

Basic Law

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General principles

Article 1:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab Islamic State.

Religion: Islam

Constitution: The Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah (traditions)

Language: Arabic

Capital: Riyadh

Article 2:

Its national holidays:

- Eid Al-Fitr (a religious feast celebrated on the 1st of Shawal, the 10th month of the Islamic calendar)
- Eid Al-Ad-ha (a religious feast celebrated on the 10th of Dhul-Hijjah, the 12th month of the Islamic calendar)
- Calendar: Hijira (Lunar)

Article 3:

Its national flag:

- Green in color
- Width equal to two thirds of length

- Article of faith (translated as "There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is Allah's Messenger") inscribed in the center with a drawn sword underneath.

Article 4:

The State's emblem consists of two intersecting swords with a datepalm in the upper space between them. Both the national anthem and the decorations awarded by the State shall be determined by the law.

System of Government

Article 5:

- (a) The system of government in Saudi Arabia shall be monarchical.
- (b) The dynasty right shall be confined to the sons of the Founder, King Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud (Ibn Saud), and the sons of sons. The most eligible among them shall be invited, through the process of "bai'ah", to rule in accordance with the Book of God and the Prophet's Sunnah.
- (c) The King names the Crown Prince and may relieve him of his duties by Royal Order.
- (d) The Crown Prince shall devote full time to his office and to any other duties which may be assigned to him by the King.
- (e) The Crown Prince shall assume the powers of the king on the latter's death pending the outcome of the "bai'ah".

Article 6:

Citizens shall pledge allegiance to the King on the basis of the Book of God and the Prophet's Sunnah, as well as on the principle of "hearing is obeying" both in prosperity and adversity, in situations pleasant and unpleasant.

Article 7:

The regime derives its power from the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah which rule over this and all other State Laws.

Article 8:

The system of government in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is established on the foundation of justice, "Shoura" and equality in compliance with the Islamic Shari'ah (the revealed law of Islam).

Constituents of Saudi Society

Article 9:

The family is the nucleus of Saudi society. Its members shall be brought up imbued with the Islamic Creed which calls for obedience to God, His Messenger and those of the nation who are charged with authority; for the respect and enforcement of law and order; and for love of the motherland and taking pride in its glorious history.

Article 10:

The State shall take great pains to strengthen the bonds which hold the family together and to preserve its Arab and Islamic values. Likewise it is keen on taking good care of all family members and creating proper conditions to help them cultivate their skill and capabilities.

Article 11:

The Saudi society shall hold fast to the Divine Rope. Its citizens shall work together to foster benevolence, piety and mutual assistance; and it avoids dissension.

Article 12:

The State shall foster national unity and preclude all that may lead to disunity, mischief and division.

Article 13:

Education aims at the inculcation of the Islamic creed in the young generation and the development of their knowledge and skills so that they may become useful members of society who love their homeland and take pride in its history.

Economic Principles

Article 14:

All God-given resources of the country, both under and above ground, or in territorial waters, or within terrestrial and maritime limits to which the State jurisdiction extends, as well as the revenues accruing therefrom shall be owned by the State as specified by the law. Likewise the law shall specify the means to be employed for the utilization, protection and development of these resources in a manner conducive to the promotion of the State's interest, security and economy.

Article 15:

No concessions shall be awarded or permission given for the utilization of the country's natural resources, except as permitted by the law.

Article 16:

Public property is sacrosanct. It shall be protected by the State and preserved by both citizens and foreign residents.

Article 17:

Ownership, capital and labor are the fundamentals of the Kingdom's economic and social life. They are private rights that serve a social function in conformity with Islamic Shari'ah.

Article 18:

The State shall guarantee the freedom and inviolability of private property. Private property shall be not be expropriated unless in the public interest and the confiscatee is fairly compensated.

Article 19:

Collective confiscation of properties shall be prohibited. Confiscation of private properties shall only be effected in accordance with a judicial verdict.

Article 20:

Taxes and fees shall be imposed only on the basis of fairness and when the need arises.

They shall only be imposed, amended, abolished or remitted in accordance with the law.

Article 21:

Zakat (poor-due) shall be levied and dispensed to its legitimate beneficiaries.

Article 22:

Economic and social development shall be achieved in accordance with a methodical and equitable plan.

Rights and Duties

Article 23:

The State shall protect the Islamic Creed and shall cater to the application of Shari'ah. The State shall enjoin good and forbid evil, and shall undertake the duties of the call to Islam.

Article 24:

The State shall maintain and serve the Two Holy Mosques. It shall ensure the security and safety of all those who call at the Two Holy Mosques so that they may be able to visit or perform the pilgrimage and "Umrah" (minor pilgrimage) in comfort and ease.

Article 25:

The State shall be keen to realize the aspirations of the Arab Muslim nations with regard to solidarity and unity while enhancing its relations with friendly states.

