

# Saudi Arabia - Constitution<sup>1</sup>

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## Chapter 1 General Principles

### Article 1

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab Islamic state with Islam as its religion; God's Book and the Sunnah of His Prophet, God's prayers and peace be upon him, are its constitution, Arabic is its language and Riyadh is its capital.

### Article 2

The state's public holidays are Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha. Its calendar is the Hegira calendar.

### Article 3

The state's flag shall be as follows:

- (a) It shall be green.
- (b) Its width shall be equal to two-thirds of its length.
- (c) The words "*There is but one God and Mohammed is His Prophet*" shall be inscribed in the center with a drawn sword under it. The statute shall define the rules pertaining to it.

### Article 7

Government in Saudi Arabia derives power from the Holy Koran and the Prophet's tradition.

### Article 8 [Government Principles]

Government in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on the premise of justice, consultation, and equality in accordance with the Islamic Shari'ah.

### Article 9

The family is the kernel of Saudi society, and its members shall be brought up on the basis of the Islamic faith, and loyalty and obedience to God, His Messenger, and to guardians; respect for and implementation of the law, and love of and pride in the homeland and its glorious history as the Islamic faith stipulates.

### Article 10

The state will aspire to strengthen family ties, maintain its Arab and Islamic values and care for all its members, and to provide the right conditions for the growth of their resources and capabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> { Adopted on: March 1992 }  
{ Adopted by Royal decree of King Fahd } { ICL Document Status: Oct 1993 }

## Article 11

Saudi society will be based on the principle of adherence to **God's command**, on mutual cooperation in good deeds and piety and mutual support and inseparability.

## Article 17

Property, capital, and labor are essential elements in the Kingdom's economic and social being. They are personal rights which perform a social function in accordance with **Islamic Shari'ah**.

## Article 23 [Islam]

**The state protects Islam**; it implements **its Shari'ah**; it orders people to do right and shun evil; it fulfills the duty regarding **God's call**.

## Article 26 [Human Rights]

**The state protects human rights in accordance with the Islamic Shari'ah.**

## Article 29 [Science, Culture]

The state safeguards science, literature and culture; it encourages scientific research; it protects the **Islamic and Arab heritage** and contributes toward the Arab, **Islamic** and human civilization.

## Article 33 [Armed Forces]

The state establishes and equips the Armed **Forces for the defence of the Islamic religion**, the Two Holy Places, society, and the citizen.

## Article 38 [Punishment, *nulla poena*]

Penalties shall be personal and there shall be no crime or penalty except in accordance with the **Shari'ah** or organizational law. There shall be no punishment except for acts committed subsequent to the coming into force of the organizational law.

## Article 45

The source of the deliverance of **fatwa** in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia **are God's Book** and the **Sunnah of His Messenger**. The law will define the composition of the senior ulema body, the administration of scientific research, deliverance of fatwa and it's (the body of senior ulema's) functions.

## Article 46

The judiciary is an independent authority. There is no control over judges in the dispensation of their judgements except in the case of the **Islamic Shari'ah**.

## Article 48

**The courts will apply the rules of the Islamic Shari'ah** in the cases that are brought before them, in accordance with what is indicated **in the Book and the Sunnah**, and statutes decreed by the Ruler which do not contradict the Book or the Sunnah.

## Article 57

(a) The King appoints and relieves deputies of the prime minister and ministers and

members of the Council of Ministers by Royal decree.

(b) The deputies of the prime minister and ministers of the **Council of Ministers are responsible, by expressing solidarity before the King**, for implementing **the Islamic Shari'ah** and the state's general policy.

(c) The King has the right to dissolve and reorganize the Council of Ministers.

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[Institute on Religion and Public Policy](#)

Thursday, June 09, 2005 9:13 PM

Subject: ***Saudis Release Christian Detainees; Deny That Non-Muslims are Apprehended or Tortured***  
 Press Release Contact: Stephen Glaser  
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Saudis Release Christian Detainees

Deny That Non-Muslims are Apprehended or Tortured

Washington, DC - **Saudi Officials yesterday announced the release of seven Christians who had been arrested for practicing Christianity in the Kingdom.**

Of the released, six were arrested on May 28 in an extensive raid carried out by the Muttawa in Riyadh. The other individual released is Samkutty Varghese, an Indian Protestant, in jail since March.

In Saudi Arabia, public expression of any faith other than Wahabbist Islam is illegal. All seven had been caught with Christian items - including Bibles, crosses, and teaching materials. Their release was contingent upon each Christian signing a renunciation to non-Muslim religious practice, which they had been carrying out privately in their homes. Such practice in theory is permitted by law in the Kingdom

A Saudi official speaking in Cairo denied allegations that the Kingdom arrests and tortures Christians. The official stated that such allegations run counter to Islamic policies of tolerance. The official, speaking to the Saudi Press Agency (SPA), explained that the allegations "don't go with the principles and values of the Kingdom and above all our tolerant Islamic belief which guarantees the rights of Muslims and residents of different religions and ethnicities alike."

Saudi Arabia was designated by the United States Department of State as a "Country of Particular Concern for Severe Violations of Religious Freedom" last year. A report accused the Saudis of "particularly severe violations" of religious freedom. Joseph K. Grieboski, President of the Institute on Religion and Public Policy, stated that "Saudi Arabia not only unashamedly suppresses fundamental rights of individuals living within the Kingdom and disregards international covenants on religious freedom, but also by these incidents, openly contradicts itself."

After their release, local press sources - referring to telephone calls from the prison - reported that the Christian prisoners were subjected to abuse. Four of the released prisoners have been repatriated to India, while the other three are awaiting a decision as to whether or not they will be allowed to remain in Saudi Arabia.

**In Saudi Arabia, all forms of religious expression are banned except Wahabbist Islam.** Saudi Arabia has their own religious police, the Muttawa, who have a reputation for violations of religious freedom for non-Muslims. The Saudi Royal Family has recently permitted non-Muslims to practice their own religion in the privacy of their homes. However, from the evidence of recent arrests, it is clear that the seriousness to protect the rights of non-Muslims is essentially non-existent.

Mr. Grieboski added that "The time has come for Saudi Arabia to uphold fundamental rights and to conduct the reciprocity of free exercise of faith that Muslims enjoy throughout the world. The Saudi record is one of direct violations of religious rights, and no matter the rhetoric, their actions speak louder than any words."