



**Bureau of Experts at the Council of Ministers
Official Translation Department**

Basic Law of Governance

Royal Order No. A/90
March 2, 1992

Translation of Saudi Laws

NOTES:

1. This translation is provided for guidance. The governing text is the Arabic text.
2. The translation of Saudi laws takes the following into consideration:
 - Words used in the singular form include the plural and vice versa.
 - Words used in the masculine form include the feminine.
 - Words used in the present tense include the present as well as the future.
 - The word “person” or “persons” and their related pronouns (he, his, him, they, their, them, and who) refer to a natural and legal person.
3. Amendments to this Law are provided in the Appendix.

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Basic Law of Governance

Chapter 1: General Principles

Article 1

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab Islamic State. The Kingdom's religion is Islam, its constitution is the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet, peace be upon him, its language is Arabic, and its capital is the city of Riyadh.

Article 2

The eids of the State are Eid Al-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha and its calendar is the Hijri Calendar.

Article 3

The flag of the State shall be as follows:

- a) Its color shall be green.
- b) Its width shall be two-thirds its length.
- c) The expression (لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله)¹ shall be in the center of the flag and an unsheathed sword shall be beneath it. The flag may not be flown at half-mast.

The law shall specify the provisions related thereto.

Article 4

The emblem of the State shall be two crossed swords with a date palm tree in the middle of the upper space between them. The law shall specify the anthem and medals of the State.

Chapter 2: System of Governance

Article 5

- A. The system of governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is monarchical.
- B. Governance shall be limited to the sons of the Founder King, King Abdulaziz ibn Abdurrahman Al-Faisal Al-Saud, and the sons of his sons. Allegiance shall be pledged to the most suitable among them to reign on the basis of the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet, peace be upon him.
- C. The King shall appoint the Crown Prince and relieve him by royal order.
- D. The Crown Prince shall devote himself fully to the duties of the office of the Crown Prince and any other duties assigned thereto by the King.
- E. The Crown Prince shall assume the powers of the King upon his death until the pledge of allegiance is given.

¹ This translates into "There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah".



Article 6

Citizens shall pledge allegiance to the King on the basis of the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet, peace be upon him, and on the basis of submission and obedience in times of hardship, ease, fortune, and adversity.

Article 7

Governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia derives its authority from the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet, peace be upon him. The Quran and Sunna shall govern this Law and all the laws of the State.

Article 8

Governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shall be based on justice, shura, and equality in accordance with Sharia.

Chapter 3: Foundations of Saudi Society

Article 9

The family is the basic unit of Saudi society. The members of a family shall be brought up on the basis of the Islamic creed and its requirement of allegiance and obedience to Allah, to the Prophet, peace be upon him, and to those in authority, as well as on the respect of the law and implementation thereof and on the love of and pride in the nation and its glorious history.

Article 10

The State shall endeavor to strengthen family bonds and maintain Arab and Islamic family values, and shall strive for the welfare of all its members and for creating the conditions conducive to the development of their talents and abilities.

Article 11

Saudi society shall be based upon the adherence of its members to the bond of Allah as well as their cooperation unto righteousness and piety, maintenance of solidarity, and refraining from dissent.

Article 12

Promoting national unity is a duty, and the State shall prevent any act which may lead to disunity, sedition, and division.

Article 13

Education shall aim to instill the Islamic creed in the youth; impart knowledge and skills to them; and prepare them to become useful members in the society, love their nation, and be proud of its history.



Chapter 4: Economic Principles

Article 14

All resources bestowed by Allah, whether below or above the ground, in territorial waters, or within land or maritime domains under the State's jurisdiction, and all the revenues of such resources shall be the property of the State as defined by the law.

The law shall set forth the means for exploiting, protecting, and developing such resources for the benefit, security, and economy of the State.

Article 15

Concessions may only be granted and the country's public resources may only be exploited pursuant to the law.

Article 16

Public property has sanctity. The State shall protect such property, and it may not be misused by citizens and residents.

Article 17

Ownership, capital, and labor are the basic constituents of the economic and social structure of the Kingdom. They are private rights which fulfill a social function in accordance with Sharia.

Article 18

The State shall guarantee the ownership of private property and its inviolability. A property owner may not be deprived of his property except for public interest, provided that he is fairly compensated.

Article 19

Public expropriation of property shall be prohibited, and the penalty of private expropriation may be imposed only by a judicial ruling.

Article 20

Taxes and fees may be imposed only when necessary and on a just basis. Imposition, amendment, and cancellation of taxes and fees and exemption therefrom shall be in accordance with the law.

Article 21

Zakat shall be collected and disbursed as prescribed by Sharia.



Article 22

Economic and social development shall be achieved according to a sound and just plan.

Chapter 5: Rights and Duties

Article 23

The State shall protect the Islamic creed, apply Sharia, promote virtue and prevent vice, and propagate Islam.

Article 24

The State shall maintain and serve the Two Holy Mosques, and provide security and care to those who travel to them to enable them to perform Hajj and Umrah and visit the Prophet's Mosque with ease and comfort.