Article 26:

The State shall protect human rights in accordance with Islamic Shari'ah.

Article 27:

The State shall guarantee the right of its citizens and their families in an emergency or in case of disease, disability and old age. Likewise it shall support the social security system and encourage individuals and institutions to contribute to charitable pursuits.

Article 28:

The State shall provide job opportunities to all able-bodied people and shall enact laws to protect both

the employee and the employer.

Article 29:

The State shall foster sciences, arts and culture. It shall encourage scientific research, shall preserve Arab and Islamic heritage and shall contribute to Arab, Islamic and human civilization.

Article 30:

The State shall provide public education and shall commit itself to the eradication of illiteracy.

Article 31:

The State shall be solicitous for promoting public health and shall provide medical care to every citizen.

Article 32:

The State shall seek to conserve, protect and develop the environment and prevent pollution.

Article 33:

The State shall build and equip the armed forces to defend the Islamic faith, the Two Holy Mosques, the society and the homeland.

Article 34:

Defending the Islamic faith, the society and the homeland shall be the duty of each and every citizen. Rules of military service shall be spelled out by the law.

Article 35:

The rules which govern the Saudi Arabian nationality shall be defined by the law.

Article 36:

The State shall ensure the security of all its citizens and expatriates living within its domains. No individual shall be detained, imprisoned or have his actions restricted except under the provisions of the law.

Article 37:

Houses are inviolable. They shall not be entered without the permission of their owners, nor shall they be searched except in cases specified by the law.

Article 38:

Punishment shall be restricted to the actual offender. No crime shall be established as such and no punishment shall be imposed except under a judicial or law provision. No punishment shall be imposed except for acts that take place after enactment of the law provision governing them.

Article 39:

Mass media, publication facilities and other means of expression shall function in a manner that is courteous and fair and shall abide by State laws. They shall play their part in educating the masses and boosting national unity. All that may give rise to mischief and discord, or may compromise the security of the State and its public image, or may offend against man's dignity and rights shall be banned. Relevant regulations shall explain how this is to be done.

Article 40:

All forms of correspondence, whether conveyed by telegraph, post or any other means of communication shall be considered sacrosanct. They may not be confiscated, delayed or read, and telephones may not be tapped except as laid down in the law.

Article 41:

Foreign residents in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shall abide by its regulations and shall show respect for Saudi social traditions, values and feelings.

Article 42:

The State shall grant political asylum, if so required by the public interest. The law and international agreements shall define the procedures and rules for the extradition of common criminals.

Article 43:

The "Majlis" of the King and the "Majlis" of the Crown Prince shall be open to all citizens and to anyone who may have a complaint or a grievance. Every individual shall have the right to communicate with public authorities regarding any topic he may wish to discuss.

Powers of the State

Article 44:

The powers of the State shall comprise:

- The Judicial Power
- The Executive Power
- The Organizational Power

All these powers shall cooperate in performing their duties according to this Law and other regulations. The King is the ultimate source of all these authorities.

Article 45:

The source of Ifta (religious ruling) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah. The law shall specify the composition of the Senior Ulema Board and of the Administration of Religious Research and Ifta and its jurisdictions.

Article 46:

The judicial authority is an independent power. In discharging their duties, the judges bow to no authority other than that of Islamic Shari'ah.

Article 47:

Both citizens and foreign residents have an equal right to litigation. The necessary procedures are set forth by the law.

Article 48:

Courts shall apply the provisions of Islamic Shari'ah to cases brought before them, according to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah as well as other regulations issued by the Head of State in strict conformity with the Holy Qur'an and the Prophet's Sunnah.

Article 49:

Subject to the provisions of article 53 of this law, the courts shall have jurisdiction to deal with all kinds of disputes and crimes.

Article 50:

The King, or whomsoever he may deputize, shall be concerned with the implementation of the judicial verdicts.

Article 51:

The law specifies the formation of the supreme judicial council and its functions as well as the organization and jurisdiction of the courts.

Article 52:

Judges are appointed and their service is terminated by a Royal Order upon a proposal by the supreme judicial council as specified by the law.

Article 53:

The law defines the structure and jurisdiction of the Court of Grievances.

Article 54:

The law shall specify the reference, organization and jurisdictions of the Board of Investigation and Public Prosecution.

Article 55:

The King shall undertake to rule according to the rulings of Islam and shall supervise the application of Shari'ah, the regulations, and the State's general policy as well as the protection and defense of the country.

Article 56:

The King shall be the Prime Minister and shall be assisted in the performance of his duties by members of the Council of Ministers according to the rulings of this law and other laws. The Council of Ministers Law shall specify the Council's Powers with regard to internal and external affairs, organizing government bodies and co-ordinating their activities. Likewise the Law shall specify the conditions which the Ministers must satisfy, their eligibility, the method of their accountability along with all other matters related to them. The Council of Ministers' law and jurisdiction shall be modified with this Law.

