

# Information Rights and Social Rights Protection in Kazakhstan's Constitutional Legal Framework\*

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 [10.15408/jch.v13i2.46835](https://doi.org/10.15408/jch.v13i2.46835)

## Abstract

In this article, the authors examine theoretical approaches and challenges related to the protection of social human rights and the citizens' right to information within the constitutional doctrine of the Republic of Kazakhstan. It has been established that the national regulatory and legal framework governing state bodies' activities is aligned with the fundamental legal principles underlying the state's organization and legal system. The authors analyze the concepts and role of mass media in safeguarding social rights, demonstrating how this enables comprehensive development of institutional openness and social protection of citizens. The authors consider various mechanisms for implementing social rights in the field of legal information and discuss the importance of understanding systemic connections between social security and information rights. The study reveals that the idea of social rights and the right to information emerged from the objective need for people to seek, receive, produce, and disseminate information, as well as a response to excessive secrecy of information essential for civilized society. The authors substantiate the conclusion that while systemic connections between social protection and information rights vary across countries, there is a typical pattern in legislative development. In some foreign countries, these rights arose as elements of freedom of speech and the press. However, in most countries, laws protecting state secrets appeared first, followed by legislative acts guaranteeing the protection of social rights and access to information about the activities of state bodies.

**Keywords:** Information Rights; Social Protection; Constitution; Kazakhstan; Implementation Mechanisms

\* Received: February 19, 2025, revised: March 9, 2025, accepted: June 22, 2025, Published: June 30, 2025.

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## A. INTRODUCTION

To implement the protection of the social rights of individuals and citizens, and the right to information within this article, it is necessary to examine and clarify two interrelated legal concepts — the mechanisms for implementation and the guarantees for the realization of these rights. This determines the purpose and mechanisms for protecting individuals' and citizens' social rights to information. The purpose of this article is to substantiate and reveal the essence and specifics of constitutional and legal policy in the field of protecting the social rights of individuals and the right of citizens to information in the Republic of Kazakhstan, to identify how it functions, and the mechanisms for its improvement, taking into account the patterns, guidelines, and development experience in this area. The mechanism for realizing social rights and the right of citizens to information is complex and multifaceted, both in organizational-political and legal terms. In the exercise of citizens' rights and freedoms, not only do citizens themselves participate, but also state bodies of general and exceptional competence.

This complexity is further amplified in the context of digitalization, where new threats to human rights emerge, including violations of privacy in digital environments, cyber-attacks, digital discrimination, and the misuse of personal data, requiring states to develop comprehensive protection mechanisms that balance technological advancement with fundamental rights protection. ([Petrov et al., 2024](#)) Therefore, this issue requires legal regulation. In this regard, S.S. Alekseev ([1981, p. 303](#)) notes that "legal regulation, in its actual result, is expressed in the implementation of the law". He distinguishes three main stages of the mechanism of legal regulation: 1). The general effect of legal norms, during which the behavior of subjects is regulated, the content of this behavior is determined, the conditions for the emergence of rights and obligations, etc.; 2). The emergence of subjective rights and responsibilities; 3). The realization of rights and obligations, during which rights and obligations are embodied in the actual behavior of subjects. This is expressed in four forms of exercising the law: Execution, use, observance, and application.

The importance of precise terminology and conceptual frameworks in legal regulation mechanisms is demonstrated by the evolution of judicial management concepts in post-Soviet states, where the development from Soviet-era terms like 'organizational leadership of courts' to modern 'internal judicial management' reflected fundamental changes in understanding judicial independence and the practical implementation of legal rights. ([Abdulin, 2024](#))

Similarly, the evolution of legal terminology in international contexts reflects broader systemic changes, as Akhmedova (2024) demonstrates through analysis of how vocabulary used in international negotiations has transformed over time to accommodate new legal paradigms and cross-cultural understanding in the field of human rights protection. In execution, the subjects of law fulfill the binding legal prescriptions contained within it. In accordance with the forms of exercising the law, the ways of its realization should be noted: 1). Observance of the rule of law by citizens; 2). The exercise of law enforcement activities by state authorities.

The exercise of law enforcement by state authorities is most closely related to the forms of law's realization, such as execution and application. This is because, in legal relations associated with the realization of civil rights, the subjects entrusted with the duty to protect citizens' social rights are state bodies.

One of the most important instruments of social governance, serving as a regulator, is law, which, in itself, is a type of social information. The interrelations among phenomena such as social governance, legal regulation, law, information, legal reality, and others are so complex and multifaceted that for each link in these chains, it is possible to offer different interpretations of legal information, which, in the appropriate context, will be the most correct. All processes within social governance and the entire mechanism of legal regulation represent a continuous emergence, movement, and processing of social information circulating in two streams — from the subject of social governance to the object and vice versa. These streams circulate information about legal norms and information "about law."

