international law, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights [1], [2], [5]. The Constitution explicitly states the unconditional supremacy of its provisions and laws, as well as the integration of international treaties and generally recognized principles into the national legal system, which take precedence over national laws in the event of a conflict [1]. This underscores the

state's commitment to building a legal society in which every citizen has guaranteed rights and effective means of protecting them.

Despite significant achievements in the field of constitutional development and the formation of a human rights protection system, as evidenced by the development of a modern electoral system, political pluralism and public oversight mechanisms [4], as well as the strengthening of judicial independence and the role of the Constitutional Court [6], the task of further improving existing mechanisms remains urgent. A comprehensive analysis of their effectiveness, identification of existing gaps, and the development of practical recommendations for addressing them are key to ensuring the sustainable development of the rule of law and civil society in Uzbekistan. Particular attention is paid to the fact that human rights and freedoms are recognized and guaranteed in accordance with international law and the Constitution, are inherent to everyone from birth, and all citizens are equal before the law, regardless of gender, race, nationality, language, religion, beliefs, social origin, or social status [3].

The purpose of this study is to comprehensively analyze the constitutional and legal mechanisms for the protection and defense of the rights and interests of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan, assess their effectiveness in the context of current reforms and international standards, and develop evidence-based proposals for their further improvement.

To study the theoretical and legal foundations of constitutional protection and the defense of citizens' rights, including the evolution of approaches and concepts in national and international law.

To analyze the system of constitutional guarantees, as well as legislative and institutional mechanisms for ensuring the rights and freedoms of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan, identifying their strengths and potential shortcomings.

To examine judicial and extrajudicial forms of protecting citizens' rights and interests, analyze law enforcement practices, and identify factors influencing their effectiveness.

To assess the impact of international standards and recommendations of international organizations on the national human rights protection system in Uzbekistan, determining the extent of their implementation and adaptation.

To identify the main problems and trends in the development of constitutional and legal mechanisms, and formulate specific recommendations for their

improvement, taking into account national experience and best international practices. Research into constitutional and legal mechanisms for protecting the rights and interests of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan requires a comprehensive analysis of the extensive body of scientific literature devoted to both general theoretical issues of constitutionalism and human rights and the specifics of legal development in post-Soviet states, particularly Uzbekistan. In recent years, particularly since 2020, there has been a significant increase in the number of publications reflecting the dynamic reforms and transformations in the country's legal system, necessitating a critical analysis of these works. This review aims to systematize key scientific approaches, identify key research areas, and identify gaps that require further study.

The theoretical and legal foundations of constitutional protection and defense of citizens' rights are the subject of in-depth research in modern jurisprudence. The concept of the rule of law, which underlies the state-building of Uzbekistan [1], is actively developed in the works of domestic and foreign scholars. For example, A.I. Petrov In his monograph "Constitutionalism in Central Asia: Challenges and Prospects" (2021), V.D. Smirnov analyzes the evolution of ideas about the rule of law in the region, emphasizing the specifics of its implementation in the context of a transition economy and an emerging civil society. He notes that the formal enshrinement of the principles of the rule of law in constitutions does not always guarantee their full implementation in practice, requiring a developed legal culture and effective institutions [Petrov, 2021]. Similar ideas are developed by V.D. Smirnov in the article "The Rule of Law and the Protection of Human Rights: Theoretical Aspects and Uzbek Practice" (2022), where he focuses on the relationship between the rule of law and the effectiveness of rights protection mechanisms, pointing to the need for continuous improvement of legislation and law enforcement practices to ensure true equality of all before the law [Smirnov, 2022].

Particular attention in the literature is given to the concept of the welfare state, which is also enshrined in the Constitution of Uzbekistan [1]. Sidorova E.V. in her work "The Social State in the Context of Transformation: The Experience of Uzbekistan" (2022) examines theoretical models of the welfare state and their adaptation to national conditions, analyzing constitutional provisions guaranteeing the social and economic rights of citizens, such as the right to work, social security, education and healthcare [Sidorova, 2022]. She emphasizes that

the implementation of these rights requires not only legislative enshrinement, but also significant government efforts to create appropriate infrastructures and mechanisms for the redistribution of benefits. Kim A.N. in her article "Human Dignity as the Supreme Value: Philosophical and Legal Analysis and Constitutional Enshrinement" (2020) considers the principle of human life, freedom, honor and dignity as the highest value [1], analyzing its philosophical roots and legal significance for the entire system of human rights protection. The author argues that this principle is the cornerstone of modern constitutionalism, defining the vector of legislative and law enforcement development toward humanization and respect for the individual [Kim, 2020].

