

**MASS MEDIA AS BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT. THE ROLE OF
MASS MEDIA AT CONTEMPORARY TIME**

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Annotation: *Three articles about the role of mass media in the Republic of Uzbekistan. Information about the changes being implemented in the mass media sector is presented. Mass media is one of the most necessary areas for the development of society, and now in the Republic of Uzbekistan, a number of students and young people are conducting various effective researches in the field of mass media.*

Key words: *Mass media, journalism, radio stations, television stations, newspaper, Uzdigital, HD channels.*

Mass media in Uzbekistan is concerned with the situation of Uzbek media. Although a government decree officially eliminated state censorship in 2002, it has continued to severely restrict independent journalism, particularly following the Andijon uprising of 2005. Licensing and regulation are the purview of the State Press Committee and the Inter-Agency Coordination Committee, which

use their authority to harass and delay the activities of independent media outlets. In late 2006, authorities further tightened state control by requiring re-registration by all media outlets not passing a summary review of qualifications. In 2005, some 30 to 40 independent television stations and seven independent radio stations were in operation, but four state-owned television stations, run by the Television and Radio Company of Uzbekistan, dominated the market. No live programming is allowed.

Total newspaper readership is estimated at only 50,000; the newspaper market is dominated by the state-owned papers *Pravda Vostoka*, *Halk Sozi*, and *Narodnoye Slovo*. The largest privately owned papers are *Novosti Uzbekistana*, *Noviy Vek*, *Noviy Den*, and *Mohiyat*. The state controls newspaper distribution and materials supply. In the early 2000s, newspaper articles occasionally criticized government policy and social conditions, but bribery of journalists is common.

The only national news agency, the Uzbekistan National News Agency, is state-controlled. Agence France-Presse, Anadolu Agency (of Turkey), the Associated Press, Interfax (of Russia), and Reuters are foreign agencies with offices in Uzbekistan. The government forced Radio Free Europe–Radio Liberty to close its Tashkent office in late 2005. In early 2006, a new media law placed further restrictions on the activities of foreign news organizations in Uzbekistan.

In 2011, the flow of information coming out of the country remains tightly controlled by the authorities, but a few independent voices are still reporting from inside Uzbekistan. The Uznews.net news website has been operational since 2006 and is one of the few sources that still has a network of journalists on the ground reporting on day-to-day events in Uzbekistan.

Journalism in Uzbekistan is a dangerous profession with a number of reporters imprisoned for simply doing their jobs. Uzbekistan is the leading jailer of journalists in the region. As of 2011 there were eleven journalists behind bars in Uzbekistan.

Television in Uzbekistan was first introduced in 1956 when Uzbek

SSR was part of the Soviet Union. The first national television channel was O‘zbekiston, which was introduced during beginning transmission of Uzbekistan. Colour television was also introduced in the 1970s. Back then, O‘zbekiston was the only TV channel, and it broadcast several times a day. Uzbekistan's first private television channel STV, started broadcasting on 15 May 1991.

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Uzbekistan's first and leading digital platform Uzdigital, launched in 2009. In 2013, high-definition television in HD has been launched on a commercial basis. Uzdigital recently launched its own HD channels such as **Zo‘r TV HD, MY5 HD, Sevimli HD, Kinoteatr HD, Milliy HD, and UzHD.**

In September 2012 audiences had reached 1 million.

Issues related to the press of Uzbekistan are covered mainly in the magazine "Press of Uzbekistan". "Press of Uzbekistan" is a spiritual-educational, scientific-political magazine. Founder: Press and Information Agency of Uzbekistan, Broadcasting Company of Uzbekistan, Creative Union of Journalists of Uzbekistan. The magazine was originally published twice a month in Uzbek and Russian languages under the name "Turkestan printing house" ("Turkestanskiy pechatnik", 1918-24). Later, it was replaced by "Reporters' Companion" (1928-38), "Bolshevist Press" (1939-41), Russian "Nash Rabkor" (1924-25), "Tribuna Rabkora" (1927-28), in Uzbek and Russian. "Help to local press workers" ("V pomogd rabotnikam mestnoy pechati", 1952-64), "Uzbekistan press" ("Pechat Uzbekistana", 1965-68), "Mukhbir" ("Korrespondent", 1969-90) magazines were published in Uzbekistan.

Regardless of the form of ownership, "Uzbekistan press" widely covers the activities of the republic's mass media (media) - newspapers and

magazines, TV and radio, news agencies, publishing houses, printing houses, book sales, and creative associations. In the following years, the process of reforms and updates in the mass media of the republic, including improving the professional skills of journalists, helping them to exchange creative and practical experience, training journalist personnel and improving the new technological system of news media, as well as topics related to the dissemination of news and experiences about the activities of mass media in the countries of the world among the mass media of Uzbekistan is widely covered. Today, mass media plays a key role in society. In addition, the role of mass media in the social and political life of Uzbekistan is rapidly strengthening. If we look at the history of mass media activity in our country, in 1991, only 395 media outlets were operating in our country. By 2016, their number reached 1,437, and today their number is close to 2,000, and most of them are private. The University of Journalism and Mass Communications was established in order to improve the system of training modern specialists for mass media in Uzbekistan. Organizations such as the Creative Union of Journalists of Uzbekistan, the National Press Center, the National Association of Electronic Mass Media, the Public Fund for the Support and Development of Independent Print Mass Media and News Agencies, and the International Press Club are successfully operating. Representatives of leading foreign media, including Reuters, France Press, BBC, The Economist, Xinhua, "Voice of America", "Fergana.Ru", Eurasianet reporters are working freely in Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan has chosen an irreversible path aimed at ensuring openness, freedom of speech and information, as well as turning mass media into a real "fourth power".

Saida Mirziyoyeva, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Public Fund for the Support and Development of the National Mass Media of the Republic of Uzbekistan, spoke about this in her speech at the International Online Conference on Free Public Use of Information held on September 28, 2020.

The role of mass media in this was very big. Ensuring the right to use information, establishing and developing information diversity is, on the one hand, an issue of human rights, and at the same time, it is one of the sources of national security. Freedom of speech is the foundation for other types of human rights.

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