Considering the legal impact on social relations, M.A. Fedotov presents the legal management process as the implementation of a set of information-significant functions. This includes setting legal management goals, receiving and interpreting incoming information, processing it, making specific legal decisions, and transferring and using socio-legal information. At the same time, based on the interpretation of law as an instrument of social governance, he stipulates that this information concerns not only the norms of law and information about actions, but also data on the interaction of economic and legal mechanisms, certain legal information about the activities of enterprises, associations, citizens, deputies, and so on. The information circulating within society's legal system and other legal mechanisms is social. It serves as specific facts, data, and knowledge about the social form of the movement of matter and its different forms, insofar as they are used in legal system formations and the relevant spheres of legal activity. (Fedotov, 1999, p. 16)

V.G. Afanasyev ([1976, p. 39](#)) believes that legal information is “a means of orienting the behavior of an individual or social group in certain conditions and a means of society’s control over their behavior”. V.P. Kazimorchuk ([1990, p. 35](#)) classifies legal information involved in the mechanism of the action of law as that part of normative or legal information that actually functions and has a regulatory impact on the formation of lawful and socially active behavior.

In prescriptive legal information, the social needs, interests, and goals of society are expressed in requirements for specific behavior, reflected in legal norms. Thus, in legal literature, there are various classifications of guarantees of citizens’ social rights. Most often, three main types of guarantees are distinguished: general, legal, and organizational ([Bobrova, 1984, p. 5](#)). General guarantees, in turn, are divided into material, political, and spiritual guarantees. Legal guarantees include guarantees of realization (implementation) and guarantees of protection (safeguarding). Organizational guarantees are determined by the activities of the state, its bodies and officials, and public organizations in the field of lawmaking, legal relations, control, procedural, and regulatory activities.

Depending on the scope of action, guarantees are divided into national and international. Consequently, general legal guarantees of social rights may also be national and international. Since general guarantees (the unity of the economic space, social partnership between the individual and the state, the ability to exercise one's rights and freedoms, defend one's interests, ideological diversity, etc.) are common to all rights and liberties, it seems more appropriate to focus on the consideration of legal guarantees of the right of individuals and citizens to information (both national and international).

## B. METHODS

### 1. First group of materials.

The first group of materials on this issue primarily includes the **Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan**, which guarantees judicial protection of all individuals’ rights and freedoms, stating: “In the Republic of Kazakhstan, human rights and freedoms are recognized and guaranteed in accordance with the Constitution” ([Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 1995](#)). The protection of citizens’ rights can be entrusted not only to the courts but also to law enforcement agencies such as the police and the prosecutor’s office, as well as the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which consists of two chambers: the Senate and the Mazhilis (Paragraph 1 of Article 50), the

Commissioner for Human Rights ([Constitutional Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022](#)), and the committees and commissions of Parliament. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the guarantor of human and civil rights and freedoms is the President (Paragraph 2 of Article 40).

State bodies may participate in the realization of citizens' rights not only through law enforcement activities but also by simply complying with legal provisions that obligate them to perform specific actions. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, bodies of state power and local self-government must ensure that citizens have the opportunity to access documents and materials that directly affect their rights and freedoms. In addition, "Everyone has the right to freely receive and disseminate information by any means not prohibited by law. The list of information constituting state secrets of the Republic of Kazakhstan shall be determined by law" (Paragraph 2 of Article 20).

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Access to Information" ([Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015a](#)) establishes that the activities of state bodies, organizations and enterprises, public associations, and officials are carried out in accordance with the principles of information openness. This is expressed in the availability of information of public interest and affecting the personal interests of citizens; in the systematic informing of citizens about planned or adopted decisions; and in citizens' ability to monitor the activities of state bodies, organizations and enterprises, public associations, and officials and the decisions they make related to compliance with, protection, and safeguarding of the rights and legitimate interests of citizens.

Article 24 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Informatization" ([Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2015b](#)) states: "Critically important objects of information and communication infrastructure are those objects of information and communication infrastructure, the violation or termination of which results in the illegal collection and processing of restricted-access personal data and other information containing legally protected secrets, emergencies of a social and/or man-made nature, or significant negative consequences for defense, security, international relations, the economy, certain sectors of the economy, or for the livelihood of the population residing in the relevant territory, including infrastructure: heating, electricity, gas, water supply, industry, healthcare, communications, banking, transportation, hydraulic structures, law enforcement activities, and 'electronic government'." At the same time, they must refer to the source of the information.

