

**THE ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN**

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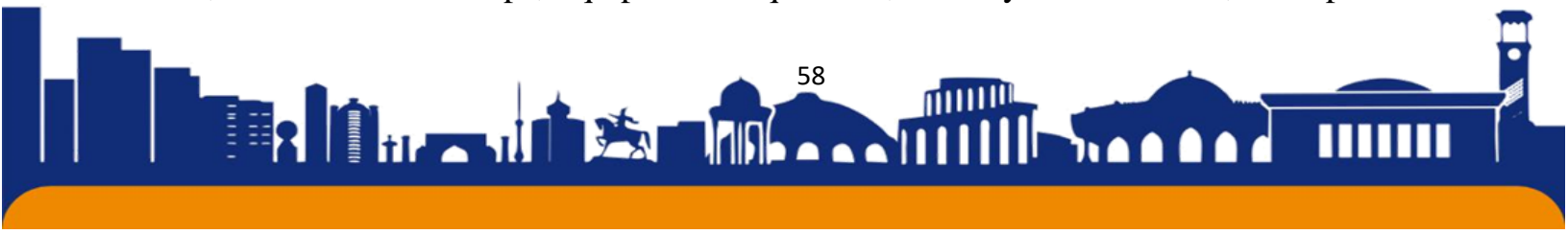
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**Abstract:** The Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Uzbek: O'zbekiston Respublikasi Qurolli Kuchlari, Ўзбекистон Республикаси Қуролли Кучлари), is the name of the unified armed forces of Uzbekistan, consisting of the Ground Force and the Air and Air Defence forces under the defence ministry. Paramilitary units include the National Guard, a Frontier Service and a River Force. It is reported to be the largest and the strongest in Central Asia. 'The country has also began professionalizing its military, an effort that has only limited success and erratic government support. But even in Uzbekistan, these changes represent merely a modest beginning and most of the benefits are concentrated in a few elite, higher readiness formations rather than uniformly applied to the entire force. The Uzbek military is woefully inadequate, but it is far superior to its neighbours.' Emerging from the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Army of the Republic of Uzbekistan embarked on a unique journey of transformation.

**Key words:** Air Defence, the National Guard, a Frontier Service, a River Force, Soviet era, Uzbek Border Troops, Equipment Acquisition, Military Infrastructure, Corruption and



Lack of Transparency. Uzbekistan's armed forces inherited a complex legacy from the Soviet era. While equipped with a substantial arsenal and infrastructure, the military also faced challenges of outdated equipment, a rigid command structure, and a lack of national cohesion. The transition from a Soviet republic to an independent nation demanded a fundamental shift in the military's purpose, structure, and ideology. The early years were marked by uncertainty and challenges. Issues of loyalty, ethnic tensions, and a lack of resources hampered the development of a cohesive and effective force. However, the leadership recognized the crucial role of a strong military in safeguarding the newly acquired independence and ensuring national security. The Armed Forces of the Republic of Uzbekistan are comprised of several branches, each with specific roles and responsibilities:

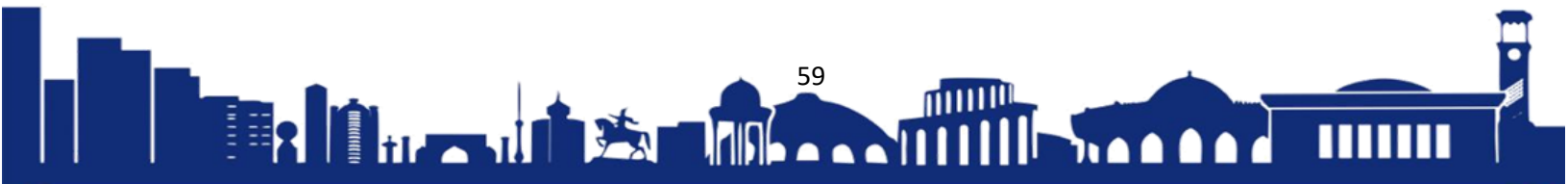
**Uzbek Ground Forces:** The largest branch, responsible for land-based operations, defense, and territorial integrity. It is composed of infantry, armored units, artillery, air defense, and special forces.

**Uzbek Air and Air Defense Forces:** Responsible for air defense, aerial reconnaissance, and providing air support to ground forces. It operates a mix of Soviet-era and modern aircraft, including fighters, helicopters, and transport planes.

