



Uzbekistan's first female lawyer

Sultonov Oybek Sultonboyevich

Deputy head of the Department of the General prosecutor's office of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Doctor of philosophy (PhD) law, Uzbekistan

OPEN ACCESS

SUBMITTED 14 February 2025
ACCEPTED 13 March 2025
PUBLISHED 12 April 2025
VOLUME Vol.07 Issue04 2025

CITATION

Sultonov Oybek Sultonboyevich. (2025). Uzbekistan's first female lawyer. *The American Journal of Political Science Law and Criminology*, 7(04), 29–32. <https://doi.org/10.37547/tajpslc/Volume07Issue04-06>

COPYRIGHT

© 2025 Original content from this work may be used under the terms of the creative commons attributes 4.0 License.

Abstract: Diloru (also known as Dinara) Yusupova – Uzbekistan's first female lawyer, assistant to the Prosecutor of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 1935. On October 28, 1937, Diloru Yusupova was formally charged under Article 68 of the Criminal Code of the Uzbek SSR. After her release, Diloru Yusupova took full responsibility for her family, rejoined the party, and was reinstated in the prosecutor's office. In 1939, she worked in arbitration, and during World War II, she served as the chair of the commission responsible for the social welfare of military personnel and war-disabled families.

Keywords: Law, history, female, lawyer, wife, Sobirjon Yusupov, Muhammadjon Muminov, prosecutor, Scientific Research Institute of Soviet Law.

Introduction: Diloru (also known as Dinara) Yusupova was born in 1911 in Bukhara. Her father, Sobirjon Muhamedovich Yusupov (1881–1931), studied at a vocational school in Tashkent from 1907 to 1910, specializing in mechanics. In 1911, due to persecution by the Tsarist secret police, he was forced to relocate to Bukhara, where he became an active member of the "Young Bukharans" organization. However, in 1917, Sobirjon Yusupov faced persecution by Emir Alim Khan and moved to Tashkent with the "Young Bukharans". His knowledge of the Russian language and familiarity with revolutionary movements enabled him to integrate easily into political activities. In Tashkent, he participated in the Council of Muslim Soldier Deputies alongside figures such as Orif Kilibliev and Davlat Mirzaev, attending meetings held from October 18 to 26, 1917. Later, he was invited to join the presidium of the Kokand Autonomy government. Following the violent suppression of the Turkestan Autonomy, he took part in the Fifth Congress of the Soviets.

On December 16, 1918, Sobirjon Yusupov was among a group that was received by Lenin. However, instead of addressing the issues they had raised, the Bolshevik

leader (“dohiysi” – “the genius”, a term used by Soviet propaganda to glorify Lenin) went on a lengthy discourse about irrigation matters in Turkestan. From that point forward, Soviet administrators kept a close watch on Sobirjon Yusupov, recognizing his influence and resourcefulness among the people. Until 1919, Yusupov held the status of an RSFSR representative in Turkestan. He later joined the fight against Admiral Kolchak’s forces. In August 1920, he was sent to Bukhara, where he served as the chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the Bukharan People’s Soviet Republic (BuKhChK – Bukharan Cheka, the secret police of the Bukharan People’s Soviet Republic), the head of the Bukharan Cheka (ChK – Cheka, the Soviet secret police), military commissar, and chief of the Shahrisabz militia. Later, he moved to Tashkent, where he worked as the director of the “Kizil Shark” teKhtile factory (“Red East”, a Soviet-era teKhtile factory).

Due to her father’s political stance, Diloru Yusupova’s life was marked by persecution and eKhile. In 1917, she and her mother were expelled from the Emirate of Bukhara. Even after arriving in Tashkent, they were first pursued by the Tsarist secret police and later forced to live in constant hiding from Cheka informants. During his years in eKhile, Sobirjon Yusupov often disappeared for long periods, leaving Diloru and her mother to move from place to place in search of shelter.

In her autobiography, written in her own hand, Diloru Yusupova describes this period as follows:

“My father was constantly on the run from the police. He was arrested multiple times but repeatedly escaped. Even when sentenced to execution, he managed to flee again. After 1917, our family settled in Tashkent. In 1918, my mother joined the party, while my father was constantly at the front—first in Orenburg, then on the Alma-Ata front, serving as the chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council. My father passed away in 1931”.

Despite these hardships, Diloru Yusupova, with the support of kind-hearted individuals, was sent to Moscow in 1922 by the Bukharan People’s Republic to pursue her education, despite her young age. There, she studied under the Uzbek Education Institute. By 1924, thanks to her academic aptitude and active participation in social activities, she had already gained recognition among Uzbek students in Moscow. She became the leader of the “Young Pioneers” student group. In 1926, Yusupova graduated with eKhcellent grades and returned to Tashkent, where she began working at the district committee of the Tashkent Komsomol. Simultaneously, she enrolled in the Faculty

of Soviet Economy and Law at the Central Asian State University (СаГУ – Среднеазиатский Государственный Университет), specializing in the judicial department. However, by 1929, she was unable to complete her studies due to the closure of the law faculty.

