

Mirziyoyev Revives “blacklists” of Muslims

News:

The well-known Uzbek blogger, Mirrahmat Muminov, announced that he has information about the introduction of total control and surveillance of parishioners of mosques in the country. He reported this on his Facebook page:

“The Committee for Religious Affairs and the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, together with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, were instructed to compile lists of regular parishioners of mosques. This decision is related to the growing religious radicalism and popularity of religious ideas among young people. The goal is to prevent their radicalization. Imams are also instructed to instruct young people, dissuade them from extremism, and keep lists of aggressive parishioners. Mosques are required to provide data from surveillance cameras to law enforcement agencies.

Imams of mosques are also tasked with mentoring young men with beards, promoting the ideas of religious tolerance characteristic of their madhhab, and warning about global religious conflict situations. Imams must compile separate lists of aggressive young men who disparage mosque officials or speak out critically.

In addition, all mosques have been instructed to register their CCTV cameras and hand over the recordings to law enforcement agencies. Imams have been reminded that while they love their jobs, disobeying the authorities will result in punishment, reprimands and other serious consequences.”

Comment:

Recall that the “blacklist” of religious activists was introduced by the previous President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov as part of an unprecedented fight he waged to prevent a religious and political revival in the country. After coming to power in 2017, Mirziyoyev formally abolished the “blacklists” of people suspected of Islamic activity or convicted of it, then solemnly declaring the removal of 16 thousand people from the lists. And in 2019, a representative of the Secretariat of the Human Rights Commissioner, Saidbek Azimov, stated that Uzbekistan no longer keeps such records of religious activists and there are no more “blacklists”.

If such lists of mosque attendees are compiled and monitored, this practice will mean not just a return to the past, but a significant increase in pressure on the population, even compared to the times of Karimov. Obviously, the goal of these measures is to create an atmosphere of fear among the people in order to reduce attendance at mosques in general, thereby slowing down the rate of the population's return to Islamic self-awareness.

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