



شعبة الترجمة الرسمية  
Official Translation Department

**Basic Law of Governance**

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**Translation of Saudi Laws**



**NOTE:**

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) refer to a natural and legal person.



## Basic Law of Governance

### Chapter 1: General Principles

#### Article 1

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab and Islamic State. Its religion is Islam and its constitution is the Quran and the Sunna (Traditions) of Prophet Muhammad, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him (PBUH). Its language is Arabic and its capital is the city of Riyadh.

#### Article 2

The two eids of the State shall be Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha, and its calendar shall be 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) Centered therein shall be the expression: (لا إله إلا الله محمد رسول الله) "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger", with an unsheathed sword beneath it. The flag shall never be flown at half-mast.

The Law shall set forth relevant provisions.

#### 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 set forth 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 Abdulaziz ibn Abdurrahman al-Faisal al-Saud, and the sons of his sons. Allegiance shall be pledged to the most suitable amongst them to reign on the basis of the Quran



and the Sunna of the Messenger (PBUH). After the Founder King's sons, the King and the Crown Prince may not be the descendants of the same sons of the Founder King.

- C. The call for the pledge of allegiance to the King and the selection of the Crown Prince shall be in accordance with the Succession Commission Law.
- D. The Crown Prince shall devote himself exclusively to the office of the Crown Prince and shall perform any other duties assigned to him by the King.
- E. The Crown Prince shall assume the powers of the King upon his death until the pledge of allegiance is given.

#### **Article 6**

Citizens shall pledge allegiance to the King on the basis of the Quran and the Sunna of the Messenger, 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 Messenger, both of which 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 basis unit of the Saudi society is the family; its members shall be brought up on the basis of Islamic creed and its requirement of allegiance and obedience to Allah, to His Messenger, and to those in authority, respect for and implementation of laws, and love of and pride in the homeland and its glorious history.

#### **Article 10**

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



**Article 11**

Saudi society shall be based upon its members' adherence to the bond of Allah, 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 what may lead to disunity, sedition, and division.

**Article 13**

Education shall aim to instill Islamic creed in the young, impart knowledge and skills to them, and prepare them to be useful members in the building of their society, loving of their homeland, and taking pride in its history.

**Chapter 4: Economic Principles**

**Article 14**

All the resources bestowed by Allah, be it under the ground, on the surface, in national territorial waters, or on land or maritime domains under the State's control, and revenues thereof 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**

No concession may be granted and no public resources of the country may be exploited except pursuant to a law.

**Article 16**

Public property has sanctity. The State shall protect it, and citizens and residents shall not misuse it.

**Article 17**

Property, capital, and labor are 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 private property and its inviolability. No one shall be deprived of his property except for the public interest, provided that the owner 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 if needed and on a just basis. They may be imposed, revised, abolished, or exempted only in accordance with the law.

**Article 21**

Zakat shall be collected and spent as prescribed by Sharia.

**Article 22**

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

**Chapter 5: Rights and Duties**

**Article 23**

The State shall protect Islamic creed, apply its 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 so as 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 cases of emergency, 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 the employee and the employer.

**Article 29**

The State shall foster science, art, and culture, encourage scientific research, protect Islamic and Arab heritage, and contribute to Arabic, 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 prevent pollution.

**Article 33**

The State shall create and equip armed forces for the defense of the Islamic creed, Two Holy Mosques, society, and homeland.

**Article 34**

Defense of the Islamic creed, society, and homeland 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 its citizens and residents. A person's actions may not be restricted nor may he be detained or imprisoned, except under the provisions of the law.

### **Article 37**

Residences shall be inviolable, and they may not be entered or searched without the owners' permission except in cases set forth by the law.

### **Article 38**

Punishment shall be carried out on an individual basis. There shall be no crime or punishment except on the basis of a Sharia or statutory provision, and there shall be no punishment except for deeds subsequent to the effectiveness of a statutory provision.

### **Article 39**

Media and all means of expression shall use decent language and adhere to State laws. They shall contribute towards educating the nation and supporting its unity. That which leads to sedition and division, or undermines the security of the State or its public relations, or is injurious to the dignity and rights of man, shall be prohibited. Laws shall set forth provisions to achieve this.

### **Article 40**

Correspondence by telegraph, mail, telephone conversations, and other means of communication shall be protected. They may not be seized, delayed, viewed, or listened to except in cases set forth by the law.