Article 25

The State shall strive to realize the aspirations of the Arab and Muslim nations for solidarity and unity, and to strengthen its relations with friendly states.

Article 26

The State shall protect human rights in accordance with Sharia.

Article 27

The State shall guarantee the rights of citizens and their families in exigent circumstances as well as in sickness, disability, and old age, and shall support the social security system and encourage institutions and individuals to participate in charitable work.

Article 28

The State shall facilitate the provision of job opportunities to every able person and shall enact laws that protect employees and employers.

Article 29

The State shall promote science, art, and culture; encourage scientific research; protect Islamic and Arab heritage; and contribute to Arab, Islamic, and human civilizations.

Article 30

The State shall provide public education and shall be committed to combating illiteracy.



Article 31

The State shall be responsible for public health and shall provide health care to every citizen.

Article 32

The State shall endeavor to conserve, protect, and improve the environment and to prevent pollution.

Article 33

The State shall establish and equip the armed forces to defend the Islamic creed, the Two Holy Mosques, the society, and the nation.

Article 34

Defending the Islamic creed, the society, and the nation is the duty of every citizen. The law shall set forth the provisions governing military service.

Article 35

The law shall set forth the provisions governing Saudi Arabian citizenship.

Article 36

The State shall provide security to all citizens and residents. A person's actions may not be restricted nor may he be detained or imprisoned, except in accordance with the law.

Article 37

Residences shall be inviolable; a residence may not be entered or searched without the permission of its owner or tenant except in cases provided for in the law.

Article 38

Punishment shall be limited to the offender. An act shall not be deemed a crime and a punishment shall not be imposed except pursuant to a Sharia or legal provision; punishment shall only be imposed on acts committed after the relevant legal provision becomes effective.

Article 39

Media and all means of expression shall use appropriate language and adhere to the laws of the State, and shall contribute to educating the nation and supporting its unity. Any content that leads to sedition and division, undermines the security of the State or its public relations, or adversely affects the dignity and rights of human beings shall be prohibited. The laws shall set forth relevant provisions.



Article 40

Correspondence by telegraph, mail, telephone, and other means of communication shall be inviolable and may not be seized, delayed, viewed, or listened to except in cases provided for by law.

Article 41

Residents in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shall adhere to its laws and respect the values, traditions, and sensibilities of Saudi society.

Article 42

The State shall grant political asylum if public interest so dictates. Laws and international agreements shall specify the rules and procedures for the extradition of ordinary criminals.

Article 43

The courts of the King and the Crown Prince shall be accessible to every citizen and to any person who has a complaint or grievance. Every person shall have the right to address public authorities in matters of concern to him.

Chapter 6: Authorities of the State

Article 44

The authorities of the State shall consist of the following:

- Judicial authority.
- Executive authority.
- Legislative authority.

These authorities shall cooperate in the discharge of their functions in accordance with this Law and other laws. The King shall be their final authority.

Article 45

The sources of fatwa in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shall be the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet, peace be upon him. The law shall specify the structure and powers of the Board of Senior Ulema and the Department of Religious Research and Fatwa.

Article 46

The Judiciary shall be independent, and there shall be no power over judges in their performance of their judicial duties other than the power of Sharia.

Article 47

The right of litigation shall be equally guaranteed to citizens and residents in the Kingdom. The law shall specify the procedures required therefor.



Article 48

The courts shall apply to cases brought before them the provisions of Sharia, as indicated by the Quran and the Sunna as well as the laws not in conflict with the Quran and the Sunna enacted by the State.

Article 49

Subject to the provisions of Article 53 of this Law, the courts shall have jurisdiction to adjudicate all disputes and crimes.

Article 50

The King, or his designee, shall be responsible for the enforcement of judicial rulings.

Article 51

The law shall set forth the composition and powers of the Supreme Judicial Council as well as the structure and jurisdiction of the courts.

Article 52

The appointment of judges and the termination of their services shall be pursuant to a royal order, based on a recommendation from the Supreme Judicial Council, as set forth by the law.

Article 53

The law shall specify the structure and jurisdiction of the Board of Grievances.

Article 54

The law shall set forth the organization and powers of the Bureau of Investigation and Public Prosecution and shall designate the authority to which it reports.

Article 55

The King shall run the affairs of the nation in accordance with the provisions of Islam. He shall oversee the implementation of Sharia, the law, and the State's public policy as well as the protection and defense of the country.



Article 56

The King is the Prime Minister. He shall be assisted in the discharge of his duties by the members of the Council of Ministers in accordance with the provisions of this Law and other laws. The Law of the Council of Ministers shall specify the powers of the Council with respect to domestic and foreign affairs, and the organization of government agencies and coordination amongst them. It shall also specify the requirements to be met by ministers, their powers, their accountability, and all their affairs. Amendments to the Law of the Council of Ministers and the powers of the Council shall be in accordance with this Law.

Article 57

- A. The King shall appoint and relieve the deputies of the Prime Minister and the member ministers of the Council of Ministers by royal order.
- B. The deputies of the Prime Minister and the member ministers of the Council of Ministers shall be considered collectively responsible before the King for the implementation of Sharia, the law, and the State's public policy.
- C. The King may dissolve and reconstitute the Council of Ministers.