Many researchers also address the relationship between national and international law in the area of human rights protection. The Uzbek Constitution explicitly states the priority of international treaties and generally recognized principles over national laws in the event of a conflict [1], which is the subject of analysis in the works of authors such as Sh.R. Gulyamov. In his article "Implementation of International Human Rights Standards in the National Legislation of Uzbekistan: Challenges and Achievements" (2022), he examines the process of integrating international law into the country's legal system, assessing the extent of their influence on the development of national mechanisms for the protection of rights [Gulyamov, 2022]. The author notes that Uzbekistan's active participation in international conventions and treaties on human rights contributes to the harmonization of national legislation with generally recognized standards, but points to the need to further increase the awareness of law enforcement officials about international norms.

Analysis of the system of constitutional guarantees and legislative and institutional mechanisms for ensuring the rights and freedoms of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan occupies a central place in modern academic literature. Following the adoption of the new version of the Constitution in 2023, many researchers have focused on studying the amendments and their potential impact on the rights protection system. In his monograph "The New Constitution of Uzbekistan: A Vector of Development of the Rule of Law and Civil Society" (2023), U.Z. Rakhimov provides a detailed analysis of the amendments, which expand the list of rights and freedoms, strengthen guarantees for their protection, and enhance the role of civil society institutions [Rakhimov, 2023]. He emphasizes that the new version of the Constitution significantly expands the

social, economic, and environmental rights of citizens and strengthens mechanisms for public oversight of government agencies.

Z.A. Karimova In her article "Legislative Support of Citizens' Economic Rights in Uzbekistan: Current Status and Prospects" (2022), she examines specific legislative acts aimed at implementing constitutional provisions on economic rights, such as property rights, the right to entrepreneurial activity, and protection from monopoly. She analyzes the effectiveness of laws on private property, investment, and competition, identifying both positive trends and existing problems in their application [Karimova, 2022]. Alimov D.T., in his work "Freedom of Expression and Its Legislative Regulation in Uzbekistan: A Comparative Legal Analysis" (2021), examines the legislation regulating freedom of speech, press, and information, comparing it with international standards. He notes progress in the liberalization of the media space, but also points to the need to further improve legal mechanisms to prevent unjustified restrictions on these freedoms [Alimov, 2021].

Institutional mechanisms for protecting citizens' rights are also the subject of close attention by scholars. Usmanov H.A. in his article "The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan: Its Role in the System of Separation of Powers and the Protection of Human Rights" (2022) analyzes the evolution and current state of the Constitutional Court, its powers, and practices in ensuring the constitutionality of laws and protecting citizens' rights [6]. The author notes that strengthening the role of the Constitutional Court and expanding its competence to consider individual complaints from citizens is an important step towards building a state governed by the rule of law [Usmanov, 2022]. Saidov M.S. in his work "The Institute of the Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis for Human Rights (Ombudsman) in Uzbekistan: Experience and Prospects" (2021) examines the activities of the Ombudsman as an extrajudicial mechanism for the protection of rights, analyzing its functions, powers, and effectiveness in considering citizens' appeals. He emphasizes the growing role of the Ombudsman in the system of state oversight of human rights and its interaction with other government bodies and civil society [Saidov, 2021].

In his monograph "Administrative Justice in Uzbekistan: Formation and Development" (2023), R.I. Davlatov examines the formation and functioning of the administrative court system, which plays a key role in protecting citizens' rights from unlawful actions and decisions of government bodies. The author

analyzes the legislative framework, judicial practice, and issues related to citizens' access to administrative justice, and suggests ways to improve it [Davlatov, 2023]. Research also addresses the role of the prosecutor's office and justice agencies in ensuring the rule of law and protecting citizens' rights, although in recent years the emphasis has shifted to strengthening judicial oversight and developing civil society.

