[UZ] New Media Statute Enters into Force

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On 15 January 2007 Uzbekistan's President, Islam Karimov, signed into law the Statute that provides for a new version of the 1997 Law on the Mass Media. Among the types of mass media "in electronic form" the new statute specifically lists "TV, radio and video programmes, newsreels, and websites in general access telecommunication networks" (Art. 4). Censorship is forbidden, which means that "nobody shall have the right to demand a preliminary approval of materials or reports", intended for mass publication, changes in their texts or a complete ban to print or air them (Art. 7).

The statute expands the article that forbids abuse of the freedom of the mass media, by adding issues such as the propaganda of terrorism, as well as that of ideas of religious extremism, separatism and fundamentalism, propaganda of narcotics and of pornography, to the list of such abuses (Art. 6).

The new statute provides for more clarity as to the procedure of closure or suspension of a news outlet by the court of law following such a demand from the registration authority because of violations of the mass media legislation (Art. 24).

Some of the rights of the journalists and the editor are now transferred to the founders (owners) of the news outlets (Art. 11, 13, 16).

Закон Республики Узбекистан "О средствах массовой информации"

Statute on the mass media of the Republic of Uzbekistan) was published in Russian in the official daily Народное слово (Tashkent) on 16 January 2007

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