

Press Release

Has Independence Restored Our Religion to Us? And From Whom Did We Gain Independence During those 35 Years?!

(Translated)

On August 28, 2026, at the closing ceremony commemorating the 35th anniversary of Uzbekistan's independence, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev stated: "Independence has restored to us—above all—our glory and honor, our sacred religion, our mother tongue, and our national values that had been forgotten."

We do not deny some of the positive changes that have occurred in religious life since independence, and we are well aware that Islam did not enter this land in 1991. For centuries, it has been a center of Islamic scholarship and civilization. Indeed, the eminent scholars mentioned by the President, such as al-Bukhari, al-Tirmidhi, al-Maturidi, and Burhan al-Din al-Marghinani, were raised and educated in a society governed by Islam.

Therefore, portraying Islam as a gift bestowed upon the people by independence requires both historical and Shari' explanation. Islam is not a religion that arises with a particular political system or with the attainment of independence; rather, it is the one true religion sent by Allah to humanity, a complete system that governs human life.

Accordingly, independence must be assessed not only in the religious sphere, but also in terms of political, economic and military independence, and the extent of dependence on external powers.

Over the past 35 years, to what extent has Uzbekistan made its domestic and foreign policy decisions independently? To what extent has it been influenced by foreign states and major geopolitical powers? To what extent does it possess independent sovereignty over its natural resources, strategic sectors, foreign trade, and investment and credit policies? If external sources and interests play a decisive role in important economic decisions, can this be called complete economic independence? The fact that the country's external debt has reached \$40 billion is by no means due to Islam.

To what extent are Uzbekistan's defense and security policies, military cooperation, armament issues, and military standards linked to external powers? And if weakening Russian military standards and transitioning to NATO standards were to cost the nation billions more in debt, how much additional debt would that impose?

We gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. But in the 35 years since, haven't new political, economic, and military dependencies emerged, whether

to Russia, the West, or other external powers? Isn't the fundamental truth of the plans being promoted under the guise of a "national project" simply subservience to Western capitalists?

Is the fruit of what we proudly call our "independence" the pride we take in exporting millions of migrant workers abroad?! Or do we take pride in sending our women, who deserve dignity and honor, who are the pillars of their homes, and for whom Islam has placed Paradise at their feet, to perform shameful work in foreign lands?! Aren't these actions shameful rather than a source of pride?!

We categorically reject the interpretation of replacing one foreign power with another as a success for our people! We believe it is our duty to clarify the true meaning of actual independence.

Independence is not only manifested in the state's flag, emblem, national anthem, and membership in international organizations, but also in the ability to make political decisions independently, to manage resources without having to sell it at the lowest prices to the people's historical enemies, and in the state's ability to manage its heavy industries on its own in defense policy, and to stop the aggressor if necessary.

The only political system that possesses an army that makes all the protectors of capitalism tremble – whether in the East or the West – and possesses the strongest and most stable economy in the world, and determines its position in foreign policy independently, is the system of Islam.

Only when Islam is fully implemented, with all its rulings, will we regain our glory, honor, and dignity!

And only then will world-class scholars, as you mentioned, reappear. For true honor does not come from mere independence, but is bestowed by the religion of Allah. And independence must be measured by its true essence, not its name. The Allah (swt) says: ﴿وَلِلَّهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُولِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَلَكِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾ **“But all honour and power belongs to Allah, His Messenger, and the believers, yet the hypocrites do not know”** [Al-Munafiqun 63:8].

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in Uzbekistan**