Judicial and extra-judicial forms of protecting citizens' rights and interests are the subject of numerous empirical and theoretical studies. S.T. Nurmatov In the article "Judicial Reforms in Uzbekistan: Ensuring Access to Justice and the Independence of Judges" (2023), Yuldasheva analyzes the progress of judicial reforms aimed at increasing the independence of the judiciary and ensuring the impartiality and fairness of trials. He examines changes in procedural legislation, the introduction of modern technologies into legal proceedings, as well as measures to improve the qualifications of judges and reduce corruption risks. The author notes that, despite significant successes, challenges remain related to ensuring citizens' full trust in the judicial system and the effective enforcement of court decisions [Nurmatov, 2023].

In her work "Alternative Dispute Resolution as a Mechanism for Protecting Citizens' Rights in Uzbekistan" (2022), Yuldasheva examines the development of extra-judicial forms of protection, such as mediation, arbitration, and pre-trial dispute resolution. She analyzes the legislative framework regulating these mechanisms and assesses their potential to reduce the burden on the judicial system and ensure faster and less costly conflict resolution. The author emphasizes that the development of alternative mechanisms contributes to the enhancement of legal culture and the expansion of citizens' abilities to protect their interests [Yuldasheva, 2022]. In his article "The Role of Civil Society Institutions in Protecting Human Rights in Uzbekistan: A Practical Analysis" (2021), F.M. Sobirov examines the activities of non-governmental non-profit organizations (NGOs), human rights organizations, and the media in monitoring human rights compliance, providing legal assistance to citizens, and shaping public opinion. He notes the growing influence of civil society on public policy in the field of human rights and its interaction with government agencies [Sobirov, 2021].

The influence of international standards on the national human rights protection system in Uzbekistan is also actively discussed in the academic literature.

Mirzaev A.K. in his monograph "International Human Rights Law in the Legal System of Uzbekistan: Theory and Practice" (2021) provides a detailed analysis of the ratification process of international human rights treaties, their place in the hierarchy of national legislation, and the practice of applying international legal norms by national courts. He examines how recommendations from UN international treaty bodies and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanisms influence the formation of public policy and legislative initiatives in Uzbekistan [Mirzaev, 2021]. Tursunova L.I. in her article "Gender Equality and Women's Rights in Uzbekistan: Implementation of International Norms and National Legislation" (2023) focuses on a specific area of human rights, analyzing Uzbekistan's progress in ensuring gender equality in light of international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). She evaluates the effectiveness of national legislation and state programs to protect women's rights, identifying both achievements and persistent challenges [Tursunova, 2023].

Problems, development trends, and recommendations for improving constitutional and legal mechanisms constitute the final, but no less important, area of research. R.S. Khodjaev, in his work "Legal Culture and Its Impact on the Effectiveness of Legal Reforms in Uzbekistan" (2023), raises the issue of the importance of the legal culture of society and law enforcement for the successful implementation of constitutional and legal mechanisms. He argues that low levels of legal literacy, legal nihilism, and corruption can significantly reduce the effectiveness of even the most advanced laws and institutions, suggesting ways to enhance legal culture through education and awareness [Khodjaev, 2023]. N.D. Ismatova In her article "Challenges and Prospects for Protecting Citizens' Economic Rights in the Context of Market Reforms in Uzbekistan" (2022), she analyzes specific issues citizens face when exercising their economic rights, such as protection from unfair competition, ensuring a level playing field for entrepreneurship, and protecting consumer rights. She offers specific recommendations for improving legislation and law enforcement practices in this area [Ismatova, 2022].

In her work "Digital Rights of Citizens in Uzbekistan: New Challenges and Legal Regulation" (2021), B.A. Rakhmanov explores a relatively new but rapidly developing area: protecting citizens' rights in the digital environment. He analyzes legislation on personal data, cybersecurity, and access to information

online, identifying gaps and proposing ways to address them to ensure the protection of citizens' digital rights in the context of the rapid digitalization of society [Rakhmanov, 2021]. Many authors also point to the need to further strengthen the independence of the judiciary, increase the transparency of government agencies, develop public oversight mechanisms, and expand citizen participation in the governance of public and state affairs [3], [4].

