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**Legislative Decree No. (18) 1973 regarding Public Meetings, Processions and Gatherings**

We, Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Emir of the State of Bahrain.

Having reviewed Emiri Decree No. (3) of 1971 regarding the Administrative Reorganization of the State;

Bahrain Penal Code of 1955, and the laws that amend it;

Bahraini Public System Law No. 25 of 1956;

And Notification No. 55 of 1956;

And upon the submission of the Prime Minister,

 And after the approval of the Council of Ministers,

**Hereby Decree the following Law:-**

**First- Public Meetings**

**Article -1-**

Public meetings are permissible, under the conditions and circumstances specified in this Law.

**Article -2-**

A- Anyone who wishes to organize a public meeting shall notify the Director-General of Police in writing at least three days before the meeting is held.

B- This period shall be reduced to twenty-four hours if the meeting is of an electoral nature.

**Article -3-**

The notification mentioned above shall take into account the following:

It shall include specifying the time and place of the meeting and stating its subject. It shall also indicate whether the purpose is a lecture, general discussion, or an electoral meeting.

Notifications shall be signed by five individuals, or two individuals if the meeting is of an electoral nature.

A- Those who sign the notifications shall meet the following conditions:

They shall be residents of the city or locality where the meeting will be held.

Their place of residence shall be in that city or village, and they shall be known in their community for their good reputation.

They shall enjoy their civil and political rights.

Each of the signatories in the notification shall provide their name, description, occupation, and place of residence.

**Article -4-**

The Director-General of Police may not prohibit a public meeting that has been notified in the manner specified in this Law, except when it is likely to disrupt security, public order, or good conduct due to its purpose, due to the circumstances of the time and place related to it, or for any other serious reason.

Notice of the prohibition shall be conveyed to the organizers of the meeting or one of them personally or at their place of residence as specified in the notification at least six hours before the scheduled time of the meeting, and the notice of the prohibition shall be posted at the door of the relevant police station. The organizers of the meeting have the right to appeal the prohibition to the Prime Minister.

**Article -5-**

Meetings may not be held in places of worship, schools, or other government buildings unless the lecture or discussion for which the meeting is held does not conflict with the purpose for which those places and buildings are designated. Under no circumstances may these meetings be held after eleven-thirty in the evening without special permission from the Director-General of Police or his delegate.

**Article -6-**

Each public meeting shall have a committee composed of a president and at least two members. If the attendees do not elect a committee at the beginning of the meeting, it is considered to be composed of those who signed the notification mentioned in Articles Two and Three of this Law.

The meeting's committee shall be responsible for maintaining order and preventing any violation of the laws or the purpose specified in the notification. It shall also prevent any speech or discussion that contradicts public order, morals, or incites crimes.  The committee may seek assistance from members of the police force.

**Article -7-**

Members of the police force shall always have the right to attend public meetings as necessary to maintain security and public order. They may choose a suitable location for themselves at the meeting, provided that it is away from the speaker's location. They shall have the right to dissolve the meeting in the following situations:

A- If requested by the meeting's committee mentioned in Article Six.

B- If the meeting deviates from its specified purpose in the notification.

C- If severe disturbance occurs that threatens security or public order.

D- If a crime occurs during the meeting, as specified in the Penal Code or other applicable laws.

**Article -8-**

For the purposes of applying the provisions of this Law, any meeting held in a public or private place that individuals enter without receiving a personal invitation shall be considered a public meeting. A meeting shall be considered public if the Director-General of Police deems that the meeting, due to its subject, the number of invitations, their distribution method, or any other circumstance, lacks the true and genuine nature of a private meeting. In this case, the Director-General of Police shall notify the inviter to the meeting or its organizer to fulfil the duties imposed by the law.

For the purposes of this Law, any meeting that meets the following conditions is considered an electoral meeting:

A- Its purpose is the selection of candidates for public electoral positions or hearing their statements.

B- It is restricted to voters and candidates or their representatives.

C- The meeting is held between the date of voter invitations and the day designated for the election.

**Second – Demonstrations in Public Roads and Squares**

**Article -9-**

The provisions of Articles One, Two, Three, Four, and Seven shall apply to all types of meetings, processions, and demonstrations held or conducted on public roads and squares for political purposes.

The public security authorities may, at any time, decide on the location of the meeting or the route of the procession or demonstration, provided that the organizers are informed of this in accordance with the provisions of Article Four.

If a procession for political purposes is organized on the occasion of a funeral, the notification issued by public security authorities to prohibit the procession or specify its route shall be communicated to the funeral organizers from the deceased individual's family.

**Article -10-**

A- Non-citizens shall be prohibited from participating in processions, demonstrations, and gatherings held for political purposes, which are the right of citizens only.

B- Demonstrations for electoral purposes shall be prohibited.

**Article -11-**

Demonstrations, gatherings, or their continuation shall not be allowed before sunrise or after sunset without special permission from the Director-General of Police or his delegate.

**Article -12-**

The provisions of this Law shall not prejudice the powers granted to the police under any other effective law to disperse any gathering or assembly that poses a threat to security or restricts their right to secure the freedom of movement on public roads and squares.

**Third - Penalties and General Provisions**

**Article -13-**

Without prejudice to any more severe penalty stipulated by any other law applicable for the same acts:

A- Those who call for or organize and members of the committees of public meetings, processions, demonstrations, and gatherings that are held or conducted without notification or in violation of a prohibition order shall be punished with imprisonment for a period not exceeding three months, a fine not exceeding one hundred dinars, or with both penalties.

B- Those who call for or organize public meetings, processions, demonstrations, or gatherings, whether they have notified them or not, and continue to do so despite the prohibition, shall be punished with imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months, a fine not exceeding one hundred dinars, or with both penalties.

In this case, individuals who participate in these meetings, processions, demonstrations, or gatherings shall also be punished with imprisonment for a period not exceeding one month, a fine not exceeding twenty dinars, or with both penalties.

C- Any person who, despite police warning, participates in a meeting, procession, demonstration, or gathering that has not been notified or has been prohibited, or disobeys the dispersal order issued to the participants, shall be punished with imprisonment for a period not exceeding one month, a fine not exceeding twenty dinars, or with both penalties.

D- Other violations of the provisions of this Law shall be punished with imprisonment for a period not exceeding fifteen days, a fine not exceeding fifteen dinars, or with both penalties.

**Article -14-**

Any provision conflicting with the provisions of this Law shall be repealed.

**Article -15-**

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

**Article -16-**

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

**Emir of the State of Bahrain**

**Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa**

Issued at Riffa Palace

On 8 Shaaban 1393 A.H.

Corresponding to 5 September 1973