



Office in Tajikistan

Spot Report

Zarif Alizoda appointed as first Tajik Human Rights Ombudsman

On 27 May 2009, the *Majilisi Namoyandagon* – the lower chamber of Parliament - approved a Presidential decree nominating Zarif Alizoda as the first Human Rights Ombudsman (Уполномоченного по правам человека) in Tajikistan. The new ombudsman made a speech afterwards, expressing his readiness to protect citizens' rights and took an oath before the deputies. The decree and parliamentary endorsement are the first steps in implementing the law on the Ombudsman institution that was passed in March 2008. President Emomali Rahmon first announced the nomination of Alizoda in a meeting on 26 May with ten Heads of Delegations to the OSCE, during their visit to Tajikistan.

Zarif Alizoda was the State Adviser to the President on legislation and constitutional rights and the Representative of the President in the Parliament since December 2007. From December 2002 until December 2007, he was the Chairman of the Constitutional Court of Tajikistan. From December 2001 until December 2002, he headed the State Service Administration under the President. Before this he was a Deputy in the Parliament, having been elected in the February 2000 Parliamentary elections. Zarif Alizoda was born 1962 in Kolkhozobod district of Khatlon province. He has a PhD in law from the Tajik National University.

The idea of establishing the Human Rights Ombudsman had been discussed over the past ten years and supported by the then OSCE Centre in Dushanbe and the UN Tajikistan Office for Peace-building and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The law on the Human Rights Ombudsman was adopted by Parliament in March 2008. Prior to its adoption, the draft law was the subject of several public hearings initiated by NGOs, the UN OHCHR, and the OSCE. A number of proposals aimed at improving the final draft law were presented to Parliament by the local NGO community. Although not all of the NGO recommendations were included in the final draft, the establishment of the Human Rights Ombudsman institution is an important step in meeting Tajikistan's shared values of the OSCE.

In its Unified Budget for 2009, the Office has already planned to provide support for the Ombudsman in the form of capacity building for core staff and awareness-raising about the new institution. The Office is taking the initiative to convene a meeting of representatives from embassies and international organizations to discuss further support for the Human Rights Ombudsman.

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