

THE ACTIVITIES OF NATIONAL-CULTURAL CENTERS IN NAVOI, BUKHARA AND SAMARKAND REGIONS AND THEIR ROLE IN EXTERNAL CULTURAL RELATIONS

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Abstract: *This article analyzes the process of the establishment and development of national-cultural centers in Uzbekistan after independence, in particular in the Navoi, Bukhara and Samarkand regions, their role in strengthening external cultural and diplomatic ties. The effective activities of these centers in ensuring interethnic harmony, strengthening friendly relations, ensuring mutual acquaintance of cultures among young people and cooperation with compatriots abroad are highlighted. Through a series of examples, it is revealed how the cultural heritage of different nations and peoples is preserved, as well as the results of cultural ties established through these centers with Turkey, Korea, Kazakhstan, Russia and other countries.*

Keywords: *National-cultural centers, friendship societies, international cooperation, interethnic harmony, youth education, Korean center, Turkish center, Kazakh center, Russian center, Jewish center, Zarafshan oasis, Navoi, Bukhara, Samarkand, Republican International Cultural Center, Committee on Interethnic Relations.*

Initially, the activities of national cultural centers were coordinated by the “Republican International Cultural Center”, established by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan on January 13, 1992. Currently, following the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-5046 dated May 19, 2017 and No. PF-52 dated March 19, 2025 “On measures to strengthen national harmony and relations with compatriots abroad to a new level”, they are coordinated by the Committee on Interethnic Relations and Friendly Relations with Foreign Countries, which was established on the basis of the merger of the Republican International Cultural Center and the Council of Societies of Friendship and Cultural and Educational Relations of Uzbekistan with Foreign Countries. National cultural centers operating in Navoi, Bukhara and Samarkand regions have been participating in the external relations of Navoi, Bukhara and Samarkand regions. The establishment of national cultural centers in the regions allows organizing various meetings between young people to familiarize themselves with the national culture of different nationalities living in the regions.

National cultural centers in Navoi, Bukhara and Samarkand regions organize their activities based on today's needs and, in cooperation with all national cultural centers in the regions, hold festivals, competitions on various topics, creative events, in which special attention is paid to national traditions and customs. It is noticeable that the above-mentioned national cultural centers have made a significant contribution to the development of external cultural relations of Navoi, Bukhara and Samarkand regions, and their working methods have improved from year to year.

The Bukhara Regional Korean National Cultural Center was established in 1990. Currently, the center has 21 members, mostly elderly women. Every year, a Republican conference-seminar entitled "Traditions and customs of Koreans of Uzbekistan" is held. As a result of this, thematic brochures were published. The Ariran boarding house operated under the auspices of the council. In close cooperation with the Korean Embassy in Tashkent, the Uzbekistan-Korea Friendship Society annually organizes a Republican festival of choral groups, the Tinbo Scientific and Technical Society organizes scientific conferences, publishes books and reference books about famous Koreans of Uzbekistan, and the Ariran Creative Association and the Cho Myung-hee Literary Club publish collections of Korean writers and poets. The Youth Center organized a forum for "compatriots' network", seminars on Korean traditions, folk festivals and charity events. Concerts of "Kore", "Kotbonari", "Samdien", "Syadal" and many other groups were held on large stages.

The Korean National Cultural Center was established in Navoi and Samarkand regions in 1995. There are 22 territorial divisions operating in 11 regions of Uzbekistan and the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan, and the Karakalpak Cultural Center, including the national-educational center called "Choson", operated in Navoi. In Samarkand region, events were held on the theme "Korean Diaspora: 80 years on the land of Uzbekistan" with the participation of the Korean National Cultural Center, state and public organizations.

The first Azerbaijani National Cultural Center "Gardashlik" was established in Tashkent in 1989. Then centers were opened in Samarkand and Bukhara, and in 2003 the Republican Azerbaijan National Cultural Center was established. On August 25, 2008, the Azerbaijani National Cultural Center was established in Navoi region.

Many Kazakhs live in Uzbekistan: this is the largest part of the Kazakh ethnic group outside Kazakhstan among the CIS countries. In March 1992, at the first congress of Kazakhs, the Kazakh National Cultural Center of Uzbekistan was established. It was the successor to the Kazakh Information Center, which had been operating under the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan since 1989. By 2025, the center will include the Kazakh National Cultural Center of Karakalpakstan, regional branches in Bukhara, Jizzakh, Navoi, Syrdarya, Khorezm and Tashkent regions, and a city branch in Tashkent. The Association for International Cultural and Educational

Relations of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in cooperation with the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Uzbekistan, the Republican Kazakh Cultural Center, the editorial office of the Kazakh-language newspaper "Nurli Zhol", and the Kunayev Foundation, has been holding cultural and educational events to further strengthen friendship, brotherhood, and neighborly ties between the Uzbek and Kazakh peoples. Even on April 21, 1995, a literary festival dedicated to the life and work of the beloved Kazakh poetess Khanbibibi Esenqoraeva was held in the building of the Republican International Cultural Center.

The Turkish National Cultural Center was established in Bukhara on June 27, 1991, in Tashkent in 1992, and in Uzbekistan in 1997. The Turkish National Cultural Center was established in Navoi region in 2005, and in Samarkand region in 2016. About 4,000 Turks live in Bukhara region (as of 2021), 3,500 in Samarkand region, and about 2,000 in Navoi region. The national cultural centers in the regions still serve to strengthen ties with the Turkish state.

The Russian National Cultural Center carried out various visible events from 1994 to 2003. It carried out a number of works to promote the Russian language and Russian culture among the Russian-speaking population in Navoi, Samarkand and Bukhara regions. In particular, more than 1,500 students of secondary schools from the Russian Federation received 25 sets of audio cassettes (each set consists of 26 cassettes) from various cities of Russia. The amateur artistic team of the centers actively participates in the holidays of "Navruz" and "Independence Day" every year. In 2003, the Russian National Cultural Center provided material assistance to 84 members of the center and organized free treatment for 33 members at the Sitorai Moxi-Khossa sanatorium in Bukhara to restore and improve their health. This center provided humanitarian assistance to the "House of Mercy" in the city of Gijduvan in the region. Through the mediation of the National Cultural Center, material assistance was also provided by representatives of the Russian Foreign Center and the Provoslav Diocese. Children of the House of Mercy were also provided with textbooks and study guides. These national-cultural centers have been a constant participant in events held in the regions on the occasion of the anniversaries of Russian writers and cultural figures. The activities of the Jewish national-cultural center are also effective in expanding external relations of the regions of the Zarafshan oasis. Among the above-mentioned national-cultural centers, the multilateral relations that the Jewish national-cultural center maintains with the organizations of "Bukhara Jews" living abroad are of particular importance.

Thus, after Independence, national-cultural centers were established in Uzbekistan to meet the cultural and economic needs of various nationalities and ethnic groups and ensure their rights. In particular, centers in Navoi, Bukhara and Samarkand regions today actively contribute not only to internal social stability, but also to the country's

external cultural policy. Their cooperation with countries such as Korea, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and Russia strengthens friendly relations and plays an important role in developing interethnic dialogue among young people. Based on presidential decrees and government resolutions, the centers are being institutionalized, and their sphere of influence is expanding. In the future, these centers will have the opportunity to further expand international cultural exchange, strengthen ties with compatriots, and promote universal human values.

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