### **Article 41**

Residents in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shall observe its laws. They shall 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 all those who have a complaint or grievance. Every individual shall have the right to address public authorities in matters of concern to him.

## **Chapter 6: Authorities of the State**

### **Article 44**

Authorities in the State shall consist of:

- Judicial authority
- Executive authority
- Regulatory 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 for fatwa (religious legal opinion) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia shall be the Quran and the Sunna of the Messenger (PBUH). The law shall set forth the structure and powers of the Board of Senior Ulema and the Department of Religious Research and Fatwa.

### **Article 46**

The Judiciary shall be an independent authority. There shall be no power over judges in their judicial function other than the power of Sharia.

### **Article 47**

The right of litigation shall be guaranteed equally to citizens and residents in the Kingdom. The law shall set forth 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, and whatever laws not in conflict with the Quran and the Sunna which the State may enact.



**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 designee, shall be responsible for the enforcement of judicial rulings.

**Article 51**

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

**Article 52**

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

**Article 53**

The law shall set forth the structure and jurisdiction of the Board of Grievances.

**Article 54**

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

**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 laws, and the State's public policy as well as the protection and defense of the country.

**Article 56**

The King is the President of the Council of Ministers. 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 set forth 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 set forth the requirements ministers must meet, their powers, 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 the deputies of the President of the Council of Ministers and the member ministers of the Council of Ministers, and shall relieve them by royal order.
- B. The deputies of the President of the Council of Ministers and the member ministers of the Council of Ministers shall be considered collectively responsible before the King for the implementation of Sharia, laws, and the State's public policy.
- C. The King may dissolve the Council of Ministers and reconstitute it.

### **Article 58**

The King shall appoint those who hold the rank of "Minister" and "Vice Minister" and those of "Grade Excellent", and shall relieve them from office by royal order in accordance with the law.

Ministers and heads of independent agencies shall be deemed responsible before the President of the Council of Ministers for the ministries and agencies they head.

### **Article 59**

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

### **Article 60**

The King is the Commander-in-Chief of all armed forces. He shall appoint and terminate the services of officers 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 thereof.

### **Article 62**

If a danger arises which undermines the safety of the Kingdom or its territorial integrity or the security and interests of its people, or hinders the institutions of the State from performing their functions, the King may take urgent measures to address such danger. If the King deems that such measures should continue, he shall take the necessary measures 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 shall grant medals in the manner prescribed by the law.

**Article 65**

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

**Article 66**

If the King travels abroad, he shall issue a royal order deputizing the Crown Prince to run the affairs of the State and protect the people's interests in the manner set forth in the royal order.

**Article 67**

The legislative authority shall have the power to promulgate laws and regulations conducive to the realization of public interest or the prevention of harm to 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 Law of the Shura Council.

**Article 68**

A shura council shall be established. Its law shall set forth its formation, the exercising 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 whomsoever he decides 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 decrees.



### **Article 71**

Laws shall be published in the Official Gazette, and shall be effective on the date of publication unless another date is specified therein.

## **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 the law.

### **Article 73**

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

### **Article 74**

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

### **Article 75**

Laws shall set forth provisions governing monetary and banking matters as well as measures, scales, and weights.

### **Article 76**

The law shall specify the fiscal year of the State. The budget shall be promulgated pursuant to a royal decree and shall include estimates of revenues and expenditures for the year, not less than one month before the fiscal year begins. If compelling circumstances prevent its promulgation and the new fiscal year begins, the budget of the previous year shall remain in force pending the promulgation of the new budget.

### **Article 77**

The agency concerned shall prepare the closing accounts of the State for the ending fiscal year and submit them to the President of the Council of Ministers.



### **Article 78**

Budgets of public agencies with corporate personality and their closing accounts shall be subject to the same provisions governing the budget and closing accounts of the State.

## **Chapter 8: Audit Agencies**

### **Article 79**

All State revenues and disbursements shall be subject to post audit, and all State movable and immovable properties shall be subject to audit. The proper use and protection of these properties shall be ascertained, and an annual report thereon shall be submitted to the President of the Council of Ministers.

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 and their proper administrative performance and enforcement of the laws shall be verified. Financial and administrative violations shall be investigated, and an annual report thereon shall be submitted to the President of the Council of Ministers.

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**

Enforcement 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 herein, 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**

Amendments to this Law shall be in the manner it was promulgated.