



Formation of the institution of parliamentary opposition and its constitutional and legal guarantees

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the development of the parliamentary opposition institution in Uzbekistan, including its constitutional and legal foundations. The author highlights the role of healthy political competition between the parliamentary majority and the opposition within a democratic governance system, as well as its impact on law-making and parliamentary oversight. During the research process, normative-legal analysis, comparative-legal, historical, and systematic approaches were employed. Special attention is given to the opposition's right to submit alternative legislative proposals, its participation in parliamentary oversight, and its role in ensuring political pluralism.

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Парламент мухолифати институтининг шаклланиши ва унинг конституциявий-ҳуқуқий кафолатлари

АННОТАЦИЯ

Калит сўзлар:

парламент,
парламент назорати,
фракция,
фракциялар блоки,
парламентдаги кўпчилик,
парламент мухолифати.

Ушбу мақолада Ўзбекистонда парламент мухолифати институтининг шаклланиши ва унинг конституциявий-ҳуқуқий кафолатлари таҳлил қилинган. Муаллиф томонидан парламентдаги кўпчилик ва мухолифат ўртасидаги соғлом сиёсий рақобатнинг демократик бошқарув тизимидаги ўрни ҳамда қонун ижодкорлиги ва парламент назоратига таъсири асосланган ҳолда ёритиб берилган. Тадқиқот жараёнида норматив-ҳуқуқий таҳлил, қиёсий-ҳуқуқий, тарихий ва тизимли ёндашув усуллари қўлланилган. Мақолада мухолифатнинг қонун лойиҳалари юзасидан муқобил таклифлар киритиш ҳуқуқи, парламент назоратида иштирок этиши ва сиёсий плюрализмни таъминлашдаги ўрнига алоҳида эътибор қаратилган.

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Формирование института парламентской оппозиции и его конституционно-правовые гарантии

АННОТАЦИЯ

Ключевые слова:

парламент,
парламентский контроль,
фракция,
блок фракций,
парламентское
большинство,
парламентская оппозиция.

В данной статье проанализированы формирование института парламентской оппозиции в Узбекистане и его конституционно-правовые гарантии. Автор раскрывает значение здоровой политической конкуренции между парламентским большинством и оппозицией в системе демократического управления, а также её влияние на законотворчество и парламентский контроль. В процессе исследования использовались методы нормативно-правового анализа, сравнительно-правовой, исторический и системный подходы. Особое внимание уделено праву оппозиции вносить альтернативные законопроекты, её участию в парламентском контроле и роли в обеспечении политического плюрализма.

INTRODUCTION

The institution of parliament plays a crucial role in maintaining the balance between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of state power based on the principle of separation of powers. It ensures mutual checks and balances, strengthens democratic processes in the country, and protects the interests of the people. Parliament not only adopts laws but also exercises parliamentary oversight, making it one of the key institutions that ensures the stability and effectiveness of state governance.

Undoubtedly, a modern democratic system of governance is difficult to imagine without healthy political competition between the parliamentary majority and the opposition. This institution is an essential factor in improving the effectiveness of public administration and ensuring that adopted laws are well-developed and comprehensive.

Therefore, studying the institution of parliamentary opposition and analyzing the participation of political parties within it is of significant importance. In particular, the issue of regulating the status of the opposition in parliament on a constitutional and legal basis is especially relevant in the context of ongoing democratic reforms. This article is dedicated to examining this very issue.

METHODOLOGY

This article analyzes the formation and legal status of the institution of parliamentary opposition in Uzbekistan based on legislative sources. The following legal research methods were applied in the study:

- Normative legal analysis – the content of the Constitution, laws, and parliamentary regulations was examined;
- Comparative legal method – models of parliamentary opposition in international practice (in particular, Westminster and Continental models) were compared with the experience of Uzbekistan;
- Historical method – the developmental stages of the opposition institution in the years 2005, 2015, and 2025 were analyzed;
- Systematic approach – the status, powers, and functions of the opposition in parliament were considered as an interrelated system.

As sources of the research, the Constitution, laws, resolutions of the chambers of the Oliy Majlis, and the views of leading legal scholars were used. The theoretical framework was linked with practical legal mechanisms through the analysis of legal documents and real-life examples.

RESULTS

The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in his historic speech at the first session of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis following the elections, emphasized the importance of revitalizing the parliamentary opposition. He stated: “We believe that if the healthy competition and the clash of opposing views seen during elections are transferred into parliament, it will undoubtedly contribute to the development of laws that truly serve the interests of the people” [1]. To this end, the head of state proposed expanding the number of guaranteed rights for the parliamentary opposition from three to six, granting it the right to hold one committee chairmanship and two deputy chair positions, and introducing at least one issue each quarter within the framework of the “Government Hour” and parliamentary inquiries.

