

Uzbekistan: Million-Soums Fines for Teaching Islam to Children

News:

On June 25, deputies of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted in the first reading a bill prohibiting parents from sending their children to study in unregistered religious organizations or to individuals without the appropriate permission. The bill was initiated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. It is planned to establish administrative liability for violating this ban. The fine for ignoring this requirement will be from 10 to 15 BRV (from 3.4 million soums to 5.1 million soums), if the ban is violated again, the fine will increase and will be from 15 to 25 BRV (from 5.1 million soums to 8.5 million soums). Also, the parents or guardians of the child may be subject to administrative arrest for up to 15 days.

One of the initiators of the bill, an officer of the special anti-terrorist service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Lieutenant Colonel Abduvahid Shukurov, told journalists that there are many cases of deportation of Uzbek children from foreign countries. ***"The people who teach there are not Arabs, but people we are looking for, or who have gone abroad because they do not have the qualifications to teach in Uzbekistan. Our main goal is to ensure that they receive a healthy, pure Islamic education so that they do not fall under the influence of extremist and terrorist organizations"***, - he said.

Comment:

Observers on the ground say parents are forced to send their children abroad because there is no legal way to provide them with any religious education in Uzbekistan. The 16 existing secondary religious schools in Uzbekistan only accept children over 16, and their numbers are considered insufficient to meet Muslim needs.

It should be noted that Mirziyoyev's rise to power in 2016 was accompanied by the announcement of large-scale liberal reforms, which also affected the religious sphere. But, as it turned out in practice, all of this was populist in nature, and as soon as the new president consolidated his power, everything began to gradually slide back to the practices of Karimov's time. For example, in 2018 alone, 116 "hujras" (home madrassas) were closed. In addition, starting in August 2018, control over the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Uzbekistan and the Committee on Religious Affairs was transferred to the security forces by appointing Dilshod Khoshimov, an employee of the State Security Service, to the post of deputy head of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Uzbekistan, and Lieutenant Colonel of the Ministry of Internal Affairs Nuriymon Abulhasan to the post of deputy head of the Committee on Religious Affairs.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Muhammad Mansour**