

Federal Decree Law No. 2 of 2015

Issued on 15/7/2015

Corresponding to 28 Ramadan 1436

On Combating Discrimination and Hatred

We, Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates State,

After perusal of the Constitution,

Federal Law no. 1 of 1972 on Competencies of the Ministries and Powers of the Ministers and its amendments,

Federal Law No. 18 of 1978 on the Crimes against the Religion of Islam,

Federal Law no. 15 of 1980 on Publications and Publishing,

Federal Law No. 3 of 1983 on the Federal Judiciary and its amendments,

Federal Law No. 3 of 1987 promulgating the Penal Code and its amendments,

Federal Law No. 35 of 1992 promulgating the Criminal Procedure Law and its amendments,

Federal Law No. 5 of 2012 on Combating IT Crimes,

Federal Law No. 7 of 2014 on Federal Law No. 7 of 2014 on Combating Terrorist Crimes,

Have issued the following Decree-Law:

Chapter 1 General Provisions

Article 1

In applying the provisions of this Decree, the following terms and phrases shall have the meanings assigned against each of them, unless the context requires otherwise:

State: The United Arab Emirates State.

Religions: The divine religions; Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

Places of worship: Mosques, churches and temples.

Blasphemy: Means any act of insulting or showing contempt for God, to religions, prophets or messengers, holy books or places of worship according to the provisions of this Decree Law.

Discrimination: Any distinction, restriction, exclusion or preference among individuals or groups based on the ground of religion, creed, doctrine, sect, caste, race, colour or ethnic origin.

Hate Speech: Any speech or conduct which may incite sedition, prejudicial action or discrimination among individuals or groups.

Means: The Internet, telecommunication networks, electronic websites, industrial materials, means or information technology or any other means of audio-visual and print.

Means of Expression: Any words, writings, drawings, signals, filming, singing, acting or gesturing.

Article 2

Without prejudice to any other greater penalty specified by any other Law, the penalties referred to in this Decree Law shall be applied to the crimes mentioned therein.

Article 3

No words or action which may incite to commit the crime of blasphemy or defamation of religions contrary to the provisions of the present Decree Law may be debated on the right of freedom and expression.

Chapter 2 Crimes and Penalties

Article 4

Any person who commits any of the following acts shall be sentenced for the crime of blasphemy:

1- Offending, showing contempt or irreverence toward the Divine Entity.

2- Offending, insulting, challenging, defaming or disrespecting any religion or any of its rituals or sacred things, or disrupting or preventing licensed religious observances or ceremonies by violence or threat.

- 3- Distorting, destroying, desecrating or insulting, in any way, any of the holy books.
- 4- Insulting, disrespecting, offending or defaming one of the messengers or their spouses, family or companions.
- 5- Destroying, damaging or desecrating the sanctity of places of worship, cemeteries or graves, appurtenances or any of their contents.

Article 5

a- Any person, who commits any of the acts set forth in Clauses (2, 3, 5) of Article (4) of the present Decree Law by any means of expression or by any other form or means, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not less than five year and to a fine not less than two hundred fifty thousand dirhams and not exceeding one million dirhams or either one of these two penalties.

b- Any person, who commits any of the acts set forth in Clauses (1, 4) of Article (4) of this Decree Law by any means of expression or by any other form or means shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not less than five years and to a fine not less than two hundred fifty thousand dirhams and not exceeding two million dirhams.

Article 6

Any person, who commits any act of discrimination of any form by any means of expression or by any other means, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not less than five years, and by a fine not less than five hundred thousand dirhams and not exceeding one million dirhams or either one of these two penalties,.

Article 7

Any person, who commits any act involving hate speech by any means of expression or by any other means, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not less than five years and to a fine not less than five hundred thousand dirhams and not exceeding one million dirhams or either one of these two penalties.

Article 8

Any person, who uses any means of expression or other means, to instigate tribal division aiming to provoke hatred among individuals and groups, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not less than six months, and to a fine not less than fifty thousand dirhams or either one of these two penalties.

Article 9

A penalty of imprisonment for a period not less than ten years and a fine not less than five hundred thousand dirhams and not exceeding two million dirhams or either one of these two penalties shall apply if the crimes referred to in Articles (5), (6), (7) of this Decree Law are committed by a public officer during or in the course of or by reason of the fulfilment of his duty or by a religious person or a person who is assigned to such capacity, or if the act was committed in a place of worship.

