

Participation and Activity of Political Parties in the Formation of Parliament in Uzbekistan

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ABSTRACT

This article covers the participation of political parties in the parliamentary elections and their activities in the electoral process. At the same time, this article discusses the role of political parties, which are an important institution of civil society, in enhancing the political culture of citizens and the role and importance of promoting diversity of opinion in society.

Keywords: political parties, electoral system, elections, parliament, multiparty system, senator, deputy.

The formation of parliament through popular elections is the most important sign of a democratic state governed by the rule of law. Elections are the supreme expression of the direct realization of the power and will of the people, a huge socio-political event that is the basis for the democratic organization of state power. In Uzbekistan, elections are held by secret voting on general, equal, direct and multiparty basis. This is one of the main conditions of a Democratic state.

The democratic conduct of elections depends in many ways on the electoral system. The transition from a non-democratic system to a democratic electoral system in Uzbekistan has not been easy. This process required not only a certain amount of time, but also serious preparation. To achieve the goal, first of all, a completely new legal framework was required. In Soviet times, however, it was impossible to create such conditions. After the independence of Uzbekistan, favorable conditions were created for real democratic elections on a multi-party basis [2].

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted on December 8, 1992, became the basis for the formation of a democratic electoral system [1]. Laws adopted by the Supreme Council of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including, "On Elections to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan", December 28, 1993, "On guarantees of electoral rights of citizens" May 5, 1994, "On the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan" September 22, 1994 created the legal basis for the December 25, 1994 elections to the Oliy Majlis.

On December 25, 1994, in connection with the first parliamentary elections to the Oliy Majlis, the existing political parties in the country held their congresses. According to Articles 20 and 22 of the Law "on Elections to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan", the right to nominate candidates for the Oliy Majlis of the Republic was vested in the highest body of political parties.

In particular, on October 29, 1994, the II Extraordinary Congress of the Homeland Development Party, and on November 1, 1994, II Extraordinary Congress of the People's Democratic Party was held. At this congresses, the election program of the parties, the nomination of candidates to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan and a number of other issues were considered[3].

As a result, 69 people were elected to the Oliy Majlis from the People's Democratic Party, 14 from the Homeland Development Party, and 167 from local authorities. Thus, the first convocation of the Oliy Majlis, held for the first time in the framework of the Constitution and electoral legislation adopted in the conditions of independence, was an important historical step taken by Uzbekistan towards democracy.

Until the next parliamentary elections, there were five political parties in the country. Then they had the right to participate in elections in a democratic environment, on the basis of perfectly developed legislation.

On December 5, 1999, in connection with the elections to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan of the second convocation, all political parties began to prepare for the elections, plenary sessions, extraordinary congresses were held.

As a result of the elections held on December 25, 1999, 49 deputies from the People's Democratic Party; 34 deputies from the Fidokorlar National Democratic Party; 20 deputies from the Homeland Development Party; 11 deputies from the Social Democratic Party of Justice; 10 deputies from the Democratic Party of National Revival; 16 deputies from initiative groups of voters; 107 deputies from the representative bodies of power were elected to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

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On May 25, 2000, the second session of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan of the second convocation discussed the main reasons for the need to move to a bicameral system for the first time - the need to strengthen parliament, transform the legislative process into a full professional basis, to improve the quality of laws and decisions. Furthermore, there was a need for a split representation, with the lower house consisting of parties and citizen initiative groups (120 deputies), and the upper house consisting of local government representatives (six deputies from local councils in Karakalpakstan, Tashkent, and regions) and 16 members appointed by the president (100 senators).

In this regard, the next elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis, regional, district and city councils of People's Deputies were scheduled for December 26, 2004. Serious preparations were made for the elections. Observers, experts, media, representatives of political parties and the Center for Support of Independent Candidates from foreign countries and international organizations participated in all stages of the election process. The voting process was also closely monitored by them.

Elections held in 2004 differed from the previous ones in a number of ways:

- a legal requirement that at least 30% of candidates nominated by political parties be women;
- previously elections had required at least 50% of the electorate to be considered valid, then the figure was established 33%;
- under previous law, convicted persons could not run for parliament. Then this restriction only applied to persons whose convictions had not been expunged;
- a Center for Support of Independent Candidates was established to protect the interests of independent candidates and assist them in organizing their election campaigns.

The ways of forming the parliament of Uzbekistan were defined in the Law "On elections to the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan" adopted on August 28, 2003 in the new edition. On the eve of the elections, political parties in Uzbekistan conducted their own election campaigns, adopted relevant resolutions and documents at their congresses. For example, on October 23, 2004 the II Congress of Liberal Democratic Party, on October 30, 2004 the III Congress of Social Democratic Party of Justice, on October 31, 2004 the III Congress of Democratic Party of National Revival [5], on November 6, 2004 the IV Congress of People's Democratic Party were held. At these congresses, the election programs of the parties for participation in the elections to the bicameral parliament for the first time in the history of the country, parliamentary candidates were approved, issues related to the priorities of party structures during the election campaign were discussed. In connection with the transition to a bicameral parliament, elections to the Legislative Chamber were held on December 26, 2004, and 62 people's deputies were elected. On 9 January 2005, 58 deputies were elected in polling stations where candidates did not receive sufficient votes. The elections were held with the participation of candidates nominated by both political parties and initiative groups of voters in Uzbekistan.

