

# UZBEKISTAN 2021 HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Uzbekistan is a constitutional republic with a political system led by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and his supporters. On October 24, the government held presidential election and President Mirziyoyev won re-election with 80.2 percent of the total votes. A genuine choice of political alternatives was not available to voters because true opposition candidates were unable to register or run for office. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe stated, “while election day was peaceful, significant irregularities were observed and important safeguards were often disregarded during voting, counting, and tabulation.”

The government authorizes four different entities to investigate criminal activity and provide security. The Ministry of Internal Affairs controls police, who are responsible for law enforcement, maintenance of order, and the investigation of crimes. It also investigates and disciplines police officers if they are accused of human rights violations. The National Guard provides for public order and the security of diplomatic missions and radio and television broadcasting, and other state entities. The State Security Service, whose chairperson reports directly to the president, deals with national security and intelligence matters, including terrorism, corruption, organized crime, border control, and narcotics. The Prosecutor General’s Office is mandated to protect the rights and freedoms of citizens and legally protected interests of the state, to conduct preliminary investigations of crimes, and to prosecute persons and entities accused of crimes. Civilian authorities generally maintained effective control over the security forces, but security services permeated civilian structures. Civilian authorities opaquely interacted with security services’ personnel, making it difficult to define the scope and limits of civilian authority. There were reports that members of the security and law enforcement agencies, particularly police and prison officials, committed abuses.

Significant human rights issues included credible reports of: unlawful or arbitrary killings, including extrajudicial killings; torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; arbitrary arrest or detention; political prisoners;































































































investigation into labor complaints within five business days. The ministry or a local governor's office could initiate a selective inspection of a business, and special inspections were conducted in response to accidents or complaints. Inspectors do have the authority to make unannounced inspections and initiate sanctions. Reports suggested that enforcement was uneven because of the difficulty and size of the informal economy, where employment was usually undocumented. Despite an increase in the number of labor inspectors in prior years, the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations lacked adequate staff to enforce compliance and prevent many violations in the informal sector. The most common labor violations were working without contracts, receiving lower than publicly announced payments, delayed payments, and substandard sanitary or hygienic working conditions. The government did not provide statistics on industrial accidents.

**Informal Sector:** Many employees had official part-time or low-income jobs and many continued to work informally. In April the International Monetary Fund estimated the informal sector employed approximately 40 percent of the workforce and produced one-third of GDP. The government worked to shift more of the economy from informal to the formal economy and to provide labor and social protections to those working informally.

The most common violations committed by private sector employers were violations of wage, overtime, and occupational health and safety standards. Although regulations provide standards for workplace safety, workers reportedly worked without necessary protective clothing and equipment at some hazardous job sites. More specific information was not available on sectors in which occupational safety violations were common, as well as on specific groups of workers who worked in dangerous conditions or without needed safety equipment. In March 2020 the country joined the Commonwealth of Independent States' Interstate Council for Industrial Safety to improve its industry safety standards.