Article 57:

- (a) The King shall appoint the Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers and may relieve them of their duties by a Royal order.
- (b) The Deputy Prime Minister and Cabinet Ministers shall be jointly responsible before the King for the applications of Islamic Shari'ah, the laws and the State's general policy.
- (c) The King shall have the right to dissolve and re-form the Council of Ministers.

Article 58:

The King shall appoint ministers, deputy ministers and officials of the "excellent grade " category and he may dismiss them by a Royal order in accordance with the rules of the law.

Ministers and heads of independent authorities shall be responsible before the Prime Minister for their ministries and authorities.

Article 59:

The law shall prescribe the provisions pertaining to civil service, including salaries, bonuses, compensation, privileges and retirement pensions.

Article 60:

The King shall be the Supreme Commander of the armed forces and shall appoint military officers and terminate their service in accordance with the law.

Article 61:

The King shall have the right to declare a state of emergency and general mobilization as well as war.

Article 62:

If danger threatens the safety of the Kingdom, the integrity of its territory, the security of its people and their interests, or impedes the performance of State institutions, the King shall take necessary and speedy measures to confront this danger. If the King feels that these measures may better be permanent, he then shall take whatever legal action he deems necessary in this regard.

Article 63:

The King receives Kings and heads of state, appoints his representatives to other countries and accepts accreditation of the representatives of other countries to the Kingdom.

Article 64:

The King awards medals in the same manner as specified by the law.

Article 65:

The King may delegate parts of his authority to the Crown Prince by a Royal order.

Article 66:

In the event of his traveling abroad, the King shall issue a Royal Order deputizing the Crown Prince to run the affairs of the State and look after the interests of the people as stated in the Royal Order.

Article 67:

Acting within its term of reference, the Organizational Power shall draw up regulations and by-laws to safeguard public interests or eliminate corruption in the affairs of the State in accordance with the rulings of the Islamic Shari'ah. It shall exercise its powers in compliance with this law and the two other laws of the Council of Ministers and the Majlis Al-Shoura (Consultative Council).

Article 68:

The Majlis Al-Shoura shall be constituted. Its law shall determine the structure of its formation, the method by which it exercises its special powers and the selection of its members. The King shall have the right to dissolve the Majlis Al-Shoura and re-form it.

Article 69:

The King may call the Council of Ministers and Majlis Al-Shoura to hold a joint meeting to which he may invite whomsoever he wishes for a discussion of whatsoever issues he may like to raise.

Article 70:

Laws, treaties, international agreements and concessions shall be issued and modified by Royal Decrees.

Article 71:

Laws shall be published in the official gazette and they shall take effect as from the date of their publication unless another date is stipulated.

Financial Affairs

Article 72:

(a) The law shall determine the management of State revenues, and the procedures of their delivery to the State Treasury.

(b) Revenues shall be accounted for and expended in accordance with the procedures stated on the law.

Article 73:

No obligation shall be made to pay funds from the State Treasury except in accordance with the provisions of the budget. Should the provisions of the budget not suffice for paying such funds, a Royal Decree shall be issued for their payment.

Article 74:

State property may not be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of except in accordance with the law.

Article 75:

The regulations shall define the provisions governing legal tender and banks, as well as standards, measures and weights.

Article 76:

The law shall determine the State's fiscal year. The budget shall be issued by a Royal Decree which shall spell out revenue and expenditure estimates for the year. The budget shall be issued at least one month before the beginning of the fiscal year. If, owing to overpowering reasons, the budget is not issued on time and the new fiscal year has not yet started, the validity of the old budget shall be extended until a new budget has been issued.

Article 77:

The concerned authority shall prepare the State's final accounts for the expired fiscal year and shall submit it to the Prime Minister.

Article 78:

The budgets and final accounts of corporate authorities shall be subject to the same provisions applied to the State budget and its final accounts.

Control and Auditing Authorities

Article 79:

All State revenues and expenditures shall be kept under control, so shall its fixed and liquid (mobile) assets which will be checked to ascertain that they are properly utilized and maintained. An annual report thereon shall be submitted to the Council of Ministers.

The law shall name the control and auditing authority concerned, and shall define its terms of reference and accountability.

Article 80:

Government bodies shall be monitored closely to ensure that they are performing well and applying the law properly. Financial and administrative violations shall be investigated and an annual report thereon shall be submitted to the Council of Ministers.

The law shall name the authority to be charged with this task and shall define its accountability and terms of reference.

General Provisions

Article 81:

The implementation of this law shall not violate the treaties and agreements the Kingdom has signed with other countries or with international organizations and institutions.

Article 82:

Without prejudice to the provisions of article 7 of this law, none of the provisions of this law shall, in any way, be obstructed unless it is a temporary measure taken during the time of war or in a state of emergency as specified by the law.

Article 83:

No amendments to this law shall be made except in the same manner in which it has been issued.

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