Undoubtedly, many decisions in parliament are adopted under the significant influence of the parliamentary majority. However, in a truly democratic parliamentary system, the power of the majority must not become absolute; rather, it is essential to maintain balance by considering the position of the opposition. The parliamentary opposition seeks to defend its views and position as an alternative to the majority’s decisions. This, in turn, fosters ideological and opinion diversity – that is, political pluralism – in state activities as enshrined in the Constitution.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has undertaken significant reforms aimed at improving the organizational and legal foundations of its national parliament – the Oliy Majlis. These reforms have also extended to the institutions of both the parliamentary majority and the opposition. It is impossible to view these two concepts in isolation. The existence of a parliamentary majority – and the fact that most decisions are adopted by it – naturally creates the need for a parliamentary opposition that puts forward alternative proposals. The presence of diverse opinions and critical perspectives prevents the adoption of one-sided decisions by parliament and contributes to the development of legislation based on broader public interests.

Looking back at history, it can be observed that several factions have acted as the parliamentary opposition in Uzbekistan’s legislative development. Notably, on February 17, 2005, the People’s Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (PDP) faction declared that it would assume the role of the parliamentary opposition in response to the formation of a democratic bloc composed of the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the “Fidokorlar” People’s Democratic Party, and the “Adolat” Social Democratic Party.

On March 18, 2015, the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted a resolution titled “On the Statement of the Factions of the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Businesspeople – the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan and the Democratic Party ‘Milliy Tiklanish’ on the Formation of the ‘Democratic Forces Bloc’ [2]”. On the same date, the Legislative Chamber adopted a resolution declaring the faction of the People’s Democratic Party of Uzbekistan in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis as the opposition to the Democratic Forces Bloc, which constituted the parliamentary majority [3].

Following the 2019 parliamentary elections, the political party factions represented in the Legislative Chamber neither formed inter-factional blocs nor declared themselves as the parliamentary opposition—unlike the practice observed in previous convocations. Nevertheless, Alisher Qodirov, leader of the “Milliy Tiklanish” party and its parliamentary faction, stated in a post-election announcement that he was dissatisfied with the results of the repeat voting. He indicated that, depending on whether an agreement was reached with the current parliament, the party would either act as an ally or assume the role of the opposition [4]. Despite the existing legal framework and the availability of such options, none of the factions opted for either course during the 2020–2024 term.

In the current convocation of the Legislative Chamber, the unification of factions into a bloc has been observed. For instance, on May 5, 2025, the faction of the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Businesspeople – the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan and the faction of the Democratic Party “Milliy Tiklanish” signed an agreement to establish the “Development Bloc” in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan [5].

The “Development Bloc” unites 93 deputies, thereby forming the parliamentary majority and becoming the leading political force.

The main purpose of establishing this bloc is to combine the efforts of the two factions to effectively implement the programmatic goals and objectives of their respective political parties.

At the same time, to preserve political diversity within parliament and ensure a balance of power, on May 13, 2025, the People’s Democratic Party of Uzbekistan officially declared itself the parliamentary opposition faction [6]. The party announced that it does not support certain aspects of the “Development Bloc” and the government program endorsed by it.

As a parliamentary opposition faction, the party has identified the representation of its electorate’s interests and the defense of the principles of social justice and equality as its primary objectives. This contributes to fostering healthy political competition and maintaining a balance between diverse viewpoints within parliament.

The increasing activity of the opposition reflects the tangible outcomes of the ongoing reforms in the country. This dynamic is also evident in the speeches of deputies and in the debates over draft legislation.

In particular, Shukhrat Yakubov, a member of the “Adolat” Social Democratic Party faction and a deputy, expressed his views on the institution of parliamentary opposition. He emphasized that the opposition should no longer be limited to expressing opinions alone, but must also directly participate in the legislative process. According to him, the opposition in parliament is becoming a political force whose voice must be heard. From this perspective, the official declaration by the People’s Democratic Party of Uzbekistan on May 13, 2025, recognizing itself as the parliamentary opposition, marked a significant milestone. At the same time, the party actively participated in the law-making process, raising strong objections to a draft law concerning land plots, which ultimately led to its revision. Furthermore, an official statistical report was also subjected to re-evaluation as a result of critical parliamentary debates. According to the deputy, these developments indicate the emergence of a parliament built upon healthy political competition and the open contest of diverse viewpoints [7].

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the institution of parliamentary opposition is not a new phenomenon for the Uzbek parliament.

First of all, if we consider the lexical meaning of the term “opposition” (from the Latin *oppositio* – “to set against”), it refers to a minority that does not accept official views. It represents the perspectives and objectives of the minority and seeks to challenge or counterbalance the views and goals of the majority participants in political processes[8].

In global parliamentary practice, there are two widely recognized models of opposition: the Westminster (Anglo-Saxon) model and the Continental (French) model. In the Westminster model, the distinction between the ruling power and the opposition is clearly defined: the party that wins the elections forms the government, while the losing party becomes the opposition. In countries following this model, the status of the parliamentary opposition is explicitly emphasized in their constitutions.

In the French model, the parliamentary opposition consists of several parties. Thus, the institution of parliamentary opposition is widespread worldwide and, having proven its effectiveness, continues to maintain its significance today[9].

