



ISSUES OF EFFECTIVE PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND THE NATION'S GENE POOL FROM DRUG-RELATED CRIMES

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Abstract

This article analyzes Decree No. PD-207 of 3 November 2025 of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, aimed at strengthening comprehensive protection of public health and the nation's gene pool from drug addiction and drug-related crimes. The study clarifies the conceptual scope of "public health" and "nation's gene pool" as policy-legal categories and systematizes the Decree's approach as an integrated set of regulatory-legal, operational-preventive, organizational, and educational measures. Particular attention is given to the prioritization of youth protection, the proposed tightening of criminal sanctions for organized drug crime, Internet-based distribution, and illegal laboratories, as well as the introduction of electronic control over precursor circulation. The paper highlights the Decree's reform agenda, including the preparation of a new edition of the law on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the formation of a distinct chapter in the Criminal Code on crimes against public health and the nation's gene pool, the strengthening of liability for offenses involving minors, restrictions on early conditional release, and the development of AI-enabled mechanisms to detect and block online drug markets. The article concludes that the Decree institutionalizes a more systematic, stringent, and digitally supported model of counter-narcotics governance, combining deterrence with targeted prevention and technological oversight.

Keywords: Drug addiction; drug-related crimes; public health protection; nation's gene pool; youth safeguarding; criminal liability; organized drug crime; Internet drug trafficking; precursors control; electronic monitoring; legal reform; artificial intelligence.



Introduction

On **3 November 2025**, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan adopted **Decree No. PD-207** entitled “*On Comprehensive Measures for the Effective Protection of Public Health and the Nation’s Gene Pool from Drug Addiction and Drug-Related Crimes.*”

This Decree provides for the determination of comprehensive measures aimed at achieving the priority objectives of the national strategy for combating drug addiction and drug-related crimes in the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as at bringing activities to combat drug addiction and organized drug crime to a qualitatively new level, thereby ensuring effective protection of the population, first and foremost the health of young people, as well as the nation’s gene pool.

In this context, public health is understood as the physical and mental well-being of every citizen, especially young people, as well as the harmful effects of drug addiction, which damages the functioning of the human brain, heart and liver and shortens life expectancy.

The nation’s gene pool is understood as the genetic heritage of the Uzbek people, namely the health and intellectual potential of future generations, as well as circumstances whereby drug addiction causes congenital defects and intellectual disabilities in children, and dependence on psychoactive substances disrupts and destroys individuals’ lives.

The Decree establishes that the fight against drug addiction shall be carried out through a комплекс of regulatory and legal, operational-preventive and organizational-educational measures, with primary attention focused on the following:

- protection of young people — safeguarding minors and young people from psychoactive substances is designated as an urgent task of all state bodies;
- strengthening punitive measures — it is proposed to introduce punishment in the form of deprivation of liberty for up to twenty years for organized drug crime, distribution via the Internet, and the establishment of illegal laboratories;
- control of precursors — the introduction of an electronic control system over the circulation of chemical substances used in the production of narcotic drugs.

In addition, the Decree provides for the development of a new edition of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “*On Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic*



Substances” within the framework of regulatory and legal reforms in this area, the introduction into the Criminal Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan of a new chapter entitled “*Crimes Against Public Health and the Nation’s Gene Pool,*” the development of legal norms enabling enhanced counteraction to new forms of drug-related crimes, including the use of the Internet, transboundary smuggling, criminal organizations, and patronage by officials in relation to such crimes, the establishment of administrative liability in the form of administrative arrest for up to fifteen days for the consumption of narcotic drugs in public places, the doubling of liability for drug-related crimes committed against minors, the recognition of the commission of any drug-related crime against minors or with their involvement as an aggravating circumstance, the introduction of criminal liability предусматривающей punishment in the form of deprivation of liberty for up to ten years for involving minors in the consumption of potent substances specifically within educational institutions, student dormitories, children’s camps or adjacent territories, as well as the establishment of a procedure prohibiting early conditional release from serving a sentence for persons who have committed certain drug-related crimes.

At the same time, pursuant to the Decree, measures are also envisaged to expand the list of precursors with restricted circulation in Uzbekistan based on international experience within the framework of mechanisms for early prevention and detection of drug-related crimes, as well as to introduce mechanisms for its rapid supplementation and updating in a simplified manner, to establish the activities of units combating the illegal circulation of precursors, to encourage citizens who report or assist in detecting crimes related to the illegal circulation of narcotic drugs, and to introduce the development of programs aimed at detecting and blocking online drug shops and cases of drug distribution on the Internet through the use of artificial intelligence technologies.

In conclusion, this document contributes to transforming the fight against drug addiction in Uzbekistan into a systematic, stringent and digitized system, ensuring the inevitability of punishment, and, through the strengthening of prevention and digital control, provides significant assistance in protecting the future of the country’s youth and the nation’s gene pool.



Conclusion

Decree No. PD-207 frames drug addiction and drug-related crime as a direct threat to both individual well-being and the long-term biological and intellectual potential of future generations, thereby elevating the policy response to a strategic level. Its core contribution lies in consolidating counter-narcotics measures into a single, coherent architecture that integrates stricter punitive instruments with early prevention, organizational coordination, and educational initiatives. By prioritizing the protection of minors and young people, expanding aggravating circumstances and enhanced penalties for crimes against or involving minors, and proposing limits on early conditional release for certain offenses, the Decree reinforces the principle of the inevitability of punishment while increasing the protective function of criminal law. In parallel, the shift toward digitized governance—most notably through electronic control of precursor circulation and AI-supported detection and blocking of online drug distribution—signals a transition to proactive, data-informed enforcement capable of addressing contemporary, technology-mediated crime patterns. Overall, the Decree advances a “systemic and digitized” paradigm that strengthens legal foundations, improves operational responsiveness, and aligns preventive and enforcement mechanisms with emerging forms of transboundary and Internet-enabled drug trafficking.

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