Thus, an analysis of contemporary academic literature reveals that constitutional and legal mechanisms for protecting the rights and interests of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan are the subject of active study. Researchers focus on the theoretical foundations of constitutionalism, analyze legislative and institutional changes, assess the effectiveness of judicial and extrajudicial forms of protection, and the impact of international standards. However, despite the significant amount of work that has been done, there is a need for a more comprehensive and systemic analysis of the interrelationships between all these elements. Many studies focus on individual aspects or specific reforms, leaving their overall impact on the overall effectiveness of the rights protection system under-researched. In particular, insufficient attention has been paid to a comparative analysis of the law enforcement practices of various institutions, the identification of systemic gaps, and the development of evidence-based, practically applicable recommendations that take into account both the national context and best international practices. This study aims to fill these gaps by offering a comprehensive analysis and specific ways to improve constitutional and legal mechanisms for protecting the rights and interests of citizens of Uzbekistan in the context of ongoing reforms and international standards.

This study of constitutional and legal mechanisms for protecting the rights and interests of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan is based on a comprehensive approach, combining elements of doctrinal, socio-legal, and critical analysis. The choice of this methodological framework is driven by the multifaceted nature of the research subject, which requires not only an in-depth study of the legal framework but also an assessment of its practical implementation, effectiveness, and compliance with international standards. The philosophical foundation of the study is critical realism, which recognizes the existence of an objective legal reality (norms, institutions, practices), but emphasizes that our understanding of this reality is mediated by social, political, and historical contexts. This approach avoids both pure positivism and radical constructivism, enabling a critical

examination of existing mechanisms, identifying their strengths and weaknesses, and proposing evidence-based recommendations for their improvement, taking into account the dynamics of legal reforms in Uzbekistan and international experience.

The study is qualitative in nature, focused on a thorough understanding of the essence and functioning of legal phenomena. The qualitative paradigm utilizes a descriptive, analytical, and evaluative design. The descriptive aspect aims to systematize and provide a detailed presentation of existing constitutional and legal mechanisms, their structure, content, and interrelations, including constitutional provisions, legislative acts, and institutional structures. The analytical component involves decomposing these mechanisms, identifying their internal logical connections, operating principles, and goals. Particular attention is paid to analyzing the legal concepts that underlie Uzbek constitutionalism, such as the legal, democratic, social, and secular state, as well as the principle of the supremacy of human life, freedom, honor, and dignity [1], [3]. The evaluative aspect aims to critically assess the effectiveness of existing mechanisms in terms of their compliance with constitutional principles, international human rights standards [2], [5], and the practical needs of citizens, including identifying gaps, conflicts, and ineffective practices. The use of such a comprehensive design allows us not only to establish the existence of mechanisms but also to thoroughly analyze their functioning in real-world conditions, which is key to achieving the research objective—the development of scientifically sound proposals for improving the rights protection system.

Data was collected through an analysis of a wide range of sources. First, these are primary legal sources, which form the basis of the doctrinal analysis. These include the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, particularly its new 2023 edition, which significantly expanded the list of rights and freedoms and strengthened guarantees for their protection [Rakhimov, 2023]. The provisions of the sections devoted to the fundamental rights, freedoms, and responsibilities of individuals and citizens, the foundations of state and social structure, and the principles of government bodies were examined in detail [1], [3]. In addition to the Constitution, key laws regulating various aspects of human rights protection were analyzed, including the Electoral Code, the Laws "On Courts," "On the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan," "On the Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis for Human Rights (Ombudsman)," "On Administrative

Procedures," "On Guarantees of Freedom of Access to Information," "On Mass Media," "On the Protection of Personal Data," "On Private Property," "On Social Security of Citizens," "On Education," "On Healthcare," and other regulatory legal acts adopted after 2020. Particular attention was paid to bylaws (presidential decrees, cabinet resolutions) detailing constitutional and legislative provisions. A study of these documents allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the regulatory framework governing the protection and defense of citizens' rights. Secondly, secondary legal sources were used, including decisions and rulings of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which have precedent-setting significance for the interpretation of constitutional norms and ensuring their supremacy [6]. Resolutions of the Plenum of the Supreme Court, summarizing judicial practice, and decisions of administrative courts, which play a key role in protecting citizens from unlawful actions by state bodies, were also analyzed [Davlatov, 2023]. An important source was the annual reports of the Commissioner of the Oliy Majlis for Human Rights (Ombudsman), containing an analysis of citizens' appeals, identified violations, and recommendations [Saidov, 2021]. Reports of the National Center for Human Rights of the Republic of Uzbekistan were also considered. These sources made it possible to assess how constitutional and legal norms are applied in practice and what problems arise during their implementation.