As a result of the elections held on December 26, 2004, 28 deputies from the People's Democratic Party; 18 deputies from the Fidokorlar National Democratic Party; 10 deputies from the Social Democratic Party of Justice; 11 deputies from the Democratic Party of National Revival; 41 deputies from Liberal Democratic Party, 12 deputies from initiative groups of voters. As a result, in the Legislative Chamber, LiDeP formed the largest faction with 41 deputies and a parliamentary majority. This is due to the fact that LiDeP, despite being one of the youngest parties, conducted an excellent election campaign, the party's charter and program, the election program found its supporters among the people.

On January 17-20, 2005, elections to the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan were held. According to the election results, 84 senators elected to the upper house were registered. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the electoral legislation, 16 members of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis were appointed from among respected citizens with extensive practical experience and distinguished service in science, art, literature, industry and other spheres of state and society in accordance with the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 24, 2005.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On amendments and additions to some laws of the Republic of Uzbekistan in connection with the improvement of the electoral legislation" adopted on July 1, 2009 played an important role in the life of the country.

According to this law:

First, the number of seats in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis was increased from 120 to 150 (135 deputies are elected on a multi-party basis in territorial constituencies, and 15 seats are allocated to the public organization - the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan);

Second, candidates from initiative groups would no longer run in the elections;

Third, the institute of “authorized representative of a political party” was introduced (it was given the right to participate in the counting of votes at polling stations, verification of signature sheets, the number of trustees of candidates was increased from 5 to 10); fourthly, the previously established deadline for registration of a party intending to run in the elections by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan was reduced (from six months to four months); political parties had to collect 50,000 signatures to be eligible to run in the election, then that number was reduced to 40,000, and so on.

On December 27, 2009, elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis and regional, district and city councils of people's deputies were held in accordance with the new legislation. Four political parties in the country participated in the election. The election process was directly monitored by about 300 observers from foreign countries and international organizations. The participation of 87.8% of the registered voters showed that the people of Uzbekistan were not indifferent to the political process in the country.

As a result of the elections, deputies were elected to the Lower House of Parliament in 96 constituencies. In addition, at the conference of the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan on election day, 15 deputies of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan were elected.

As a result of strong competition between political parties and the candidates nominated by them, none of the candidates in the 39 constituencies holding elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan was able to collect the required number of votes. Therefore, a repeat vote was held on January 10, 2010.

Following the elections to the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 150 deputies were elected. In particular, 53 deputies were elected from LiDeP, 32 from PDP, 31 from DPNR and 19 from SDPJ [7].

According to Article 59 of the Electoral Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, if in the election of deputies of the Legislative Chamber and local Councils more than two candidates are nominated in the constituency, but none of them is elected, the constituency election commission shall decide on the conduct of repeat voting in the constituency for the two candidates who received the most votes and shall notify the relevant election commission and the constituency voters.

Repeat voting shall be held within two weeks in accordance with the general rules.

A candidate who receives more votes than the other candidate in the second round of voting shall be deemed elected.

The percentage of voter participation in repeat voting is not taken into account.

According to Article 60 of the Electoral Code, repeat elections of deputies of the Legislative Chamber and deputies of local Councils will held:

- if the election in the constituency has been declared invalid or not passed;
- if the repeat voting did not allow to determine the elected deputy;
- if no more than two candidates have been nominated in the constituency and none of them has been elected.

Repeat elections of deputies of the Legislative Chamber and deputies of local Councils shall be conducted by the constituency election commission on the instructions of the relevant election commission.

In case of detection of violations of the electoral law in the activities of constituency and precinct electoral commissions, the relevant election commission may decide whether repeat elections should be held by the new constituency and precinct election commissions. Voting shall take place in the same polling stations set up for the main election and on the same voter lists.

Repeat elections of deputies of the Legislative Chamber and deputies of local Councils shall be held no later than one month after the main election.

Following the elections, political parties won the following seats in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan:

1. Liberal Democratic Party - 53 seats;
2. Democratic Party of National Revival - 36 seats;
3. Social Democratic Party of Justice- 24 seats;
4. People's Democratic Party - 22 seats;

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5. Ecological Party of Uzbekistan - 15 seats.

A total of more than 5,000 observers from political parties and citizens' self-government bodies nominated by the candidates monitored the repeat voting process.

According to the Electoral Code, the Central Election Commission registers deputies elected to the Legislative Chamber on the basis of protocols received from constituency election commissions. Persons elected as deputies shall have the status of deputies of the Legislative Chamber from the moment of their registration by the Central Election Commission. Individuals elected as deputies of the Legislative Chamber must notify the Central Election Commission in writing of the resignation from office, which does not correspond to the status of a deputy of the Legislative Chamber. Deputies of the Legislative Chamber shall be issued a certificate and a badge by the Central Election Commission within ten days.

Civil society cannot be imagined without public organizations, especially political parties. A democratic state is built through the struggle of parties in elections. A democratic state is built only when a political force that pursues the interests of the majority of the population and can show the right way for the realization of these interests comes to the top of the state. Therefore, the scientific slogan "The driving force of democratic political processes is political parties and elections" is presented to the scientific community.

Elections cannot be imagined without political parties. Elections are a measure of the place of political parties in society and their position among the population.

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