For one year, she worked in Samarkand as an executive secretary in the planning department of the Water Management Administration. A significant turning point in her life was her marriage to Muhammadjon Muminov (1903–1938), a native of Namangan, whom she had met five years earlier during her time in Moscow. This important event in her life was also closely tied to Samarkand.

Brief Biography of Muhammadjon Muminov

At the age of 20, Muhammadjon Muminov, along with many of his peers, traveled to Moscow in 1923 under the sponsorship of “Kumak” (a Soviet-era support organization that provided financial and educational assistance to young Central Asians studying in Russia). In 1924, he enrolled in the Faculty of Law at Moscow State University. At the end of 1928, he successfully defended his thesis on “Prosecutorial Oversight in the State Administration System” and graduated with honors (red diploma). Upon returning to Samarkand in 1928, Muminov became a member of the Collegium of the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan. From 1931, he served as the head of a department in the People’s Commissariat of Justice of the Uzbek SSR. Between 1932 and 1935, he was appointed director of the Institute for Scientific Research on Socialist Construction and Law. Later, on Muminov’s initiative, this institute laid the foundation for the establishment of a Law Institute. Thanks to his dedication, numerous legal dictionaries, journals, and books were published within a short period. Notably, his 1932 book, “Na fronte teorii gosudarstva i prava” (“On the Frontline of the Theory of State and Law”), gained significant recognition in academic circles.

Diloru Yusupova, following Muhammadjon Muminov’s recommendation, initially prepared for postgraduate studies. In 1931, the couple moved to Tashkent, where Diloru enrolled at the Scientific Research Institute of Soviet Law. After successfully passing her final eKhaminations in December 1934, she was assigned to work at the Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of Uzbekistan. After completing her probationary period, Yusupova was appointed Assistant to the Prosecutor of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 1935. The young couple was filled with happiness. Despite professional challenges and the slander of envious individuals, they remained engaged in lively discussions about new ideas and legal writings. Their family grew as they raised their son, Marat, and daughter, Surayyo.

The Arrest of Muhammadjon Muminov

On the night of March 29, 1937, in the dead of night, an unknown group knocked on the door of House No. 11 on Uezdnoy Street. Presenting an arrest warrant, they forced the family members to stand against the wall and searched the house until dawn. As morning approached, they confiscated all belongings, took Muminov away in the infamous “Black Raven” (Kora Karga)—the notorious PCIA (People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs, the Soviet secret police and intelligence agency) vehicle used for political arrests—and sealed the remaining possessions. Ironically, the owners of this house were prominent legal figures: Muhammadjon Muminov, the Head of the Department of Legal Assistance and Judicial Protection at the People’s Commissariat of Justice of the Uzbek SSR, and Diloru Yusupova, the Assistant to the Prosecutor General of the Uzbek SSR. Before leaving, the officers sternly warned Diloru not to speak to anyone or seek help, threatening severe consequences if she disobeyed. At first, Diloru struggled to comprehend the situation, assuming that this was yet another false accusation against her husband. However, after going through a series of bureaucratic hurdles, she was finally permitted to visit Muminov—only to find him in a horrific state. It became painfully clear that this time was different: after enduring days of brutal torture, Muhammadjon Muminov had already “confessed” to fabricated crimes and had been reduced to a living corpse. Determined to fight back, Diloru took every possible measure. She secretly sent a letter to Moscow exposing the atrocities committed by the PCIA (People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs, the Soviet secret police and intelligence agency) in Uzbekistan. She also met in secret with Davlat Rizaev, a former friend of her husband, urging him to alert the Uzbek authorities about the unlawful persecution of Muminov. Unfortunately, by this time, all hope—both from Moscow and from local authorities—had already vanished.

Four months later, on July 4, 1937, Diloru was dismissed from her position by Order No. 164 of the Prosecutor of the Uzbek SSR, which stated: “D. Yusupova, Assistant to the Prosecutor of the Uzbek SSR for the Criminal Court Division, shall be relieved of her duties and dismissed from service, as she is no longer eligible to hold this position in the future”.

During the period of the Great Terror, Diloru did not escape repression. She was accused of the following: “As the wife of M. Muminov, a former official of the People’s Commissariat of Justice of the Uzbek SSR, who was arrested as a member of the right-Trotskyist-nationalist counterrevolutionary organization and declared an enemy of the people, she lived in the same

household with him and failed to report his counterrevolutionary activities to the Soviet authorities. Instead, she concealed his actions and assisted him. Additionally, she was charged with secretly maintaining written correspondence with the arrested Muminov and Rizaev”.

As a result, on September 22, 1937, a search warrant was issued for the residence of 26-year-old Diloru Yusupova, who lived at 11 Uezdnaya Street, Tashkent. Following the search, she was arrested and sent to “Toshturma” (Tashkent prison). During the search, authorities confiscated two books in Arabic script, a passport (No. 099339), a collection of works by Larisa Reisner published in 1929, a petition addressed to (PCIA KP(b) – People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs of the Communist Party (Bolsheviks)) officer Andreev written by Magzumov Kudrat, as well as two applications and a personal questionnaire belonging to Diloru Yusupova.