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Informatization" also establishes additional guarantees for the provision of information. According to this law, the guarantees of this right are as follows: 1). State bodies and local self-government bodies shall create information resources accessible to everyone regarding the activities of these bodies and their subordinate organizations. 2). A refusal of access to information resources may be appealed in court. 3). The Committee on Information Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan organizes the registration of all information resources and systems. It publishes information about them to ensure citizens' right to access information. 4). The list of information services provided to users from state information resources free of charge or for a fee that does not fully cover the cost of the services shall be determined by the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Mass Media" ([Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 1999](#)) guarantees citizens of Kazakhstan free access to information and materials from foreign mass media: "Mass media bodies of the Republic of Kazakhstan have the right, based on relevant agreements, to establish their correspondent offices in other countries."

## **2. Second group of materials**

To realize the rights and freedoms related to the second group of materials, a specific implementation mechanism is required, as their full implementation depends not only on the rule of law but also on the actions of authorized bodies or officials who must assist individuals in exercising their rights and freedoms. For example, executive authorities are responsible for organizing healthcare systems, education, social services, and protection against unemployment, among other areas. Additionally, executive bodies are obliged to create the necessary conditions for citizens to participate in the governance of state affairs (including the rights to form public associations, hold demonstrations, rallies, and meetings, and to exercise freedom of conscience and religion, etc.). The right to information is also part of this group of rights and freedoms.

Therefore, the legally significant features of the legal relationship regarding the search, receipt, transmission, and dissemination of information, in accordance with the Constitution of Kazakhstan, are: 1) the object of the legal relationship – information, i.e., data about events, phenomena, and facts of public life; 2) the subject of this legal relationship can be any individual (in some instances – only a citizen of Kazakhstan), as well as a state or local government

body; 3) the subjective right in this case belongs only to an individual; 4) the legal obligation may be imposed exclusively on a legal entity (state authorities, local self-government bodies, mass media, enterprises, institutions, etc.).

### **3. Third group of materials.**

The third stage of the realization of rights is the definition of the organizational and legal procedure suitable for the implementation of a given right. The organizational and legal procedure is usually contained in regulatory legal acts. For its application, it is necessary to be certain that: 1) the text of the legal norm is authentic; 2) a duly authorized body has issued the norm; 3) it is in effect at the relevant time and in the relevant territory; 4) the specific norm can be applied to the given person and object.

This third stage is called the stage of benefiting from specific goods, as the entire process of realizing the right should culminate in the subject satisfying their interests. Most likely, however, the stage of benefiting from specific goods cannot be fully equated with the stage of defining the organizational and legal implementation procedure, as a person may benefit from the goods either during the implementation of the right or upon its completion.

The stages of realizing rights and freedoms mentioned above may be supplemented by another stage — the stage of concretizing the rights and obligations of the subjects of a specific legal relationship. This stage is intermediate between the stage of legal status and the stage of the legal relationship. The concretization of rights and obligations should be understood as the detailed regulation of participants' rights and obligations in a legal relationship, as set out in current (sectoral) legislation. The implementation of this stage lies with legislative bodies. This stage should be considered intermediate for the following reasons: 1) the concretization of subjective rights and obligations is necessary when determining the legal status of the rights holder (as, essentially, it involves establishing their powers in a particular area and their limits by law); 2) if it concerns the concretization of obligations, although they stem from rights, they become relevant only when the rights holder enters into legal relations. One subsequent stage in realizing a right is the adoption of a specific decision, which must fully comply with both the law and the particular circumstances.

Regarding the theoretical, methodological, and legal foundations, it is necessary to develop a methodological research framework, which includes both specific scientific methods and principles and the methodology of an integrated approach. Firstly, the dialectical method, which allows consideration of the

protection of social rights and citizens' right to information in their interrelation and interdependence with other elements of human rights, as well as in the context of dynamic socio-economic and political transformations. Secondly, the systems approach analyzes social rights and citizens' right to information as a complex, multi-level system encompassing various objects, subjects, mechanisms, and legal regulatory tools. Thirdly, the functional method enables the identification of the role and significance of social rights and citizens' right to information in the context of ensuring Kazakhstan's national policy, and of their connections with other components of constitutional law. Fourthly, the method of comparative legal analysis allows for comparing the legal regulation of social rights and citizens' right to information in the Republic of Kazakhstan with the experience of other countries. Fifthly, the institutional approach defines the roles of state bodies, public associations, and other institutions in ensuring social rights and citizens' right to information. In addition, modeling, forecasting, and other scientific methods were used to comprehensively study this issue in the context of the Republic of Kazakhstan's legal policy.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The adoption of a decision does not exhaust the exercise of rights. To complete this process, it is necessary for the adopted decision to be implemented in people's behavior — that is, for them to actually make use of the social benefits provided for by law. The final stage of exercising a right is verifying that the directive has been adequately fulfilled. At this stage, the implementation of citizens' rights is linked to the mechanism for protecting rights, as the final stage is facilitated by various forms of control and supervision carried out by different state and local government bodies. If violations are detected during the implementation of the right, the mechanism for protecting citizens' rights and freedoms comes into play.

