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**Law No. (26) of 2005 regarding Political Associations**

We, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Having reviewed the Constitution;

Legislative Decree No. (12) of 1971 promulgating the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law, as amended;

Legislative Decree No. (15) of 1976 promulgating the Penal Code, as amended;

Legislative Decree No. (19) of 2001 promulgating the Civil Law;

Legislative Decree No. (14) of 2002 regarding the Exercise of Political Rights;

And Legislative Decree No. (46) of 2002 promulgating the Criminal Procedures Law;

The Shura Council and the Council of Representatives have approved the following law, which we have ratified and enacted:

**Article (1)**

Citizens- men and women- have the right to form political associations, and each has the right to join any of them, in accordance with the provisions of this law.

**Article (2)**

A political association means every organized group, established in accordance with the provisions of this law, and based on common principles and objectives.

It shall operate publicly by legitimate democratic political means, with the intention of participating in political life, to achieve specific programs related to the political, economic and social affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Any association or group based purely on religious, scientific, social, cultural, sports or professional purposes shall not be considered a political association.

**Article (3)**

Political associations established in accordance with the provisions of this law shall contribute to achieving political, social and economic progress in the Kingdom.

It shall work as national, popular, and democratic organizations to organize citizens, represent them, and deepen culture and political practice within a framework of national unity, social peace and democracy, all in the manner set forth in the Constitution and the National Action Charter.

**Article (4)**

The establishment or continuation of any political association shall meet the following conditions:

1- The association shall have a written statute signed by the founders.

2- The number of founders of any association shall not be less than fifty members.

3- The principles, objectives, programmes, policies and methods of the association shall not conflict with:

A- Principles of Islamic Shari´a as a major source of legislation.

B- The national constants upon which the system of government in the Kingdom of Bahrain is based.

4- The association shall not be established based on class, sectarian, categorical, geographical or occupational bases, or on the basis of discrimination due to gender, origin, language, religion, or belief.

5- The association shall not aim to establish any military or quasi-military formations, take the form of violent training aimed at combat preparation, or incite to racial, national or religious animosity.

6- The association shall not be a branch of a political association, political party, or any other political organization abroad.

7- The association shall not associate or cooperate with any parties, organizations, groups, individuals or political powers opposing to the principles, rules or provisions stipulated in the Constitution or stipulated in Clause (3) of this article.

8- The headquarters of the association and its branches shall be inside the Kingdom of Bahrain, and it shall conduct its activities in the territory of the Kingdom.

9- The association shall announce its principles, objectives, programmes, means, organizational structures and funding sources.

**Article (5)**

The founding member, or the member who joins the association after announcing its establishment, shall meet the following conditions:

-1 To be a Bahraini, enjoying all his civil and political rights.

2- He shall have reached the age of twenty one years at the time of submitting the application for establishment or on the day of joining the association.

-3 Reside in the Kingdom normally.

4- Not to be a member of any other Bahraini political association or any non-Bahraini political organization.

5- He shall not be affiliated with the Bahrain Defence Force, the National Guard, or the security authorities of the state, nor shall he be a member of the judiciary or public prosecution, or a member of the diplomatic or consular bodies.

**Article (6)**

The association's statute shall include the rules that regulate all its political, organizational, financial and administrative affairs in accordance with the provisions of this law.

In particular, this statute shall include the following:

1- The association’s name and logo, provided that its name or logo is not similar to the name or logo of another association, whether the name is full or abbreviated, or it is a name of an association that has ceased its activities for any reason, and it shall not be a name of one of the state’s authorities, any citizen or one of families, or prejudices racial, national or religious sentiments.

2- The address of the association’s main headquarters and the addresses of its sub-headquarters, if any, provided that all these headquarters are within the Kingdom and announced, and that none of them is within the headquarters of any public, private, charitable, religious, production, service or educational institution.

3- The principles on which the association is based, its programs and the objectives it seeks.

4- To provide for adherence to the following principles and rules in conducting the association’s activity:

A- Provisions of the National Action Charter and the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain and respect for the rule of law.

B- The principle of political pluralism in thought, opinion and organization.

C- Preserving the independence and security of the Kingdom, preserving national unity, and rejecting violence in all its forms.

D- Lack of organizational or financial connection with any non-Bahraini entity, or directing the association's activity based on orders or directives from any foreign country or external entity.

E- Not resorting to partisan polarization in the ranks of the Bahrain Defence Force, National Guard, the state's security authorities, the judiciary, the public prosecution, and the diplomatic and consular bodies.

F- Not to use the state institutions, public institutions, places of worship and educational institutions to conduct its activities.

5- The conditions for membership in the association, the rules and procedures for joining it, dismissing from its membership and withdrawing from it, in a way that does not include discrimination due to religious belief, race, gender, or social status, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and the Law.

6- The method and procedures for forming the association’s bodies, selecting its leaders and carrying out its activities, organizing its relations with its members on a democratic basis, and defining the political, financial and administrative competences for any of the bodies and leaders, with the widest guarantee of democratic discussion within these bodies.