From a historical perspective, the granting of the right to form an opposition to parliamentary factions in the Republic of Uzbekistan is linked to a number of normative legal acts. Before the adoption of the Constitutional Law “On Strengthening the Role of Political Parties in the Renewal and Further Democratization of Public Administration and Modernization of the Country,” the mechanisms of the “parliamentary majority” and the “parliamentary opposition” were not specifically regulated by law. However, these concepts were reflected in Articles 56 and 57 of the “Regulations of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan,” approved by Resolution No. 102-I of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis on July 28, 2005. Article 56 of the Regulations stipulates that factions may unite into a bloc to coordinate their activities and represent their common interests within the Legislative Chamber. Article 57 provides that a faction or a bloc of factions comprising more than half of the deputies shall constitute the parliamentary majority[10]. From an organizational standpoint, it was noted that any faction not part of the parliamentary majority could declare itself as the parliamentary opposition. However, the Regulations did not clearly define what rights or privileges such an opposition would possess. Since the temporary regulations of the chambers primarily encompassed provisions regulating their internal procedures, there remained a need to regulate these matters at the level of law.

The adoption of the Constitutional Law “On Strengthening the Role of Political Parties in the Renewal and Further Democratization of Public Administration and Modernization of the Country” provided a legal definition and clarity to the concepts of “parliamentary majority” and “parliamentary opposition” [11].

In this regard, the consolidation of opposition rights at the constitutional level in the updated Constitution serves to elevate democratic processes in the country to a new stage, in line with the principle of a “State Serving the People.” It also promotes greater responsibility and accountability across all branches of government. According to Article 39 of the Constitution, no one may discriminate against individuals in political parties, public associations, mass movements, or representative bodies of state power who form a minority and represent the opposition. Their rights, freedoms, and dignity are inviolable [12].

Following the current legislation, a faction that declares itself as the parliamentary opposition is entitled not only to the powers granted to all factions by law, but also to several specific rights. These include: submitting an alternative draft of a legislative

proposal or a draft resolution of the Legislative Chamber before the first reading; having its separate opinion on the matters under discussion recorded in the official transcript of the plenary session of the Legislative Chamber; and guaranteed representation in the conciliation commission on bills rejected by the Senate. Furthermore, the law firmly establishes that the rights of the parliamentary opposition may not be infringed or discriminated against by the parliamentary majority.

At the same time, efforts to enhance the role of the parliamentary opposition are continuing through the improvement of legislation. In particular, on July 30, 2025, the Law “On Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan Aimed at Expanding the Guaranteed Rights of the Parliamentary Opposition” was adopted [13].

The law consists of six articles and introduces amendments and additions aimed at expanding the guaranteed rights of the parliamentary opposition. These amendments were made to the Constitutional Laws “On the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan” and “On Strengthening the Role of Political Parties in the Renewal and Further Democratization of Public Administration and Modernization of the Country”, as well as to the laws “On the Regulations of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan”, “On Parliamentary Oversight” and “On Political Parties”. Specifically, the law provides for the following amendments:

- A political party faction in the Legislative Chamber that declares itself as the opposition shall be guaranteed the right to hold one committee chairmanship and two deputy chair positions;
- Such an opposition faction shall have the right to submit an alternative version of a draft law or its specific provisions up until the second reading of the draft;
- The opposition shall also be granted the right to propose at least one issue each quarter within the framework of the “Government Hour” and parliamentary inquiries.

This law introduces new legal mechanisms aimed at further clarifying the status and powers of the parliamentary opposition and ensuring its effective operation through legally guaranteed means.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above, it can be concluded that Uzbekistan’s legislation contains clear norms and mechanisms for recognizing the opposition and guaranteeing its rights. At the same time, when factions holding a minority of seats in the Oliy Majlis declare themselves as the opposition and make use of their rights, this can serve to enhance the quality and effectiveness of parliamentary activity.

Undoubtedly, the formal recognition and consolidation of the parliamentary opposition in legislation is a major achievement. However, ensuring its effective functioning requires the further development of political culture, the traditions of national parliamentarism, and the refinement of practical implementation mechanisms – a demand dictated by the evolving needs of the time.

Therefore, alongside legislative reforms, it remains a key priority to ensure the full and effective functioning of the institution of parliamentary opposition within the actual political processes. This, in turn, will contribute to deepening democratic developments in the country, enhancing the transparency and accountability of public authorities, and – most importantly – forming a parliament that truly reflects the will of the people.

Based on the above, to ensure the effective functioning of the institution of parliamentary opposition and to further improve the work of political party factions, it is proposed to introduce the following measures:

- granting opposition factions that have declared themselves as such the right to initiate a parliamentary inquiry;
- ensuring proportional representation of opposition members in all parliamentary committees;
- guaranteeing the right to be elected as Chairperson of the Committee on Budget and Economic Affairs of the Legislative Chamber.

Such guarantees would help maintain a balance among diverse political perspectives in parliament and strengthen the organizational and legal mechanisms for opposition activity. This would ensure the meaningful participation of the opposition in the law-making process, creating the foundation for adopting decisions that reflect broad public interests by taking into account critical and alternative viewpoints.

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