

**Speech by the Head of the Department of the human rights protection and legal support of the Ministry of Internal affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I.T.Turgunov at the OSCE meeting for human dimension
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Fighting against racism, xenophobia and discrimination, also focusing problems of intolerance and discrimination against Christians and members of other faiths

Struggle against anti-semitism

Combating with intolerance and discrimination against muslims

I.

Turning to the topic of the issue, in my opinion, should be, first of all, to define the basic concepts:

1 Racism - a set of beliefs, which are based on the provisions of the physical and mental inequality of human races and the decisive influence of racial differences in the history and culture.

2 Xenophobia (from the Greek. Ξένος – alien, φόβος - fear) - fear or hatred towards anyone or anything alien, a stranger, unfamiliar; the perception of others as incomprehensible, inconceivable, and therefore dangerous and hostile. Erected to the rank of thinking, may cause hostility on the basis of ethnic, religious or social division of people.

3 Anti-Semitism (deutsch. Antisemitismus) - a form of ethnic intolerance, expressed hostility towards Jews as an ethnic or religious group. Based on prejudices and is a form of xenophobia. The term refers to hostility towards Jews and / or the Jews, and not to all the peoples of the Semitic language group.

4 Discrimination (lat. Discriminatio - distinction) - unjustified difference in rights and human responsibilities on a particular basis.

Limitation of rights can be supported by legislation (legal, de jure), adopted in the country or religion may be based solely on the prevailing moral norms (informal, de facto). As a feature can be any significant difference between the human, for example, race, nationality, citizenship, kinship, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, age, disability, occupation and so on.

II.

In a society that tends to build a democratic, law-based state, where the rule of law is priority and the highest value is the man with his rights and freedoms? prevail understanding, harmony and tolerance among different peoples and nationalities, beliefs and faiths. And the principle of tolerance in this case was elevated to the rank of state policy. Uzbekistan fully comply with this principle, as evidenced by the adoption of the **Law "On Freedom of conscience and religious organizations"**, and proclaimed in Article 31 of the Constitution, which states:

"Freedom of conscience is guaranteed for all. Everyone has the right to profess any religion or no religion. Unacceptable imposition of religious views".

Uzbekistan is a sovereign democratic state of secular nature. This understanding is enshrined in the Constitution, which states: **"Religious organizations and associations shall be separated from the state and equal before the law. State does not interfere in the activities of religious associations"** (Article. 61).

Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Freedom of conscience and religious organizations" was adopted on 1 May 1998 and showed its efficiency in matters relating to freedom of religion and conscience.

Based on the requirements of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of 1993., Guarantees of the Constitution, in order to ensure inter-ethnic harmony and interfaith solidarity one of the main priorities of the reform of the Uzbek society was to ensure the protection and enshrined in the Constitution, the rights and freedoms of citizens and their equality before the law regardless of race, gender, nationality, language, social origin, creed, religion, personal or social status.

The state registration of religious organizations shall be in accordance with the Law "On Freedom of conscience and religious organizations" in 1998 and the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan **"On the procedure of state registration of religious organizations in the Republic of Uzbekistan"** dated June 20, 1998.

According to the national legislation of Uzbekistan, restrictions on the number of religious organizations or their terms are not provided.

To work closely with religious organizations, assisting in the implementation of the activities of the various religious denominations, joint development of proposals and measures to ensure inter-religious and inter-ethnic peace and harmony in society, develop a culture of inter-religious dialogue established **the Council for confessions** under the Committee for Religious Affairs. The Council for confessions includes the heads of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, Tashkent and Central Asian Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, the Centre of Full Gospel Churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Jewish community of Tashkent.

At meetings of the Council for confessions discusses enforcement of national legislation, the rights of religious organizations and believers, as well as other vital issues.

In the context of independent development in Uzbekistan occur consistent and systemic democratic reforms that intensify the processes of formation of the new nation-state identity in the mentality of the citizens. Moreover, tolerance, as one of the fundamental democratic principles, suggesting tolerance to lifestyle, behavior, feelings, opinions, ideas and beliefs of the people of various ethnic groups is increasingly affirming not only at national, but also at the interpersonal, intergroup levels.