7- The association’s financial system, including specifying its various resources, the bank in which its funds are deposited, the rules and procedures regulating the disbursement of these funds, and the rules and procedures for keeping, reviewing and approving the association’s accounts, and preparing and approving its annual budget.

8- The rules and procedures for dissolving the association and its voluntary merger with other political associations, regulating the liquidation of its funds and the entity to which these funds will be assigned.

**Article (7)**

A written application for the establishment of a political association shall be submitted to the Minister of Justice, signed by the founders, together with the certification of their signature, accompanied by all data and documents related to the association, in particular the following:

1- Three copies of the association's statute signed by all founders.

2- A list of the founders' names with a copy of their CPR cards.

3- A statement of the association’s funds, its sources and the bank in which it is deposited, if any.

4- The name of the person acting on behalf of the association in its establishment procedures.

The employee in charge of receiving these applications shall give the agent of the founders a notice of receipt of the establishment application, indicating the date of submission of the application and the attached data and documents .

The agent of the founders has the right to withdraw any documents or data submitted with the establishment application and replace them with others, within fifteen days starting from the date of submitting the establishment application.

**Article (8)**

The Minister of Justice may request the founders to provide any clarifications, documents or data necessary to implement the provisions of this Law, by a registered letter issued within forty five days from the date of submitting the application for the Association establishment.

The agent of the founders shall submit the required clarifications, documents and data within fifteen days from the date of notification of the Minister's letter, and the Minister may double this period based on the request of the agent of founders.

The competent employee shall give the agent of the founders a notice of receipt of these clarifications, documents and data indicating the date of their receipt.

**Article (9)**

If the application to establish a political association fulfils the conditions stipulated in this Law, the Minister of Justice shall notify the establishment of the Association within sixty days from the date of the establishment application, or within fifteen days from the date of receiving the clarifications, documents and data referred to in the previous Article. This notification shall be published in the Official Gazette.

If the Minister refuses to notify the establishment of the Association within the periods specified in the previous paragraph, he shall notify the agent of the founders by a registered letter of the establishment refusal and the rejection reasons.

Failure to meet the deadlines referred to in the first paragraph without notifying the establishment of the Association or notifying the agent of founders of the rejection shall be considered as an objection to this establishment.

**Article (10)**

Any of the founders may appeal against the explicit or implicit decision of objection of the Minister of Justice to the establishment of the association, referred to in the second and third paragraphs of the previous Article, before the High Civil Court within thirty days from the date of notification of this decision, with an acknowledgement of receipt to the agent of the founders or the lapse of the aforementioned deadlines in the first paragraph of the previous Article, according to the procedures stipulated in the Civil and Commercial Procedures Law. The court decides on the appeal within sixty days at most from the date of depositing the appeal statement.

If the court decides to cancel the minister’s decision, the minister shall notify the establishment of the association from the date of issuance of the court’s ruling. The notification shall be published in the Official Gazette.

**Article (11)**

The political association shall possess legal personality and it shall conduct its political activity as of the day following the publication of the Minister of Justice’s notification approving its establishment or on the tenth day from the date of this notification if the publication has not been made, or from the date of issuance of the court’s ruling to cancel the decision issued by the Minister objecting to the establishment of the association.

The association may not notify itself, and the association's founders may not conduct any political activity or any action in the name of the association except within the limits necessary for its establishment, prior to the date specified for its possession of legal personality in accordance with the provisions of the previous paragraph.

**Article (12)**

The president of the political association shall be the one to represent it in everything related to its affairs before the judiciary or any other authority, or against third parties.

The president of the association may delegate one or more of its leaders to carry out some of his competencies, in accordance with the association’s statute.

The selection of the association’s leaders shall be by election through the general assembly of the association, provided that this selection is renewed every four years at most according to the procedures decided by the association’s statute.

**Article (13)**

Political associations or any of their board members shall not interfere in the internal affairs of other states or carrying out any activity that may harm the Kingdom's relationship with these states.

**Article (14)**

The financial resources of the political association consist of the subscriptions and donations of its members, and the proceeds of the return on investment of its funds and resources inside the Kingdom in the aspects specified by its statute, provided that they are declared and legitimate, and that the aim of that is not to achieve any gain or personal benefit for any of the members of the association.

The association may accept unconditional gifts and donations from citizens and national institutions operating in the Kingdom.

The association may not accept any donation, privilege, or benefit from a foreigner, a foreign entity, an international organization, or an unknown person. The state contributes by providing financial support to political associations according to specific and fair standards, within the limits of the appropriation included in the state's general budget.

The association shall return the violating donations to the donors within a month from the date of their receipt, otherwise they will be transferred to the account of the State’s Public Treasury. With the exception of donations made by non-Bahraini entities, which are subject to the provisions of Article (24) of this Law.