Later, during the interrogation process, two applications and other material evidence, which were allegedly supposed to confirm Diloru’s secret written correspondence with her husband, were burned in a bonfire based on a report approved by PCIA (People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs) officer Matveev on October 10, 1937.

Her orphaned children—6-year-old son Marat Muminov and 4-year-old daughter Surayyo Muminova—were sent to an orphanage.

Despite enduring continuous physical torture and humiliation during interrogations, Diloru Yusupova firmly denied both her own and her husband’s guilt. However, on October 4, 1938, Muhammadjon Muminov was executed under the false accusation of being one of the leaders of a demonstration in Moscow in 1927.

On October 28, 1937, Diloru Yusupova was formally charged under Article 68 of the Criminal Code of the Uzbek SSR. However, on March 14, 1939, upon review, her case was dismissed due to the lack of criminal evidence. Although the State Security Department of the Uzbek SSR PCIA (People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs) issued a decision to terminate the case and release her from detention, she was kept in custody for five more days until March 19 without justification. Upon her release from the Tashkent prison, she was forced to sign a pledge of silence, forbidding her from ever speaking about the torture and interrogations she had endured.

When Diloru Yusupova returned home, she discovered that her house had already been seized by an PCIA (People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs) officer named Shutov. On May 23, 1939, she managed to reclaim her home and bring her children back from the orphanage. Accepting all that she had lost, Diloru

devoted the rest of her life to simple jobs and raising her children.

After her release, Diloru Yusupova took full responsibility for her family, rejoined the party, and was reinstated in the prosecutor's office. In 1939, she worked in arbitration, and during World War II, she served as the chair of the commission responsible for the social welfare of military personnel and war-disabled families.

From 1939 to 1946, Diloru Yusupova held various positions in the Tashkent City Prosecutor's Office, including Prosecutor for Police Oversight and Head of the Juvenile Affairs Department. As an active member of the Tashkent City Council, she gained public respect. After Stalin's death, during the early days of the "Thaw Period", Diloru Yusupova sent a letter to the Central Authorities, requesting a re-examination of her husband M. Muminov's case.

In April 1956, during a reinvestigation, Diloru Yusupova stated:

"Muhammadjon and I met in Moscow. In 1929, after arriving in Samarkand, he became a member of the Collegium of the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan. That same year, we got married, and in 1931, we moved to Tashkent, where he became the director of a research institute, which later evolved into a higher educational institution for legal studies. Throughout our seven years of marriage, I never once heard him say or saw him do anything against the people's interests. He was always a pioneer of great initiatives. However, in March 1937, he was arrested due to the malicious intentions of Agabekov. Agabekov used intimidation to extract the information he wanted from anyone, even persecuting people I associated with in an attempt to implicate me. As a result, I was wrongfully imprisoned from 1937 until April 1939, despite being innocent." On January 23, 1957, Muhammadjon Muminov was posthumously rehabilitated by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). On February 22, 1958, upon receiving this long-awaited news, Diloru Yusupova visited the CSS (Комитет Государственной Безопасности – Committee for State Security) office and signed a written statement, declaring that she had no material or moral claims against the Soviet state.

Diloru Yusupova worked for many years in the Transport Prosecutor's Office and later served as an honest legal expert in various institutions. Under her guidance, her son, Marat Muhammedovich Muminov (1930–1998), became a Doctor of Mathematical Sciences, Professor, and made significant contributions to the advancement of science in Uzbekistan. Her beloved daughter, Surayyo Muhammedovna

Muminova (1933–1954), tragically passed away in a car accident just before completing her studies at the Moscow Medical Institute. In conclusion, we hope that many more works will be written about the honorable yet tragic life of Muhammadjon Muminov and Diloru Yusupova, the pioneers of modern Uzbek legal studies.

REFERENCES

State Security Service (DXX) Archive, Collection 7460, Pages 5–8.

State Security Service (DXX) Archive, Collection 7460, Page 10.

State Security Service (DXX) Archive, Collection 7460, Page 1.

Tarixiy Xotira bekiyos [Matn] / R.T. Shamsutdinov [va boshk.]; nashr uchun mas'ul B.V. Hasanov. – Toshkent: Encyclopedia world, 2024. – 372 b.

Тарихий хотира беқиёс [Матн] / Р.Т. Шамсутдинов [ва бошқ.]; нашр учун масъул Б.В. Ҳасанов. – Тошкент: Encyclopedia world, 2024. – 316 б.

O'zbek huquqshunosligining ilk qaldirg'ochlari Muhammadjon Mo'minov va Diloru Yusupovalarning sharaflari va fojiali hayot yo'li // <https://oyina.uz/uz/article/812>

Muhammadjon Mo'minov – o'zbek zamonaviy huquqshunosligi asoschisi. – Toshkent: Encyclopedia world, 2024. – 120 b.

Qonun himoyasiga hayot baxshida... – Toshkent: Tamaddun, 2022. – 396 b.