Today in Uzbekistan there are **more than 150 registered** in the judiciary non-Muslim religious organizations represented 15 denominations and religious creeds.

Religious education system in Uzbekistan includes the Tashkent Islamic Institute, 9 madrassas, Orthodox and Protestant seminaries.

Since September 1999 in Tashkent on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was established Tashkent Islamic University. In 2003 held the first graduates of undergraduate students, and in 2005 - Master's students. At the University functions Academic Lyceum.

Believers of Uzbekistan freely celebrate all religious holidays. So, every year more and more large scale celebrated Eid al-Adha and Ramadan-Adha - the Muslims, Easter and Christmas - the Christians, Passover, Purim and Hanukkah - the Jews.

Each year, with the full support of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan believers make a pilgrimage to the holy places - Muslims in Saudi Arabia for the worship of Hajj and Umrah, Christians - in Russia, Greece and Israel, Jews - in Israel. All the years of independence, over 65 thousand citizens of the republic was given the opportunity to carry Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia, and more than 200 citizens pilgrimage to Russia, Greece and Israel, a holy place for Christians and Jews.

By the Presidential Decree of August 28, 2006 was created a Public Council on the organization and activities of the annual "Hajj" and "Umrah". The main objectives and priorities of the Public Council defined the organization of effective coordination and cooperation of ministries and departments, local authorities, non-governmental organizations in the preparation and conduct of the pilgrimage citizens engaged in rituals "Hajj" and "Umrah"; ensuring control over compliance with the safety requirements and the provisions of the legislation in this area.

Pilgrims provides comprehensive care - organization of special flights, the provision of medical services, free conversion of foreign currency, reduced prices of airline tickets, quick and smooth visa formalities.

In late 2004, in the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan jointly with the National Society for the Blind held a presentation of the Holy Qur'an printed in Braille. Uzbekistan became the third nation in the world that has effected this good cause.

Currently, Uzbekistan is home to about 24 thousand citizens, deprived of the opportunity to contemplate the world with their own eyes. Currently, special boarding schools, public libraries in the country, as well as all interested persons are provided with copies of the Koran in Braille. At the event, it was noted that the publication of the Holy Quran for the Blind, the organization Surdo-translation for the deaf in the two Friday mosques in the city of Tashkent, the decision to implement this experience in other regions of the country, will be a priceless gift for our citizens with disabilities.

All the years of independence the Holy Quran translated into the Uzbek language and published in three times, 16 books of the Old Testament and all the New Testament.

Built and restored hundreds of mosques, churches and houses of worship, including Orthodox churches in Tashkent, Samarkand and Navoi, Catholic church in Tashkent, Armenian church in Samarkand. According to the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of 22 August 2003, 15 objects - religious complexes, places of pilgrimage and the tombs - transferred to the Directorate of Muslims of Uzbekistan.

The state helps to ensure that as many guests visited Uzbekistan and personally convinced of its prosperity, and that the Government is not in words, but in fact fulfill its obligations.

So, in 1995 in Tashkent was held Christian-Muslim Conference "Together to live under the same sky". Representatives of the World Council of Churches, a number of foreign churches participated in this forum.

In 1996 marked two significant dates:

- In November, the 125th anniversary of the Tashkent and Central Asian Diocese of the Russian Orthodox Church. In celebration of this date for the first time in the history of the church came to Central Asia, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Alexy II;

- In December, the Evangelical Lutheran congregation celebrated the 100th anniversary of the only Central Asian Lutheran Church.

In 2000 in Tashkent was held an international conference on the theme: "World Religions in the way to culture of peace."

In 2001, the Tashkent and Central Asian Diocese celebrated its 130th anniversary.

In 2002, the Roman Catholic Church celebrated the 100th anniversary of the revival of Catholicism in Central Asia.

In October 2003, in Samarkand events were held on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

It is gratifying to note that the ongoing activities involving representatives of various faiths.

