

**THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR PROMOTING INTERFAITH HARMONY  
IN MODERN UZBEKISTAN**

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**Abstract.** This article provides a comprehensive socio-philosophical and legal analysis of the principles of tolerance within the context of Islamic teachings and their implementation in the legislative framework of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The relevance of the study is driven by the need to strengthen interfaith harmony amidst globalization and migration processes, where tolerance becomes not only a moral duty but also a legal necessity to prevent conflicts. The purpose of the work is to identify the synthesis between Islamic spiritual values and modern secular legal mechanisms for ensuring freedom of conscience.

The methodology involves a comparative legal analysis of normative acts and a hermeneutic analysis of sacred texts. These principles are reflected in Articles 35 and 75 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, guaranteeing equality regardless of religion. The scientific novelty of the article lies in substantiating the «Uzbek Model of Tolerance» as a system that harmoniously combines centuries-old religious traditions with modern democratic norms of a secular state. The conclusion emphasizes that

educating youth in the spirit of tolerance is the cornerstone of political stability and civil society development in New Uzbekistan.

In the modern era, characterised by economic globalisation, rapid advances in communications and large-scale population movements, the issue of tolerance has become imperative. The escalation of acts of intolerance, xenophobia and religious discrimination in various regions of the world poses a serious threat to international peace and democracy. In these circumstances, tolerance ceases to be merely a moral duty and becomes a «political and legal necessity». And for Uzbekistan, situated at the crossroads of civilisations, issues of interfaith harmony form the foundation of state stability and security. Within the framework of the New Uzbekistan development strategy, fostering an atmosphere of tolerance has been identified as a priority area, which requires in-depth academic analysis of the harmony between the centuries-old spiritual heritage of Islam and modern norms of secular law. The theoretical foundations of religious tolerance date back to the works of Western thinkers such as John Locke and Voltaire, whose «Treatise on Tolerance» laid the foundations for the fight against religious fanaticism. At the international level, the key document is the «Declaration of Principles on Tolerance» adopted by UNESCO in 1995, which defines tolerance as «harmony in diversity».

However, despite the existence of a substantial body of work, the question of the mechanisms for the practical synthesis of Islamic ethical principles with specific articles of the secular Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan within the framework of a unified «Uzbek model» requires further theoretical systematisation.

The aim of this study is to identify and provide a scientific justification for the synthesis between the spiritual values of Islam and modern secular legal mechanisms for ensuring freedom of conscience in Uzbekistan.

It should be emphasised that to achieve this aim, the following tasks must be addressed: firstly, to examine the Qur'anic principles of recognition of religious pluralism and the human right to diversity. Secondly, to analyse the constitutional and legal guarantees of freedom of conscience in the Republic of Uzbekistan, enshrined in Articles 35 and 75 of the Constitution. Thirdly, to substantiate the role of education and upbringing in fostering a tolerant mindset among the younger generation. Fourthly, to formulate an integrative model for ensuring interfaith harmony, combining theological humanism with democratic legal norms.

In the modern era, the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan plays a key role in this regard, exerting a systematic influence on the strengthening of inter-ethnic harmony by elevating this issue to the level of a priority for state policy and national security. According to the analysed sources, this influence is realised through the following mechanisms. Firstly, the fifth direction of the Development Strategy, «Ensuring spiritual development and bringing this sphere to a new stage», includes Objective No. 74, which is directly aimed at strengthening the atmosphere of inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance in society. To achieve this objective, the Strategy sets out specific practical tasks, such as improving the system of state subsidies and logistical support. Consistent implementation of the Concept of State Policy in the Field of Inter-ethnic Relations. Creation of additional favourable conditions for the self-realisation of young people of various nationalities. Additional state support for media outlets broadcasting in foreign languages and covering policies on inter-ethnic harmony. Revitalising and improving the activities of «friendship societies».

The strategy sets the direction for legislative reform. Within its framework, important documents have been adopted, such as the 2021 revised version of the Law «On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organisations» and the 2025 Concept for Ensuring Freedom of Conscience. These acts guarantee the equality of all citizens

regardless of their national or religious affiliation, which is in line with international standards.