**Article (15)**

The association's funds may only be spent on its purposes and objectives in accordance with the rules and procedures included in its statute.

The association shall provide the Minister of Justice with a copy of its annual budget during the first quarter of the year, and a statement of its financial resources, funding sources and the financial status of the association.

The National Audit Office reviews, periodically, or at the request of the Minister of Justice, the books and documents of accounts of the association’s revenues and expenses and other financial affairs, in order to verify the integrity of the association’s resources and the legality of the means of disbursing its funds, and the association shall enable the Office to do so.

The aforementioned Office shall prepare an annual report on all financial conditions and affairs of the association and provide the Minister of Justice with a copy thereof.

**Article (16)**

The association funds shall be considered as public funds while applying the provisions of the Penal Code. The officials in charge of the Association affairs and those working for it shall be considered as public officials while applying the provisions of the aforementioned Code.

**Article (17)**

The association shall keep at its headquarters the following records and data:

1- The Statute of the Association.

2- The political program of the association.

3- The names of the members, the founding members and the leaders of the association, and their addresses and places of residence.

4- Record of decisions of the association’s board of directors and committees.

5- Record of the association's revenues and expenses in detail.

**Article (18)**

The association shall notify the Minister of Justice - by a letter deposited in the office of the ministry against an Advice of delivery - of any decision issued by the association to change its president or any of its leaders, or to dissolve or merge the association, or of any amendment to its statute, within ten days from the date of issuance of the decision.

**Article (19)**

The headquarters of the association, its documents, correspondence, and means of communication are safeguarded. They may not be monitored except by a judicial decision, and they may not be confiscated except by a judicial ruling, all of this in the manner prescribed by law.

Unless in the event of flagrante delicto in a felony or misdemeanour, no headquarters of the association may be searched except by a decision of the Attorney General and in the presence of one of the prosecutors and a representative of the association. If the representative of the association refuses to attend, it shall be recorded in the inspection report. Violation of this shall result in the invalidity of the inspection and its consequences.

**Article (20)**

The Minister of Justice shall set the rules regulating the association's contact with any foreign political party or organization, and it is not permissible for any association to cooperate or ally with any of these parties or organizations except in accordance with these rules.

It is prohibited to open a branch of any political association or other political party from outside the Kingdom of Bahrain without a license from the Minister of Justice.

**Article (21)**

The association may not be dissolved, its activities suspended, or its leaders dismissed except in accordance with the provisions of the association's statute or a ruling from the High Civil Court.

**Article (22)**

If the Association violates the provisions of the Constitution, this law or any other law, the Minister of Justice may request the Higher Civil Court, based on a lawsuit filed by him, to order the suspension of the Association activities for a period not exceeding three months, during which the causes for the violation shall be removed.

The court shall issue its ruling on the merits of the lawsuit within a period not exceeding thirty days.

The ruling may be appealed during the period of suspension, unless the Minister files the lawsuit to dissolve the association.

The members of the association in charge of its management and employees are prohibited from continuing its activities or disposing of its funds during the suspension, as it is prohibited for any person to participate in the association’s activities after the notification of the suspension ruling.

**Article (23)**

If the Association commits a serious violation of the provisions of the Constitution of the Kingdom, this Law or any other law, or if it does not remove the causes of violation within the period specified in the ruling issued for the suspension of its activities according to the previous Article, the Minister of Justice may request the Higher Civil Court to order the dissolution of the Association, the liquidation of its funds and the specification of the entity to which these funds will be assigned.

The court shall schedule a hearing to consider this request within the seven days following the notification of his statement to the president of the association at its headquarters. The court shall decide on the dissolution request within thirty days at most from the date of the aforesaid hearing.

An association for which a ruling was issued suspending its activity may not conduct any activity while considering the dissolution request, in accordance with the provisions of the last Paragraph of the previous Article.

The ruling dissolving the association shall be implemented from the date when it is final. It shall be published in the Official Gazette and in one of the local daily newspapers.

**Article (24)**

Anyone who receives funds from a non-Bahraini entity for the account of the association shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year and a fine not exceeding one thousand dinars, or by one of these penalties. The court shall order the confiscation of such funds for the account of the Public Treasury of the State.

**Article (25)**

Anyone who commits a violation of the provisions of this Law, for which no special penalty is prescribed, shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months or a fine not exceeding five hundred dinars. In the event of recurrence, the penalty of imprisonment and a fine shall be applied together.

**Article (26)**

The provisions of this Law shall not prejudice any severer penalty prescribed under the Penal Code or any other law.

**Article (27)**

Every association established prior to the enforcement of the provisions of this Law and wishing to engage in political activity, shall adjust its status in accordance with the provisions of this Law, within a period not exceeding three months from the date of its enforcement.

**Article (28)**

The Minister of Justice shall issue the necessary decisions to implement the provisions of this Law.

**Article (29)**

The Ministers- each within his jurisdiction- shall implement- the provisions of this Law, and it shall come into force from the day following the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

**King of Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa**

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