Over the years of independence were held a series of international symposia on the occasion of important dates, anniversaries of world famous Muslim theologians:

- In September 1993, the 675th anniversary of Bahauddin Naqshbandi;
- In November 1995, the 920 th anniversary of Mahmoud al-Zamakhshari and 850th anniversary Najmuddin Kubra;
- In October 1998, the 1225th anniversary of Imam al-Bukhari;
- In November 2000, the 1130 anniversary of Imam Abu Mansur al-Moturidi and 910 anniversary Burkhaniddin al-Marginani;
- In November 2003, the 900th anniversary of Abduhalik Gijduvani;
- In December 2004, the 600th anniversary of Khoja Ahrar Vali.

Announcement by ISESCO Tashkent as the capital of Islamic culture in 2007 was yet another international recognition of consistent and systematic work carried out in the country under the leadership of President Islam Karimov, to ensure the freedom of conscience, the reconstruction and development of Islamic

values, the study of the rich scientific and cultural heritage of ancestors, reconstruction and improvement of burial places of great thinkers and saints.

The forum, which held on this occasion, attended by more than 100 well-known ulama, religious scholars and specialists, large public, religious and community leaders in more than 30 countries, including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Egypt, Pakistan, Iran, China, Japan, USA, UK, France, Turkey, Jordan, Israel, Bangladesh, heads of international organizations. Among them are the leading representatives of the Muslim world - the heads of major international organizations such as the OIC, the League of Arab States, ISESCO.

At the forum pointed out that during the years of independence Uzbekistan has achieved tremendous progress in the preservation of national traditions and customs, to perpetuate the memory of great ancestors, accomplishment of sacred places of their burial.

Among them is the creative work on the improvement of such places of worship as the Imam Bukhari and Imam Moturidi in Samarkand, Abdukholik Gijduvani and Bahauddin Naqshbandi, complexes "Minorai Kalon" and "Kalon Mosque" in Bukhara, monuments and Ahmad Fargoni Burkhaniddin Marghinoniy in Fergana, Hakim and Imam Termezi in Surkhandarya, historical complexes "Ichankala" in Khiva, "Dorut-Tilovat" in Shahrisabz, "Odin" and "Kuk Gumbaz" in Karshi, mausoleum Qosim-Sheikh in Karmana.

In accordance with the decree of the President February 20, 2007 "**On the support of the public fund of Hazrat Imam (Hastimom)**", in the complex of Hazrat Imam in Tashkent carried out a lot of work for the construction, reconstruction and improvement. Today, a totally new look found the mosque Hazrat Imam Barokhona madrasa, a place of worship "Muyi muborak", mosque "Tillashayh", the building of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan and other unique buildings at the complex of Hazrat Imam, which were yet another clear proof of the great creative potential of our people.

In May 23, 2008 at the Centre for the study of hadith in the Samarkand region established the International Centre of Imam Bukhari. One of the main activities of the center - the organization of training courses for leaders of mosques.

So, from 2008 to the present time have been only 29 stages of such courses, which were attended by **1860 Imam-Khatib**. The learning process continues.

In 2007 Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers was accepted "**On adoption of conservation measures in the proper form "Osman's Koran"**".

According to the decision was taken a number of measures, including, built a new place to keep "Osman's Koran", were invited foreign experts to carry out restoration work, etc.

Currently, almost all of the believers of Uzbekistan fully covered by the necessary number of religious organizations and was given the opportunity to fully practice their religious needs.

For complete coverage of the religious life of Uzbekistan a number of newspapers and magazines are publishing, including newspaper "**Islom Nuri**", "**Word of Life**" magazine "**Hidoyat**", "**Dayspring**" and etc.

It should be noted that the direct or indirect violation or restriction of rights, or the establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on the basis of gender, race, nationality, language, religion, social origin, beliefs, personal or social status, according to Article 141 of the Criminal Code Uzbekistan-

punishable by a fine up to fifty minimum monthly wages, or deprivation of certain right up to three years, or correctional labor for up to two years.

The same actions accompanied by violence -

shall be punished with correctional labor from two to three years, or arrest up to six months, or imprisonment up to three years.