The Strategy's impact is reflected in the practical support for diversity; for example, there are 138 national cultural centres operating in the country. Education in state educational institutions is conducted in seven languages. The national television and radio company broadcasts programmes in 12 languages, whilst newspapers and magazines are published in more than 10 languages. Thus, the Strategy for the Development of New Uzbekistan transforms inter-ethnic harmony from an abstract ideal into a manageable model, underpinned by budgetary funding, legal safeguards and a well-developed network of public institutions.

In particular, it is worth noting the role of the «Uzbek model of tolerance», which constitutes a unique system in which the centuries-old religious traditions of Islam are harmoniously integrated into the secular legal framework of a democratic state. This combination helps to ensure stability and interfaith harmony within a multi-ethnic society. This synthesis is achieved through the following key areas: Firstly, the model is based on the humanistic essence of Islam, which is viewed not merely as a religion, but as the foundation of the culture and morality of the majority of the population. The Qur'anic principle «There is no compulsion in religion» (Sura al-Baqara, verse 256) guarantees freedom of belief. The principle «To you your faith, and to me mine!» (Sura al-Kafirun, verse 6) serves as the spiritual justification for the right of every faith to exist. Islamic texts, specifically Sura «Al-Mumtahanah», verse 8, prescribe fairness and kindness towards adherents of other religions provided they do not cause conflict, thereby laying the ethical foundation for civil peace. Secondly, spiritual values have been transformed into clear legal norms of a secular state.

Article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan guarantees the right of every person to practise any religion or to practise none, and prohibits the forced

imposition of religious views. Under Article 75 of the Constitution, religious organisations are separate from the state and equal before the law, which precludes discrimination and state interference in their internal affairs. Article 19 of the Constitution enshrines equal rights and freedoms regardless of one's attitude towards religion. Thirdly, the combination of traditions and the law is realised through state and public institutions. In the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan (Objective 74), the strengthening of inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance is defined as a priority of state policy and national security. Institutions combining science and education have been established, such as the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan and the UNESCO Chairs in the Comparative Study of World Religions. The state provides financial and organisational support to 138 national cultural centres, ensuring schooling in seven languages and television broadcasting in 12 languages. Fourthly, Muslims, Christians, Jews and Buddhists have coexisted peacefully in Samarkand and Bukhara for centuries, creating a historical precedent of tolerance.

Contemporary law draws on this experience to combat extremism, contrasting «jahalat» (ignorance) with «ma'rifat» (enlightenment). Thus, the Uzbek model shifts tolerance from the category of passive endurance to that of active recognition of universal human rights, where Islamic values serve as a «moral compass» and secular legislation as a reliable guarantee of security and equality for all citizens.

The socio-philosophical and legal analysis presented in this article allows us to draw the following conclusions. Islamic doctrine contains the fundamental principles of religious pluralism and tolerance. The Qur'anic verses of the surahs «Al-Baqarah», «Al-Kafirun» and «Al-Mumtahanah» prohibit coercion in matters of religion and prescribe kindness and justice towards adherents of other faiths. These principles recognise every person's right to preserve their individuality, which is fully consistent with Article 1.1 of the UNESCO Declaration. In modern Uzbekistan, the spiritual principles of tolerance

have been transformed into robust legal guarantees. Article 35 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan guarantees the right of every person to practise any religion or to practise none, whilst Article 75 enshrines the secular nature of the state through the separation of religious organisations and their equality before the law.

Strengthening interfaith harmony is a priority of state policy under Objective 74 of the New Uzbekistan Development Strategy. This is reflected in the support provided to 138 national cultural centres and the activities of 16 different religious denominations across the country. The paper argues that the «Uzbek model of tolerance» represents a unique synthesis of theological humanism and secular democratic law, where religion acts as a moral regulator and the law as a guarantor of security and equality. Fostering a tolerant mindset among young people through the education system, the introduction of specialised courses and interactive methods is a necessary condition for maintaining political stability in the context of globalisation.

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