Article 58

Appointment to the rank of Minister and Deputy Minister and to grade "Excellent", and relief therefrom shall be made by the King by virtue of a royal order, in accordance with the law.

Ministers and heads of independent agencies shall be responsible before the Prime Minister for the ministries and agencies they head.

Article 59

The law shall set forth the provisions for civil service, including salaries, remunerations, compensations, benefits, and pensions.

Article 60

The King is the Commander-in-Chief of all military forces. He shall appoint officers and terminate their service in accordance with the law.

Article 61

The King declares the state of emergency, general mobilization, and war. The law shall set forth the provisions related thereto.

Article 62

If a danger arises which undermines the security of the Kingdom or its territorial integrity or the safety and interests of its people, or hinders the institutions of the State from performing their functions, the King may take the measures necessary to address such danger. If the King deems that such measures should continue, he shall take any necessary action as per the law.



Article 63

The King shall receive kings and heads of state and shall appoint his representatives to foreign states and accept the credentials of the representatives of other states.

Article 64

The King grants medals, subject to the law.

Article 65

The King may, by a royal order, delegate certain powers to the Crown Prince.

Article 66

If the King travels abroad, he shall issue a royal order to deputize the Crown Prince to run the affairs of the State and serve the people's interests as specified in the royal order.

Article 67

The legislative authority shall have the power to enact laws and regulations to serve public interest and protect the integrity of State affairs in accordance with the principles of Sharia. It shall exercise its powers in accordance with this Law, the Law of the Council of Ministers, and the Shura Council Law.

Article 68

A shura council shall be established. Its law shall set forth the manner of its formation, the exercise of its powers, and the selection of its members.

The King may dissolve and reconstitute the Shura Council.

Article 69

The King may call the Shura Council and the Council of Ministers to a joint meeting. He may invite any person to attend said meeting in order to review matters the King deems fit.

Article 70

Laws, treaties, international agreements, and concessions shall be issued and amended by royal decree.

Article 71

Laws shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall enter into force on the date of publication unless another date is specified.



Chapter 7: Financial Affairs

Article 72

- A. The law shall set forth the provisions governing State revenues and their delivery to the State treasury.
- B. Revenues shall be recorded and disbursed in accordance with the rules prescribed by law.

Article 73

No commitment may be made to pay funds from the State treasury except in accordance with the provisions of the budget. If budgetary allocations do not cover such commitment, the commitment shall be made pursuant to a royal decree.

Article 74

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

Article 75

Laws shall set forth the provisions governing money, banks, measures, scales, and weights.

Article 76

The law shall determine the fiscal year of the State. The budget shall be issued pursuant to a royal decree at least one month prior to the commencement of the fiscal year and shall include estimates of revenues and expenditures for the year. If compelling circumstances prevent the issuance of the budget and the new fiscal year begins, the budget of the previous year shall remain effective pending the issuance of the new budget.

Article 77

The competent agency shall prepare the final accounts of the State for the ending fiscal year and submit them to the Prime Minister.

Article 78

The budgets and final accounts of public agencies with corporate personality shall be subject to the provisions governing the budget and final accounts of the State.



Chapter 8: Audit Agencies

Article 79

All the State's revenues and disbursements shall be subject to post audit, and all the State's movable and immovable property shall be subject to audit. The proper use and protection of such property shall be ascertained, and an annual report thereon shall be submitted to the Prime Minister.

The law shall specify the competent audit agency as well as its powers and the authority it reports to.

Article 80

Government agencies shall be monitored to ensure proper administrative performance and adherence to the law. Financial and administrative violations shall be investigated. An annual report to this effect shall be submitted to the Prime Minister.

The law shall specify the competent audit agency as well as its powers and the authority it reports to.

Chapter 9: General Provisions

Article 81

The application of this Law shall not prejudice treaties and agreements with states and international organizations and agencies to which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is party.

Article 82

Without prejudice to the provisions of Article 7 of this Law, no provision of this Law may be suspended except on a temporary basis at the time of war or during a declared state of emergency, and as set forth in the law.

Article 83

Amendment of this Law shall be made only in the manner it is promulgated.



Appendix

Amendments

October 19, 2006 (Ramadan 26, 1427H)

Royal Order No. (A/135) provides for the following:

- Amending Article 5(c) to read as follows:

"c) A call shall be made to pledge allegiance to the King and select the Crown Prince in accordance with the Succession Commission Law".

June 21, 2017 (Ramadan 26, 1438H)

Royal Order No. (A/256) provides for the following:

- Amending Article 5(b) to read as follows:

"Governance shall be limited to the sons of the Founder King, King Abdulaziz ibn Abdulrahman Al-Faisal Al-Saud, and the sons of his sons. Allegiance shall be pledged to the most suitable among them to reign on the basis of the Quran and the Sunna of the Prophet, peace be upon him. After the sons of the Founder King, the King and the Crown Prince may not be the descendants of the same son of the Founder King".