



PRESS-RELEASE

EXPERT DISCUSSIONS ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS:

ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR HOUSING RIGHTS: INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

TASHKENT, 2 October 2019 – Today, the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Regional Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for Central Asia and the Nationwide Movement “Yuksalish” are holding an Expert Discussions on economic, social and cultural rights (ESC) rights and standards in Uzbekistan. The topic of the Fourth Expert Discussions is “Access to justice for housing rights: international and national perspectives.” This discussion will be focused on the right to adequate housing.

The Expert Discussions are aimed at increasing awareness about the implementation of international law and standards on ESC rights by national courts, to facilitate access to justice in relation to ESC rights and effective use of international human rights law for ESC rights at the national level. Each Expert Discussion is supported by presentations of international and national experts. The first experts’ meeting was held in September 2018 on international standards in labour rights, the second meeting - held in December 2018 touched upon the principle of non-discrimination in courts and court decisions, and the third meeting – held in March 2019 – was dedicated to the rights of people with disabilities.

These three events brought together lawyers, defense lawyers, individual experts, civil society activists, NGOs, academia representatives and law students via interactive discussions, research papers, peer review articles and policy papers.

“In recent years, large-scale work has been carried out in Uzbekistan to provide housing for the rural population through the construction of affordable residential buildings according to updated standards. However, participatory decision-making is in need to guarantee housing rights. It is vital to create opportunities for various groups to speak out on the topic and establish an open dialogue. We hope that today’s platform is one of such tools for exchange of opinions”, said Akmal Burkhanov, Chairperson of the Nationwide Movement “Yuksalish”.

Head of the EU Delegation in Uzbekistan Ambassador Eduards Stiprais said, "Economic, social and cultural rights are fundamental rights for every individual. They are also fundamental for the economic development of the society. No man and no company will invest in improving its situation unless it can rely on its right to appropriate the fruits of its investment".

Helena Fraser, UN Resident Coordinator, noted in her opening remarks that “under Sustainable Development Goal 11 by 2030 all UN member States commit to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The nationally adopted SDG targets for Uzbekistan are to ensure access to affordable housing for all; and to increase the scale of participatory planning of human settlements”.

“These, our fourth expert discussions on economic and social rights, are devoted to the important issue of the right to adequate housing, a right that is well established in international human rights law. We aim to hold a constructive discussion, informed by international law as well as national best practices, to find ways to address an array of

issues linked to housing rights in Uzbekistan. We would like to thank the EU Delegation for their support, as well as our partners - the Regional UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR) for Central Asia and the Nationwide movement “Yuksalish.”,” said Róisín Pillay, Europe and Central Asia Programme Director of the International Commission of Jurists.

Background information: Uzbekistan ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1995. In 2014, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended Uzbekistan “to take appropriate measures, including legislative and other measures, to provide all evicted persons with alternative accommodation or adequate compensation”.

The third national periodic report of Uzbekistan on implementation of provisions of the ICESCR was submitted in June 2019. The list of questions regarding the submitted report will be adopted in March 2020.

The Expert Discussions are organized in the framework of the project "Advancing Civil Society in Promoting Economic, Social and Cultural Rights" (ESCR) Standards (ACCESS)" funded by the EU through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

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