

## **THE ROLE OF INTERETHNIC HARMONY IN ACHIEVING SOCIO- POLITICAL STABILITY**

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### **Abstract**

This article analyzes the democratic reforms being carried out to ensure socio-political stability and methodological approaches aimed at fostering interethnic harmony in society. It also highlights the economic-political, educational, and promotional factors, along with pedagogical tools that serve to strengthen a sense of interethnic communication culture based on tolerance. The article presents methodological recommendations proposed on the basis of theoretical and practical experiences.

**Keywords:** Nation, interethnic harmony, religious tolerance, freedom of conscience, Strategy of Actions, digital economy.

### **Introduction**

The nation, as a historical unity of people, has formed over a long period and has enriched its unique national mentality. A nation is a unity of common economic life, language, territory, culture, and spiritual harmony. A nation is not simply a group of people who speak the same language. It is a historical, moral, spiritual, human, political, and social unity. A nation thrives in an environment of internal and external harmony, solidarity, and cooperation.

On January 28, 2022, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, signed the Decree «On the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026.» The development strategy and the “roadmap” for its implementation in 2022 outline around 100 objectives to be achieved across seven priority areas of national development.

The fifth priority area—ensuring spiritual development and elevating the field to a new stage—includes Objective 74, titled: “Strengthening the environment of

interethnic harmony and interreligious tolerance in society.” This objective outlines the following tasks:

Further improvement of the system of state support for national cultural centers;  
Ensuring the consistent implementation of the State Policy Concept of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the field of interethnic relations;

Creating additional favorable conditions for youth of different nationalities, fostering their sense of civic duty, patriotism, and interethnic communication culture based on tolerance;

Taking measures to provide additional state support to mass media operating in foreign languages and covering state policy in the field of interethnic relations;

Improving the activities of friendship societies to develop friendly relations with foreign countries.

This once again confirms that strengthening interethnic harmony and interreligious tolerance is an integral part of the reforms being carried out in our country.

In recent years, one of the main priorities of state policy has been ensuring interethnic harmony and tolerance in society, strengthening the atmosphere of friendship and the feeling of one large multinational family, educating the younger generation in the spirit of love and loyalty to the Motherland, and respect for national and universal values, as well as expanding cultural and educational relations with foreign countries.

Since ancient times, representatives of many nations and ethnic groups have lived together peacefully in the territory of Uzbekistan. The absence of national conflicts among them for centuries reflects the long-standing tolerance of our people. In countries where interethnic harmony has been established, multiculturalism positively influences the political and economic development of society.

In our republic, the guarantee of freedom of belief for citizens has opened the doors to religious enlightenment and education. In this regard, the political and legal conditions developed by our state, along with the culture of tolerance inherent in our people, have served as a solid foundation for developing healthy interfaith dialogue.

Today, while geopolitical conflicts are intensifying among world powers, we are witnessing interethnic and interfaith tensions increasing in many regions. Therefore, maintaining unity is of critical importance for the consistent continuation of ongoing reforms.

Social and political stability, first and foremost, can be ensured through political reforms aimed at strengthening democracy and the rule of law. In this context, the conditions for freedom of speech and mass media have significantly improved in Uzbekistan, allowing for the free expression of political opinions and effective monitoring of government activities.

Uzbekistan is also implementing economic reforms aimed at ensuring the social well-being of the population and, consequently, the stability of society. Specifically, the government is increasing investment in education and healthcare, promoting sustainable development and infrastructure improvement, and creating new jobs in various sectors of the economy.

In the Action Strategy for the five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021, initiated by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, ensuring interethnic harmony and tolerance, as well as expanding cultural and educational relations with foreign countries, was identified as a key priority.

Currently, representatives of more than 130 nationalities and ethnic groups living in our country are actively contributing to various sectors of the economy, science, culture, and social life, enjoying equal rights and opportunities as guaranteed by our Constitution and laws. They are making a worthy contribution to the prosperity of our homeland, strengthening its independence, and enhancing its reputation and image on the international stage.

At the same time, an important factor in ensuring socio-political stability is strengthening dialogue and cultural-social cooperation among different ethnic groups. In this regard, programs have been developed to promote mutual understanding between cultures, support the formation of youth groups, work with religious communities, and assist the socio-economic development of border regions.

To improve the provision of education in native languages for all ethnic groups in Uzbekistan, an assessment was conducted of the status of general secondary schools where education is conducted in brotherly languages. As a result, these schools, where education is conducted in seven brotherly languages, were supplied with literary materials. In the field of interethnic relations, systematic scientific and social research, as well as monitoring of ongoing developments, is being carried out.

It is also commendable that the Committee on Interethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries under the Cabinet of Ministers has published a number of books and scientific articles, prepared scientific-research materials and analytical reviews, and conducted scientific-practical studies on interethnic relations.