Thirdly, considerable attention was paid to international legal sources and documents, which is due to Uzbekistan's commitment to the generally recognized principles and norms of international law and their integration into the national legal system [1], [2]. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention against Torture, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights treaties ratified by the Republic of Uzbekistan were analyzed [5]. The concluding observations and recommendations of UN treaty bodies on Uzbekistan's reports, as well as recommendations received within the framework of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) [5], were also studied. These documents served as a benchmark for comparative legal analysis and assessment of the compliance of national mechanisms with international standards. Fourth, the scientific and expert literature was used as sources of information, including monographs,

articles in peer-reviewed journals, and dissertations published after 2020. The literature review served as the basis for identifying key theoretical approaches, existing research, and defining gaps. The works of such authors as Petrov A.I. (2021), Smirnov V.D. (2022), Sidorova E.V. (2022), Kim A.N. (2020), Gulyamov Sh.R. (2022), Rakhimov U.Z. (2023), Karimova Z.A. (2022), Alimov D.T. (2021), Usmanov Kh.A. (2022), Saidov M.S. (2021), Davlatov R.I. (2023), Nurmatov S.T. (2023), Yuldasheva G.R. (2022), Sobirov F.M. (2021), Mirzaev A.K. (2021), Tursunova L.I. (2023), Khodjaev R.S. (2023), Ismatova N.D. (2022), Rakhmanov B.A. (2021), and others were used to form a theoretical base and critically evaluate achievements and challenges.

Fifth, official reports and statistics published by government agencies of the Republic of Uzbekistan (the Ministry of Justice, the State Statistics Committee), as well as reports from international organizations, were used. Although not the primary focus of the qualitative research, these data were used to confirm or refute certain trends in law enforcement practice, such as the dynamics of citizen appeals to the courts or the Ombudsman, as well as to assess the scale of certain problems.

A set of complementary methods was used to analyze the collected data, ensuring the comprehensiveness and depth of the study. The dogmatic (formal-legal) method was central to the study of the legal framework. It included an analysis of the text of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan [1], [3], [4] and other legislative acts to identify their structure, content, legal force, internal consistency, and compliance with general principles of law. This method allowed for the systematization of constitutional provisions, the determination of the scope and content of enshrined rights and freedoms, and the analysis of the mechanisms for their protection. Particular attention was paid to the interpretation of legal norms and the identification of their meaning and significance in the context of the general legal system of Uzbekistan. The application of the dogmatic method was critical to achieving the first and second objectives of the study, which concern the study of the theoretical and legal foundations and the analysis of legislative mechanisms.

The systems method was used to examine constitutional and legal mechanisms not as isolated elements, but as a unified, interconnected system. This method allowed for the identification of horizontal and vertical connections between various constitutional guarantees, legislative acts, and institutional structures (for

example, the interaction of the judiciary, the Ombudsman, the prosecutor's office, and civil society institutions in the process of protecting rights). An analysis was made of how changes to one element of the system (for example, a new version of the Constitution [Rakhimov, 2023]) impact the functioning of other elements and the system as a whole. A systems approach was particularly useful for identifying systemic gaps, conflicts, and duplications of functions, as well as for assessing the overall coherence and effectiveness of the entire rights protection system. It allowed us to understand how the various components of the system work together to achieve the overall goal of protecting and defending the rights and interests of citizens.

The comparative legal method was used to compare national constitutional and legal mechanisms with international human rights standards [1], [2], [5] and the best practices of other states. This method allowed us to assess the degree of implementation of international norms in the national legislation and practice of Uzbekistan, identify best practices that can be adapted, and identify areas requiring further improvement. The comparative analysis was conducted on such parameters as the scope and content of guaranteed rights, the independence of the judiciary, the powers and effectiveness of the ombudsman, the accessibility and effectiveness of judicial and extrajudicial remedies, and the role of civil society. Particular attention was paid to the experience of countries that have undergone a similar path of legal system transformation, which ensured the relevance of the comparisons. This method was key to achieving the fourth objective of the study, related to assessing the impact of international standards, and to developing substantiated recommendations.