**Uzbek National Guard:** Tasked with internal security, counter-terrorism operations, and protecting critical infrastructure.

**Uzbek Border Troops:** Responsible for securing the country's extensive borders and preventing illegal crossings.

Uzbekistan has undertaken significant efforts to modernize its military, focusing on key areas:



**Equipment Acquisition:** The country has diversified its sources of weaponry, acquiring modern equipment from Russia, China, the United States, and other countries. This includes tanks, armored vehicles, artillery systems, aircraft, and air defense systems.

**Domestic Defense Industry:** Uzbekistan is actively developing its own defense industry to reduce reliance on foreign suppliers and enhance self-sufficiency in military equipment production.

**Training and Education:** Significant investments have been made in training programs and military education. This includes establishing partnerships with foreign militaries for training exchanges, joint exercises, and participation in international peacekeeping missions.

**Military Infrastructure:** Modernization efforts extend to improving military infrastructure, including bases, training facilities, and communication networks.

Despite progress in modernization, the Uzbek military faces several challenges:

**Corruption and Lack of Transparency:** Corruption within the defense sector hinders efficient resource allocation and undermines modernization efforts. Lack of transparency raises concerns about accountability and responsible governance of the military.

**Regional Security Threats:** Sharing a border with Afghanistan exposes Uzbekistan to security threats such as terrorism, drug trafficking, and cross-border infiltration. The evolving situation in Afghanistan and the presence of extremist groups pose ongoing challenges for border security and regional stability.

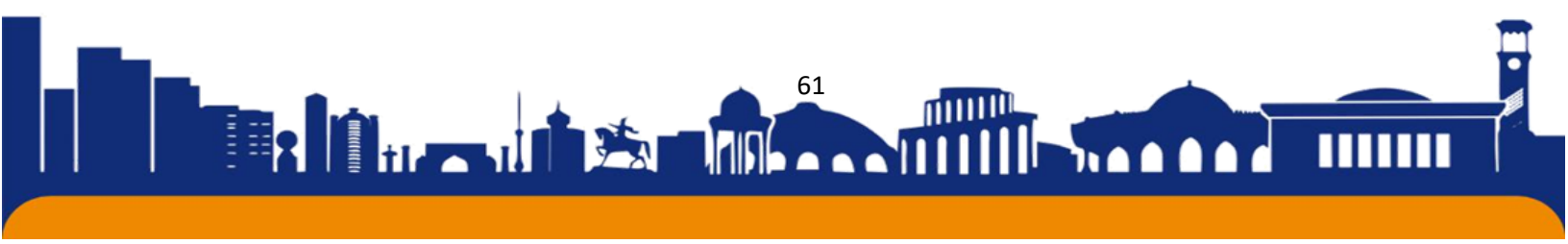
**Geopolitical Balancing Act:** Uzbekistan strives to maintain a balanced foreign policy amidst competing interests of major powers like Russia, China, and the United States. Navigating these relationships while preserving its independence and sovereignty requires careful diplomatic maneuvering.

Human Rights Concerns: Allegations of human rights abuses within the military, including hazing and torture, raise concerns about the ethical conduct and professionalism of the armed forces. Addressing these issues is crucial for building trust and legitimacy.

The Human Element:

Beyond equipment and strategy, the Uzbek military recognizes the importance of the human element. Efforts are underway to improve the living conditions, welfare, and morale of its personnel. This includes providing better housing, healthcare, and educational opportunities for soldiers and their families.

**In conclusion**, the Army of the Republic of Uzbekistan stands as a testament to the nation's journey of independence and its evolving role in a complex world. From its Soviet legacy to its ongoing modernization efforts, the Uzbek military has undergone a significant transformation. While challenges remain, the commitment to building a professional, well-equipped, and accountable force is evident. Uzbekistan's geographic location and regional security dynamics necessitate a strong and capable military. The threats of terrorism, drug trafficking, and instability in neighboring Afghanistan demand constant vigilance and preparedness. Furthermore, navigating the geopolitical landscape and balancing relations with major powers requires strategic foresight and diplomatic finesse. The Uzbek military's future success hinges on several key factors. Addressing corruption and promoting transparency within the defense sector is crucial for ensuring efficient resource allocation and building public trust. Continued investments in training, education, and professional development will be essential for fostering a skilled and competent force. Moreover, upholding human rights and adhering to ethical conduct will contribute to the legitimacy and respect of the armed forces.



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