The state bodies exercising constitutional control in the Republic of Kazakhstan are the head of state, the Assembly of People's Representatives, the Government, and the Judiciary. "The Constitutional Court," as S.A. Avakyan ([1995, p. 14](#)) reasonably argues, "in a general sense serves to protect all political, economic, social, and moral values of the respective society". The role of the Constitutional Court is directly connected with the protection of constitutional rights and freedoms of individuals and citizens.

Thus, the mechanism for the exercise of individuals' and citizens' right to information has certain specific features compared to that for other rights and

freedoms. First, it should be noted that its implementation involves two sides — the citizen and the state bodies. This specificity is determined by the nature of the legal relationship regarding the search for and obtaining of information, which is an interrelated two-way process. In addition, it is essential to note the different conditions for exercising the right to information by Kazakhstani citizens and by persons who do not hold the citizenship of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The third distinctive feature of the mechanism for the exercise of this right is that the obligation in the legal relationship to search for, obtain, transmit, and produce information is imposed exclusively on legal entities.

Guarantees and restrictions occupy a special place in the mechanism for the exercise of citizens' rights and freedoms, as they help make the implementation process more orderly. Guarantees promote the exercise of citizens' rights, as their primary purpose is to ensure the most favorable environment in which the legal status of the individual, enshrined in law, becomes the actual condition of every citizen. That is, guarantees help to realize the norms of legislation in real life. The content of guarantees constantly changes and depends on the socio-political, economic, spiritual, and other processes occurring in our country at specific stages of its historical development.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan and other legal acts, the protection of social rights and the concealment of information imply not only withholding information about events, facts, and phenomena that pose a danger to life, health, and the environment, but also the distortion of such information, that is, providing it partially or entirely in a form that does not correspond to reality.

Protecting citizens' social rights from various encroachments is one of the most essential functions of the state. All state bodies carry out this function. Undoubtedly, current legislation plays a significant role in clarifying such provisions; however, the Constitution itself must not contain overly vague norms and must ensure the coordinated functioning and interaction of state bodies, as well as their accountability to the people. Therefore, the head of state holds priority powers and is one of the key links in the mechanism for implementing citizens' social rights, as the president oversees the activities of all top-level power holders in this area. The content of this function of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan is also expressed in the text of the presidential oath, which states: "I solemnly swear to faithfully serve the people of Kazakhstan, strictly follow the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan, guarantee the rights and freedoms of citizens, and conscientiously fulfill the high duties entrusted to me as President of the Republic of Kazakhstan" ([On the](#)

[President of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Law, 1995](#)). Thus, both legally and practically, there is not a single subjective right (freedom) of an individual or citizen in the implementation of which the President does not have the potential to participate.

The Mazhilis implements the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution by adopting laws and resolutions. However, it is bound by the President's decisions and consent. The Security Council, in turn, prepares the President's decisions on issues related to protecting the vital interests of the individual, society, and the state from internal and external threats, and on conducting a unified state policy in the field of security. The Security Council is also a body that ensures the conditions for the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to exercise his constitutional powers to protect social rights, as well as the rights and freedoms of the individual and citizen, and to safeguard the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Kazakhstan ([Article 40 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan](#)).

Political parties and public associations also play a significant role in realizing citizens' social rights. They may have both general and special competence and act based on the Constitution and the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Political Parties" dated July 15, 2002 ([Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2002](#)). According to this law, political parties are recognized as "...voluntary associations of citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan, expressing the political will of citizens and various social groups, to represent their interests in representative and executive bodies of state power, local self-government, and participating in their formation."

In addition to the above-mentioned state bodies of general competence, there are also bodies with special competence in implementing social rights. Implementing citizens' social rights is one of the main functions of these bodies. The institution of the Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) exists in many countries. Its functions include protecting and restoring human rights that have been violated. The position of the Commissioner for Human Rights was introduced to strengthen guarantees of state protection of human rights and to promote the observance and respect for human rights and dignity in the activities of state bodies and officials.