The historical and legal method was used to study the evolution of constitutional and legal mechanisms for the protection and defense of citizens' rights in the Republic of Uzbekistan since gaining independence in 1991 [1], [2], [4]. This method allowed us to trace the dynamics of legislative development, the formation and transformation of institutions, and changing approaches to understanding and implementing human rights. Particular attention was paid to the analysis of reforms implemented since 2020 and the adoption of the new Constitution in 2023, which allowed us to understand the context of current changes and their impact on the modern system of human rights protection. Historical analysis helped identify continuity and innovation in legal

development, as well as the factors that determined certain decisions in constitutional development.

The functional method aimed to analyze the actual functioning of constitutional and legal norms and institutions in practice. Unlike the dogmatic method, which focuses on "book law," the functional method examines "law in action." It allowed us to assess how effectively legislative provisions are implemented in practice, what factors influence their application, and what results are achieved. This method included an analysis of judicial practice (decisions of courts at various levels), the activities of the Ombudsman and the Prosecutor's Office, as well as citizen appeals to government agencies and civil society institutions. Functional analysis was critical for achieving the third objective of the study—investigating judicial and extrajudicial forms of protecting citizens' rights and interests, as well as identifying problems and shortcomings in law enforcement practices.

A legal modeling and forecasting method was used in the final stage of the study to develop evidence-based recommendations for improving constitutional and legal mechanisms. Based on the identified problems, development trends, and an analysis of best international practices, proposals were formulated for legislative amendments, institutional optimization, and improved law enforcement practices. This method not only allowed for a critical assessment of the current situation but also proposed specific, practically applicable paths for the further development of the human rights protection system in Uzbekistan, predicting the potential consequences of the proposed changes.

The critical analysis method permeated all stages of the study. It involved a continuous understanding and evaluation of the phenomena under study in terms of their compliance with the ideals of the rule of law, democracy, social justice, and universally recognized human rights standards. A critical analysis allowed us to identify not only formal but also substantive gaps in legislation, the ineffectiveness of individual institutions, and factors hindering the full realization of citizens' rights. This method facilitated the formation of independent and objective conclusions and the development of recommendations aimed at genuine improvement.

The scope of this research covers constitutional and legal mechanisms for protecting the rights and interests of citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan, focusing on the national level of legal regulation and law enforcement practice.

The timeframe of this research primarily covers the period after 2020, due to the intensity and scale of legal reforms in Uzbekistan, including the adoption of a new version of the Constitution in 2023. This allows for an up-to-date analysis of current mechanisms and an assessment of their effectiveness in the context of current reforms. The scope of this research is limited to constitutional and legal aspects, involving an analysis of constitutional provisions, constitutional laws, and other acts directly related to constitutional rights and freedoms.

Limitations of the research include its primarily doctrinal and analytical nature. Despite the desire to assess practical effectiveness, the study relies on an analysis of regulations, official documents, published judicial practice, and academic literature. Direct empirical research (interviews, sociological surveys) was not part of the scope of this research, meaning that conclusions regarding the effectiveness of these mechanisms are based on an analysis of available data and expert assessments. The dynamic nature of legal reforms may require updating some of the findings. Finally, the broad scope of citizens' rights and interests means that the study focuses on general protection mechanisms rather than exhaustive details of each aspect.

The ethical principles of the study included objectivity, impartiality, and academic integrity. All sources of information were carefully verified and accurately cited. When analyzing problems and shortcomings, the principle of constructive criticism aimed at finding avenues for improvement, rather than destructive condemnation, was observed. The study was conducted with respect for the legal system of the Republic of Uzbekistan and its aspiration to build a democratic state governed by the rule of law.

This study confirmed the Republic of Uzbekistan's deep commitment to the principles of human rights and the rule of law, enshrined in its Constitution and actively developed through legislative and institutional reforms. The country has developed a comprehensive system of constitutional guarantees, judicial and extra-judicial protection mechanisms, increasingly aligning with international standards. Despite clear progress in strengthening the independence of the judiciary, expanding civil liberties, and promoting public participation, the analysis also identified areas for further improvement. Continued efforts are needed to enhance the practical effectiveness of these mechanisms, improve the legal culture, and ensure full compliance with constitutional principles and

international obligations, thereby strengthening a truly democratic and social state.

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