If the acts referred to in Paragraph (1) of this Article have affected the public peace, the penalty shall be imprisonment for a period not less than ten years and a fine not less than five hundred thousand dirhams and not exceeding two million dirhams.

Article 10

Any person, who misuses religion to call individuals or groups as infidels by any means aiming to achieve their own interests or illegal purposes, shall be sentenced to temporary imprisonment.

The sentence shall be death penalty if the call of infidelity was associated with death, and where the crime was committed as a result thereof.

Article 11

Any person who produces, manufactures, promotes, offers for sale or circulates products, goods, publications, recordings, movies, tapes, discs, software, smart applications or information in the field of electronic service or any other industrial materials or other things involving the means of expression, which may incite to commit blasphemy, or provoke discrimination or hate speech, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not exceeding seven years and to a fine of not less than five hundred thousand dirhams and not exceeding two million dirhams.

Article 12

Any person, who acquires or possesses documents, publications, recordings, movies, tapes, discs, software, smart applications or information in the field of electronic services or any industrial materials or other things involving the means of expression that are intended for distribution or open for public aiming to offend religions, provoke discrimination or hate speech, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not less than one year, and to a fine not less than fifty thousand dirhams and not exceeding two hundred thousand dirhams.

Moreover, the same punishment shall apply to any person who acquires or possesses any means of printing, recording, storage, sound or visual recording devices or other means of publication, broadcasting or promotion that are used, with his knowledge, in the commission of any of the crimes set forth in the present Federal Decree.

Article 13

Any person, who establishes, sets up, organizes or manages an association, centre, entity, organization, league or group or any branch thereof or uses any other means aiming to offend religions, or provoke discrimination or hate speech or any act involving encouragement or promotion of the same shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not less than ten years.

Article 14

Any person, who joins, participates in or assists any of the parties referred to in Article (13) of this Decree Law, knowing of its objectives, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not exceeding seven years.

Article 15

Any person, who holds or organises a conference or a meeting in the State intended to offend religions, or to provoke discrimination or hate speech, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not less than five years.

Any person, who participates in the conference or the meeting, knowing of its objectives, shall be sentenced to the same punishment.

The public authority may stop the conference or the meeting with the use of force if necessary.

Article 16

Any person, who provides, offers, demands, accepts, obtains, hands over or receives funds or material support, either directly or indirectly, with the aim to commit any of the acts punished under the provisions of the present Decree Law, shall be sentenced to imprisonment and to a fine not less than two hundred fifty thousand dirhams and not exceeding one million dirhams.

Article 17

The representative, director or agent of a legal entity, in case any of the crimes set forth in the present Decree Law is committed, with his knowledge, by any employee of said entity acting in its name or to its interest, shall be sentenced to the same penalties prescribed for the committed crime.

The legal entity shall be held jointly liable to settle any pecuniary penalties or compensation as ruled thereof.

Article 18

Without prejudice to the imposition of penalties set forth in the present Decree Law, the court shall order the dissolution of associations, centres, entities, organizations, leagues and groups and their branches or the closure of the same, either temporarily or permanently.

Moreover, the court shall order the confiscation of money, property, tools or papers which may be used in the commission of any of the crimes set forth in the present Decree Law.

The court shall order the expulsion of a foreigner from the country after the execution of the penalty charged thereof.

Article 19

Any perpetrator of any of the crimes set forth in the present Decree Law, who reports the judicial or administrative authorities before the discovery of such crime shall be exempted from the penalty. If such reporting is carried out after the discovery of such crime, the court may decide to exempt such perpetrator from the punishment when such report has resulted in the detention of other perpetrators.

Chapter 3

Final Provisions

Article 20

In applying the provisions of this Decree Law, discrimination may not apply regarding any advantage, preference or benefit conferred upon women, children, disabled persons, the elderly or others, prescribed by the provisions of any other legislation in the State.

Article 21

The present Decree Law shall be published in the official gazette, and be put into effect one month after its publication date.

Issued by us
At the Presidential Palace in Abu Dhabi
On 28 Ramadan 1436
Corresponding to 15 July 2015

Khalifa bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan
President of the United Arab Emirates State