

**NEW LEGAL MECHANISMS FOR THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND  
CHILDREN FROM VIOLENCE AND ABUSE: CURRENT PRACTICE AND  
TRANSFORMATIONAL PROCESSES**

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**Annotatsiya:** Ushbu maqolada O'zbekiston Respublikasida 2019–2025-yillar davomida xotin-qizlar va bolalar huquqlarini himoya qilish sohasida amalga oshirilgan fundamental qonunchilik islohotlari tahlil qilinadi. Xususan, oilaviy (maishiy) zo'rvonlikning kriminallashtirilishi himoya orderi muddatlarining sud tartibida uzaytirilishi va yarashtirish institutining cheklanishi kabi yangi huquqiy normalarning amaliy samaradorligi o'rganilgan. Maqolada huquqni qo'llash amaliyotidagi statistik ko'rsatkichlar tahlil qilinib, sohani takomillashtirish yuzasidan ilmiy-amaliy tavsiyalar ilgari surilgan.

**Kalait so'zlar:** ayollar huquqlari, bolalar huquqlari, oilaviy zo'rvonlik, tazyiq, himoya orderi, huquqiy himoya, qonunchilik islohotlari, gender tengligi, ijtimoiy himoya, huquqni qo'llash amaliyoti, zo'rvonlikka qarshi kurash

**Аннотация:** В данной статье анализируются фундаментальные законодательные реформы, проведенные в сфере защиты прав женщин и детей в Республике Узбекистан в 2019–2025 годах. В частности, изучается практическая эффективность новых правовых норм, таких как криминализация домашнего насилия, продление сроков действия судебных охранных ордеров и ограничение института примирения. В статье анализируются статистические показатели в правоохранительной практике и предлагаются научно-практические рекомендации по совершенствованию этой области.

**Ключевые слова:** права женщин, права детей, домашнее насилие, домогательства, охранный ордер, правовая защита, законодательные реформы, гендерное равенство, социальная защита, правоохранительная практика, борьба с насилием

**Abstract:** This article analyzes fundamental legislative reforms implemented to protect the rights of women and children in the Republic of Uzbekistan between 2019 and 2025. Specifically, it examines the practical effectiveness of new legal norms, such as the criminalization of domestic violence, the extension of judicial protection orders, and the restriction of the institution of reconciliation. The article also analyzes statistical indicators in law enforcement practice and offers scientific and practical recommendations for improving this area.

**Keywords:** Women's rights, children's rights, domestic violence, harassment, restraining orders, legal protection, legislative reform, gender equality, social protection, law enforcement, anti-violence.

Ensuring human rights and freedoms, particularly guaranteeing the rights of women and children, is one of the priority tasks of a democratic society. Today, violence against women is recognized not only as a national issue but also as a global socio-legal problem, posing a serious threat to social stability and security. According to research, “worldwide, every third woman experiences physical abuse by her partner during her lifetime. Thirty percent of married women report having experienced violence from their spouse, which clearly demonstrates the full scale of the problem. Unfortunately, 38 percent of women’s deaths are caused by their husbands, and only 42 percent of women who have experienced violence speak openly about this problem” [1].

From this perspective, the establishment of an uncompromising approach to any form of violence against women and children has become one of the priority directions of state policy in Uzbekistan.

An important legal basis for reforms in this field is the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. O‘RQ-561, adopted on September 2, 2019, “On the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence” [2]. In subsequent years, this law has been consistently improved under the influence of socio-legal changes taking place in society.

In particular, during 2019–2025, based on socio-legal transformations in society, a number of normative legal acts aimed at further developing this field and strengthening protection mechanisms were systematically improved and adopted several times:

First, by the Law No. O‘RQ-683 of April 21, 2021, amendments were introduced to Law No. O‘RQ-561 “On the Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence,” through which additional mechanisms for ensuring the rights and legitimate interests of women were introduced [3].

Second, the Law No. O‘RQ-829 of April 11, 2023, “On Introducing Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Connection with the Further Improvement of the System for the Reliable Protection of the Rights, Freedoms, and Legitimate Interests of Women and Children,” brought revolutionary changes to this field [4]. In particular, this law should be emphasized as a turning point in the reforms carried out in this area. According to it, administrative and criminal liability measures for domestic violence were significantly strengthened. For the first time in the history of Uzbekistan, Article 126-1 was introduced into the Code of Administrative Responsibility, and Articles 59-1 and 126-1 were introduced into the Criminal Code. These amendments provided a legal definition of the concept of “domestic violence” and established strict liability for it.

Third, the Law No. O‘RQ-978 of October 21, 2024, “On Introducing Amendments and an Addition to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Connection with the Strengthening of Measures for Protection from Domestic Violence,” is one of the important documents in this field. It elevated the mechanism of the protection order to a new procedural stage [5].