In the Presidential Decree «On the State Program for the Implementation of the Year of Development of Science, Enlightenment, and the Digital Economy,» adopted as part of the Action Strategy for the five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan for 2017–2021, the development of a concept for the advancement of science until 2030 was set as a goal.

Accordingly, on October 29, 2020, the Presidential Decree «On Approval of the Concept for the Development of Science until 2030» was adopted.

It is worth emphasizing that this decree plays a crucial role in the rapid development of economic sectors and the social sphere, the full mobilization of scientific, intellectual, and financial resources, the wide utilization of scientific and innovative potential, the identification of priority directions for consistent reform of science in the future, the training of highly qualified personnel with modern knowledge and independent thinking, and the modernization of scientific infrastructure, thereby elevating these efforts to a qualitatively new level.

In order to further strengthen peace and interethnic stability in our country, on May 19, 2017, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan signed a decree «On measures for the further improvement of interethnic relations and friendly ties with foreign countries.» In accordance with this decree, the Committee on Interethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries was established on the basis of the International Cultural Center. This, in turn, has become a solid foundation for supporting the activities of national cultural centers and friendship societies operating in our country and strengthening cooperation between state institutions and public organizations in ensuring their effective functioning.

In our country, interethnic harmony plays an important role in ensuring socio-political stability. The development of democracy, economic and social policy, the strengthening of interethnic cooperation and cultural ties—all these are important measures aimed at establishing a stable social and political environment.



Ensuring interethnic harmony is one of the key factors for socio-political stability. The reason for this is that Uzbekistan, as a multi-ethnic state, is home to many cultural, ethnic, and linguistic groups, each with its own interests and needs.

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, all citizens enjoy equal rights and freedoms regardless of gender, race, nationality, language, religion, beliefs, social origin, or status, and are equal before the law. The state ensures citizens' participation in public and state governance. It should be noted that the policy of Uzbekistan on establishing interethnic and inter-confessional harmony is fully consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international legal norms and documents. Ensuring interethnic harmony and religious tolerance is an integral part of Uzbekistan's development strategy as a modern state.

In 2019, the Concept of State Policy in the Sphere of Interethnic Relations in the Republic of Uzbekistan was approved. In addition, several decisions were adopted to improve activities in the field of religious education. According to these, a new system was introduced to implement a unified state policy in this area, protect guarantees of freedom of conscience for citizens, and develop constructive and respectful relations among representatives of various nationalities and ethnic groups.

In particular, according to the President's resolution dated April 16, 2018, «On measures to improve the activities of the Committee on Religious Affairs under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan,» a new composition of the Council on Confessional Affairs under the Committee on Religious Affairs was approved. The number of members of the Council was expanded from 9 to 17, with the inclusion of representatives of religious confessions operating in Uzbekistan. Notably, leaders of small religious organizations were also included as members of the Council.

In 2017, for the first time in the history of independent Uzbekistan, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion and belief, Ahmed Shaheed, visited our country. Based on his recommendations, on May 4, 2018, the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan approved a «Road Map» to ensure freedom of religion and belief. Overall, the international community highly appreciates Uzbekistan's efforts in ensuring interethnic harmony and religious tolerance, and there is significant interest in Uzbekistan's experience in this regard.



In particular, the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to adopt a special resolution titled «Enlightenment and Religious Tolerance» aimed at promoting tolerance and mutual respect, ensuring religious freedom, protecting the rights of believers, and preventing discrimination against them, which was proposed at the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly on September 19, 2017, and adopted on December 12, 2018, serves as a vivid example of this recognition.

One of the important outcomes of the reforms carried out in this field is the removal of Uzbekistan in 2018 from the list of “Countries of Particular Concern” regarding religious freedom by the U.S. Department of State. Notably, on October 13, 2020, during elections held at the session of the UN General Assembly, Uzbekistan was elected for the first time in its national history as a member of the UN Human Rights Council for the 2021–2023 term. A total of 169 out of 193 UN member states voted for Uzbekistan, making it the country with the highest number of votes in that election. This can rightfully be seen as a recognition of the policies pursued in our country to ensure human rights regardless of nationality or religion, including the advancement of interethnic harmony and religious tolerance.

In addition, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations”, revised in accordance with international standards and adopted on July 5, 2021, holds great significance. All of these efforts attest to Uzbekistan’s growing role as a reliable and responsible actor in international relations. In Uzbekistan, the multi-ethnic composition of the population is viewed as a favorable factor for socio-economic development. Due to the preservation of social and economic stability and the harmonization of interfaith and interethnic relations, Uzbekistan’s international reputation is steadily rising.