One of the main functions of the Commissioner for Human Rights is to consider complaints from citizens and other persons under its jurisdiction about violations or improper observance of their rights and freedoms. In addition, the Commissioner, on his or her own initiative, identifies and investigates cases of gross or mass violations of human rights if they are of special public significance;

informs state authorities and the public about the state of human rights observance. In exercising its powers, the Commissioner is independent and not accountable to any state bodies or officials. Illegal interference with the Commissioner's activities entails liability under the law.

The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Kazakhstan is a judicial body of constitutional control. Its decisions are final and not appealable. It has broad powers, which are enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Constitutional Law "On the Constitutional Court" of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated November 5, 2022 (No. 153-VII ZRK). The Constitutional Court, upon complaints about violations of constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens and upon requests from courts, verifies the constitutionality of a law applied or to be used in a particular case.

The legislator, in determining methods of protecting state secrets, may only use those that do not restrict the human rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution and international legal norms. International legal guarantees are enshrined in international legal acts ratified by the Republic of Kazakhstan. The legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan has largely been brought into conformity with international norms, but this process is not yet complete.

At the international level, as in any state, there are bodies whose direct function is the protection of human rights and freedoms. Thus, according to the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, there are two such bodies: the European Commission of Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights. They may hear cases of any citizen of a country that has signed the Convention.

The European Commission of Human Rights may accept a case for consideration only after all domestic remedies have been exhausted in accordance with the generally recognized norms of international law and only within six months from the date of the final domestic decision ([European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, 1996, p. 197](#)). The European Court of Human Rights may also hear a complaint. In this case, the complaint is submitted to the Court if the interested High Contracting Party recognizes the Court's compulsory jurisdiction or, in the absence of such recognition, with the consent of the High Contracting Party concerned, the case may be brought before the Court by: 1) the Commission; 2) the High Contracting Party whose citizen is allegedly the victim; 3) the High Contracting Party which referred the case to the Commission; 4) the High Contracting Party against which the complaint was lodged.

## D. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Kazakh legislation on the right to information demonstrates a unique duality. While it formally guarantees citizens access to information, these guarantees can easily become symbolic, as the state retains the legal authority to restrict access at any time. This creates a significant imbalance between individual rights and state control, with the latter often prevailing. Such a tendency reflects broader challenges in strengthening human rights and legal awareness within society. The full realization of transparency and freedom of information remains uncertain, hindered by historical, political, and economic factors. Developing democratic traditions and a mature civic culture is therefore essential to fostering genuine press freedom and accountability. In this context, society plays a central role as the primary channel of legal information, shaping legal culture and consciousness and nurturing civic responsibility and solidarity with the nation's evolving legal system.

During this research, we came to the following conclusions: A mass media outlet should be understood as an independent organization established in accordance with the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic, whose primary purpose is to search for, obtain, produce, and disseminate information through periodical print publications or radio, video, television, or electronic means. At present, there is a functioning set of mass media types whose activities are regulated by a specially developed system of regulatory legal acts, which include fundamental international legal principles that have a regulatory impact on relations in the field of obtaining and disseminating mass information.

The concepts of social rights and citizenship are universal principles recognized in many countries, including Kazakhstan, though their relationship with other constitutional rights may differ across states. Historically, social rights did not exist as a distinct institution in national or international law. Still, their inclusion in various legal acts eventually led to their establishment as an independent legal framework. In Kazakhstan, this development mirrored global trends, evolving through both legislative and institutional mechanisms. The realization of social rights involves not only citizens but also government institutions, reflecting a dynamic interaction between legal subjects and state authority.

Currently, Kazakhstan's legal system regulates citizens' rights to information through a comprehensive set of normative legal acts. These laws recognize this right as an essential and autonomous legal institution, define its principles, and provide guarantees for its protection. Such guarantees include the right to seek, receive, and disseminate reliable information about government

activities, access personal data affecting one's rights, demand retraction of false information, and use or store obtained information freely. Furthermore, the legislation ensures information security, protects against misinformation, and provides judicial safeguards for violations. Collectively, these measures form a coherent system designed to strengthen transparency, accountability, and the protection of individual rights in Kazakhstan.

Thus, for the further development and improvement of the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan regulating the human and citizens' right to information, it is necessary to: finalize and adopt a unified law on the right to information; adopt a law on personal and family secrecy; specify the provisions on commercial and official secrecy; strengthen administrative and disciplinary liability of officials; bring all regulatory legal acts concerning the human and citizen's right to information in line with the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan and other legislation.

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