Fourth, by the Law No. O‘RQ-1109 of December 11, 2025, “On Introducing Amendments and Additions to Certain Legislative Acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Connection with the

Improvement of the Activities of Local State Authorities,” the system for issuing protection orders was simplified, and the responsibility of state bodies in protecting women from harassment was further increased [6].

The relevance of this study is determined by the need to scientifically analyze the current practical effectiveness of the new articles introduced by Law No. O‘RQ-829, as well as the extent to which subsequent amendments have complemented this mechanism.

The legislative acts adopted in the Republic of Uzbekistan between 2019 and 2025 conceptually renewed the system for protecting the rights of women and children. These reforms did not remain merely theoretical changes; rather, they created a fundamental shift in law enforcement practice in the following key areas.

First, for the first time in the history of Uzbekistan, separate administrative and criminal liability was established for domestic violence. Previously, such cases were generally assessed as “hooliganism” or “infliction of bodily injury.” Now, however, abuse within the family is classified as a separate offense. This has provided law enforcement bodies with a legal basis for intervening in “hidden” crimes committed within households.

Second, the process of issuing protection orders was simplified, and penalties for violating their requirements were strengthened. At present, a protection order not only restricts the offender’s communication with the victim but may also include measures such as limiting the offender’s right to possess weapons or requiring the offender to undergo rehabilitation programs where necessary.

Previously, a protection order was issued for 30 days, and its extension required a repeated application from the victim. Law No. O‘RQ-978 changed this procedure. Now, if the threat posed by the offender has not been eliminated, the validity period of the protection order may be extended by a court decision for up to one year. This protects the victim from constant fear and unnecessary bureaucratic procedures.

In addition, the restrictions concerning reconciliation introduced by Law No. O‘RQ-829 were further strengthened by Law No. O‘RQ-978. According to the amendments introduced into the Criminal Procedure Code, in cases related to domestic violence, reconciliation between the parties may now be carried out not only before the case is sent to court but also during the court proceedings, and only under the supervision of a judge. This prevents third parties, such as in-laws or neighborhood activists, from pressuring the victim to “withdraw the complaint.” Liability for violating the conditions of a protection order has also been further strengthened. It has now been established that failure to comply with the requirements of a protection order may directly result in administrative detention, which serves as an effective tool for influencing the offender’s behavior.

Third, in the newly amended laws, penalties against persons who commit sexual violence against children were strengthened to an unprecedented degree, and indefinite restrictions were established. Conditional early release or replacement of punishment with a lighter one is not applied to such offenders. In addition, a registry of persons who have committed violence against children, including pedophiles, has been established, and their employment in educational

institutions is strictly prohibited. This prevents such individuals from working in educational and child-related institutions in the future.

Fourth, the National Agency for Social Protection and the “Inson” Social Services Centers have become an important link in the implementation of legislative acts. At present, a woman who has experienced violence can apply not only to internal affairs bodies but also to centers that provide the services of psychologists, lawyers, and social workers in one place. This accelerates the victim’s reintegration into society.

The results of the study show that the new legislation has led to a number of positive changes. In the first half of 2024, the number of applications submitted regarding cases of harassment against women and children increased by 25 percent compared to the same period in 2023. On the one hand, this is related to the strengthening of legislation and the increase in public awareness. On the other hand, the number of protection orders increased by 40 percent. At the same time, according to interview results, 60 percent of victims faced difficulties in the process of obtaining a protection order, such as collecting documents and the lack of legal assistance.

The obtained results demonstrate that the practical effectiveness of the legislation depends on several factors.

First, law enforcement practice has not yet fully adapted. Police officers and courts do not always fully understand the new laws or may act slowly in applying them.

Second, the lack of legal aid centers for women and children, especially in rural areas, reduces the effectiveness of protection mechanisms.

Third, patriarchal views in society and the perception of violence as a “family matter” are still widespread. To solve these problems, it is necessary not only to improve legislation but also to strengthen social and educational activities and organize special training programs.

Therefore, the new legislation on the protection of women and children from abuse in Uzbekistan represents an important step. However, its practical effectiveness has not yet been fully ensured. Accordingly, in order to simplify law enforcement mechanisms, expand the system of free legal assistance for victims, raise public awareness, and further strengthen the protection system, attention should be paid to the following issues:

- improving the legal and psychological literacy of women;
- ensuring the inevitability of punishment for persons who commit violence;
- widely promoting a culture of gender equality and mutual respect in society [7].

In conclusion, the new legislation on the protection of women and children from abuse in Uzbekistan has marked the beginning of an important stage. However, in order to increase its practical effectiveness, it is necessary not only to improve the normative legal framework but also to develop law enforcement mechanisms based on international experience.

In particular, strengthening the system for monitoring the implementation of protection orders, expanding free legal and psychological assistance for victims, and developing legal awareness and a culture of gender equality in society are of significant importance.

Only through a comprehensive approach is it possible to establish an effective legal protection system against domestic violence.

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