For example, educational instruction in state educational institutions is carried out in seven languages. The National Television and Radio Company of Uzbekistan broadcasts in twelve languages, and newspapers and magazines are published in more than ten languages. Under the Committee on Interethnic Relations and Friendly Ties with Foreign Countries, 138 national cultural centers and over 2,300 religious organizations belonging to 16 different confessions operate throughout the country. A comprehensive and well-thought-out policy is being implemented with practical measures aimed at supporting interethnic and interfaith harmony.



Transformational processes are taking place in the social lives of countries. In such circumstances, to ensure the development of the country and improve the well-being of the people, it is crucial to ensure the sustainable and uninterrupted growth of the economy, enhance its competitiveness and resilience, develop civil society institutions, and establish the rule of law and justice.

Another important factor is the state's policy aimed at economic development and improving the living standards of the population. This includes creating new jobs, developing small and medium-sized businesses, investing in various sectors of the economy, and implementing other related measures. Improving the population's economic situation helps reduce social tensions and increase mutual trust among people.

Political stability in the country is also a crucial factor. In New Uzbekistan, reforms aimed at strengthening civil society and democracy are being implemented. These include reducing administrative barriers, improving conditions for free expression of opinions, and creating opportunities for the development and functioning of political parties and public organizations.

Education and awareness-raising also play a vital role. Uzbekistan conducts activities to increase the population's educational and cultural level and promote tolerance and respect for other nations and cultures. It is important to note that education and awareness are key tools in shaping public mentality and culture, which in turn supports the development of interethnic harmony.

The famous Eastern philosopher Abu Nasr al-Farabi wrote the following about tolerance:

“Some believe that there are no natural or voluntary bonds between people, that every person should harm others' interests for their own benefit, that people are inherently strangers to each other, and even if they unite, it is only out of necessity or obligation. They think that even when people reach agreements, it is only because one side dominates while others are defeated, and that they agree only under external pressure. If that pressure disappears, so does the agreement, leading to renewed alienation and disintegration. This is one of the beast-like ideologies attributed to humanity.”

Since President Shavkat Mirziyoyev came to power in 2016, New Uzbekistan has witnessed significant changes across all areas of national life. One of the main directions of these changes has been the development of a new strategy for ensuring

socio-political stability and interethnic harmony. In this field, Uzbekistan has achieved unexpected and positive outcomes that affirm the successful advancement of the country in this direction.

There are many factors that influence socio-political stability and interethnic harmony in Uzbekistan. However, the most important among them is the strong consolidation of civil society institutions and the dialogue between citizens of various religious and ethnic groups.

Within this framework, the country is taking various measures to ensure socio-political stability and interethnic harmony. First and foremost, efforts are being made to support a multicultural environment and religious tolerance. In addition, work is being carried out to respect human rights, including the rights of national minorities. At the same time, political and economic stability is being strengthened, and poverty is decreasing, which enables citizens to live more productive and free lives.

The role of Uzbekistan's leadership in all these processes is invaluable. The President of Uzbekistan is one of the few modern statesmen who consistently defends the right to follow an independent path. The essence of his policy lies in: firstly, taking into full account the specific historical conditions of society and its national, religious, and cultural characteristics;

secondly, harmonizing economic development and progress with traditional moral and cultural values;

thirdly, giving preference to sound reasoning over theories not based on experience; fourthly, prioritizing patriotism, pragmatism, and practical creativity over ideologically-driven concepts.

Thus, in the new Uzbekistan, interethnic harmony and socio-political stability are ensured by a number of factors including the preservation of cultural traditions, economic development, political stability, education, and outreach.

In conclusion, ensuring interethnic harmony is one of the key factors in achieving socio-political stability. To achieve this, it is necessary to create conditions for respecting and preserving the cultural traditions of all ethnic groups, as well as to pursue a policy that supports interethnic relations. Regarding intercultural and interethnic relations, studies show that open dialogue and mutual understanding are fundamental components of successful interaction between different cultures and ethnic groups.



It is also important to note that, as a result of the reforms being implemented to strengthen a positive and respectful environment in the field of interethnic harmony and religious tolerance in our country, a new model of interethnic and interreligious relations has been developed. The uniqueness of this new model lies in its comprehensive approach to countering various threats, including cyber threats in the form of information attacks, that pose risks to interethnic harmony and religious tolerance.

This model is based on interethnic and interreligious dialogue, constructive approaches, and the equality of all citizens before the law. In this regard, the large-scale reforms carried out in Uzbekistan in recent years in the field of interethnic relations and religious tolerance have contributed to the formation of a system that unites a new approach and strategic objectives in these areas.

The set strategic goals and objectives align with the developmental achievements our country has made. The essence of the matter is that, in recent years, under the leadership and initiative of the President, major and effective reforms have been implemented in various spheres of public life. These reforms have led to an increase in the country's economic power, the strengthening of social stability, the enhancement of political prestige, and the renewal of the spiritual space.

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