



PEACE DIPLOMACY IN INTERNATIONAL AND ISLAMIC LAW: ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE EXPERIENCE OF UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the concept and practice of peace diplomacy through the dual lenses of International law and Islamic law, focusing particularly on the experience of Uzbekistan. Both International and Islamic legal traditions regard peace as a fundamental objective of human coexistence and interstate relations. While International law institutionalizes peace through mechanisms such as the United Nations Charter, Islamic law embeds peace within its spiritual, moral and juridical framework. Uzbekistan, as a Muslim-majority state and an active participant in the international community, demonstrates a unique synthesis of these traditions through its proactive peace-oriented diplomacy, mediation initiatives and commitment to regional stability. The study concludes that Uzbekistan's peace diplomacy exemplifies the compatibility of Islamic legal principles with modern international norms.

Introduction. Peace diplomacy represents one of the most vital dimensions of international relations and international law in the 21st century. As global conflicts persist in various regions the pursuit of peace through lawful, diplomatic and moral means remains a universal aspiration. The interaction between International and Islamic law in promoting peace has increasingly become a topic of scholarly and practical relevance. Uzbekistan's approach to foreign policy since its independence in 1991 has emphasized "peaceful coexistence", "regional stability" and "good-neighborhood". This article examines Uzbekistan's application of peace diplomacy in international law, highlighting its constitutional commitments, regional mediation efforts and contributions to global peace process, particularly in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Uzbekistan's foreign policy framework was shaped by its independence declaration on August 31, 1991, amid the dissolution of the Soviet Union and ensuring geopolitical turbulence in Central Asia. The country's Constitution, adopted in 1992 and amended in 2023, explicitly aligns with international law's core tenets. Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan codifies a "progressive peaceful foreign policy aimed at the comprehensive development of bilateral and multilateral relations with countries and international



organizations”¹ emphasizing respect for international norms. Under Sh.Mirziyoyev reforms since 2016 have transformed Uzbekistan from isolationism to proactive diplomacy. The 2023 Constitutional amendments reinforced international treaties as integral to domestic law (Article 15), ensuring *pacta sunt servanda*² - the principle that agreements must be kept.

Uzbekistan’s practice of peace diplomacy is exemplified in its mediation of regional disputes and advocacy for non-violent resolutions, consistent with UN Charter article 33’s toolkit of negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, juridical settlement and regional arrangements.

Central Asia’s post-Soviet borders, often arbitrarily drawn, have sparked tensions, yet Uzbekistan has championed delimitation through bilateral diplomacy. Uzbekistan mediated water-sharing disputes with Tajikistan and Kazakhstan over the Syr-Darya River, proposing multilateral forums under the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea³. In 2018, it hosted the Central Asia UN High-Level International Conference on Water, underscoring cooperation per the UN Water underscoring cooperation per the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Charter, where Uzbekistan plays a key role.

Domestically, Uzbekistan’s 2018 Law on Mediation operationalizes international standards, allowing mediation in civil, economic and family disputes with provisions for international agreements to prevail. This law supported by USAID and UNDP, has elevated Uzbekistan’s World Justice Project Rule of Law Index ranking. The Tashkent International Arbitration Centre established in 2018, further integrates mediation for investor-state disputes, applying foreign law and UNCITRAL rules.

Uzbekistan’s diplomacy extends to high-profile peace processes, particularly in Afghanistan, where it leverages its geographic position for multilateral engagement. As a neighbor sharing 144 km border, Uzbekistan has been pivotal in Afghanistan’s stabilization. It hosted the 2018 Tashkent Conference on “Afghanistan: peace process, security cooperation and regional connectivity”⁴ co-chaired by UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and attended by Central Asian leaders, EU Security Council Resolution (1999) and economic integration via Trans-Afghan railway project. As well as, Uzbekistan facilitated the 2021 Moscow Format talks and provided humanitarian aid exceeding \$1 million post-2021 Taliban takeover, while advocating women’s rights and counter-terrorism under UNSC Resolution (2021). By hosting SCO’s Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent since 2004, Uzbekistan coordinates intelligence-sharing, preventing spillover from Afghan conflicts.

As a UN member since 1992, Uzbekistan actively contributes to peacekeeping debates, co-authoring resolutions on religious tolerance and hosting Summits directed to peacekeeping.

¹ Constitution of Uzbekistan, Article 18. <https://lex.uz/docs/6451070>

² Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, 23.05.1969
https://www.un.org/ru/documents/decl_conv/conventions/law_treaties.shtml

³ Interstate commission for water saving coordination of Central Asia
<http://www.icwc-aral.uz/ifas.htm>

⁴ <https://www.uzbekembassy.in/declaration-of-the-tashkent-conference-on-afghanistan-peace-process-security-cooperation-and-regional-connectivity-2/>



In parallel, Uzbekistan's predominantly Muslim population informs its diplomacy through Islamic law principles. Islamic law considers peace as a divine objective and moral duty. The Qur'an emphasizes peace with verses like surah Al-Hujurat (9-10) urging mediation between conflicting parties⁵.

The Hanafi fiqh tradition, dominant in Central Asia, prioritizes *sulh* (reconciliation), aligning with international law's focus on peaceful dispute resolution. Uzbekistan's integration of these frameworks has positioned it as regional mediator and contributor to peace.⁶

Uzbekistan's experience illustrates that peace diplomacy grounded in both international law and Islamic jurisprudence can reinforce regional stability and global cooperation. International law provides institutional and procedural mechanisms, while Islamic law offers moral and spiritual foundations for reconciliation and justice. Together, they shape a holistic model of diplomacy that transcends legal positivism and embodies ethical statecraft.

The case of Uzbekistan demonstrates that adherence to Islamic values of *sulh* and *adl* (justice) can enhance compliance with international norms, providing that peace is not only a legal obligation, but also a moral imperative.

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