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Saipzhamal Korganova 

Ph.D., Associate Professor,

M. Auezov South Kazakhstan University,

Shymkent, Kazakhstan

sevinch_kor@mail.ru

INTERCONFESSIONAL CONSENT AS A FACTOR OF STABLE DEVELOPMENT OF KAZAKHSTAN

***Annotation.** This article is devoted to ethno-confessional relations in Kazakhstan, where freedom of religion is a necessary condition for the operation of a democratic society, one of the main elements of the system of human rights and freedoms. The role of religion in the spiritual renewal of society and issues of strengthening the role of the state in the prevention of religious extremism are considered. The fact is substantiated that, according to the current legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, religious associations are obliged to comply with the requirements of the legislation and legal order. Activity of religious associations not registered in the established order is not allowed. The creation and activity of religious associations, the goals and actions of which are aimed at establishing the supremacy of one religion in the state, inciting religious hatred or discord, are prohibited. The propaganda of religious extremism, as well as the commission of actions aimed at using interfaith differences for political purposes, is prohibited. It should be noted that at present in our republic the sphere of activity of religious organizations has significantly expanded, in this regard, some proposals are recommended*

***Key words:** Kazakhstan, nation, religion, state, interconfessional, consent, development*

***Анотація.** Дана стаття присвячена етноконфесійним відносинам у Казахстані, де свобода віросповідання є необхідною умовою функціонування демократичного суспільства, одним із основних елементів системи прав і свобод людини. Розглянуто роль релігії в духовному оновленні суспільства та питання посилення ролі держави в профілактиці релігійного екстремізму. Обґрунтовується той факт, що відповідно до чинного законодавства Республіки Казахстан релігійні об'єднання зобов'язані дотримуватись вимог законодавства та правопорядку. Діяльність релігійних об'єднань, не зареєстрованих у встановленому порядку, не допускається. Забороняється створення та діяльність релігійних об'єднань, цілі та дії яких спрямовані на встановлення верховенства однієї релігії в державі, розпалювання релігійної ворожнечі чи ворожнечі. Забороняється пропаганда релігійного екстремізму, а також вчинення дій, спрямованих на використання міжконфесійних розбіжностей у політичних цілях. Слід зазначити, що в даний час в нашій республіці сфера діяльності релігійних організацій значно розширилася, у зв'язку з цим рекомендуються деякі пропозиції.*

***Ключові слова:** Казахстан, нація, релігія, держава, міжконфесійність, згода, розвиток*

Introduction. Kazakhstan is a country of peace and prosperity, which is the result of the consent of the people on the path to achieving common goals for prosperity. The rapid changes of the last decade, affecting all 76 aspects of the life of the state and society, are naturally reflected in the sphere of state-religious relations. The confessional diversity of the country was quickly formed, which included both traditional religions for Kazakhstan (Islam, Orthodox Christianity) and new organizations of non-traditional, previously unrepresented religious movements in Kazakhstan. Despite all the diversity, different views, traditions and cultures, Kazakhstan remains the only state on the territory of the former Soviet Union, where there are no conflicts on national or religious grounds that bring confusion and

disorder into the life of society. The basic laws of the Republic of Kazakhstan affirm the equality of all citizens, regardless of their nationality [1].

The culture of all nations, nationalities and ethnic groups is considered as a national heritage. All citizens are guaranteed equal rights in defending and realizing their ethno-cultural interests. «Kazakhstan has ensured absolute freedom of religious belief for all Muslims, Orthodox Christians, Protestants, Jews, etc.» [2]. A time-tested model of interethnic and interreligious harmony has been created in Kazakhstan. The experience of our country in the interaction of various confessions is being studied by international organizations and foreign partners, including the UN, UNESCO and the OSCE. In the international arena, Kazakhstan is perceived as a territory of the world, a platform for dialogue and rapprochement of cultures and religions. The current conditions of Kazakhstan's development of statehood, the resolution of issues of spiritual renewal of society have created a number of rather difficult problems. One such problem is the emergence of a new religious situation. It closely intertwines both objective and subjective factors, historical and contemporary, theoretical and practical aspects, purely religious and purely secular, confessional and national.

Methods and methodology. Scientific research is the cognitive activity of a scientist, in the process of which the so-called objective knowledge about the phenomenon or process under study is developed, i.e. true knowledge corresponding to reality. The applied theoretical research method contributes to the formation of a certain vision of the phenomenon under study and ways of studying it, determines the main problems and methods of their research. In this work, general scientific and specific-subject methods were used - analogy, analysis, comparison, generalization, proof, content analysis.

Result and discussion. Today, the increased religious self-awareness of the population has become a fairly common and familiar phenomenon, whereas earlier it was objectively demanded by a part of society as a necessary element of life. And the beginning of a change in the status of religion and believers in society, the creation of a qualitatively new situation and the formation of a new model of state-confessional relations in our republic is associated with the adoption of the Constitution, according

to which everyone is equal before the law. No one can be subjected to any discrimination based on social origin, gender, race, nationality, language, attitude to religion, etc. 77 The adopted Law «On Freedom of Religion and Religious Associations» recognizes that the Republic of Kazakhstan is a democratic, secular state that respects the right of every person to freedom of belief, guarantees the equality of citizens regardless of their religion, recognizes the cultural and historical value of religions. At the same time, it should be emphasized that according to the current legislation, religious associations are obliged to comply with the requirements of the legislation and the rule of law. Activity of religious associations not registered in the established order is not allowed. The creation and activity of religious associations, the goals and actions of which are aimed at establishing the supremacy of one religion in the state, inciting religious hatred or discord, are prohibited. The propaganda of religious extremism, as well as the commission of actions aimed at using interfaith differences for political purposes, is prohibited. It should be noted that the sphere of activity of religious organizations has significantly expanded in our republic. In addition to cult practice, they are actively involved in charity, religious enlightenment and education, social service, carry out publishing and economic activities, establish and maintain international relations and contacts. The role of religion in society is constantly growing. Its influence on the consciousness of people is increasing. Although the constitutional principle of the secularity of our state presupposes the separation of religious organizations from politics, in real life it is difficult to implement.

Religion and the state are invariably interconnected and require a specific consideration in each historical period, designed to reveal the degree and specifics of the participation of religious organizations in politics, as well as the use of religion by political figures. Along with the growth of followers of traditional religions, the number of non-traditional religious communities and organizations, previously unknown occults, occultism, and totalitarian sects, is growing. And today the need for a dialogue between the state and religion is maturing and a discussion of its acute moments, the adoption of concrete measures on the current religious situation in the

country. Undoubtedly, the modern Kazakhstani policy in relation to religion is aimed at strengthening inter civilizational and interfaith dialogue. Real steps have already been taken by the state in this direction. Among 78 of them, the key is the «Strategic development plan of our country until 2020» [3]. It pays special attention to the strengthening of inter civilizational and interfaith dialogue. Our model of tolerance has received wide international recognition. And the fertile Kazakh land is home to representatives of many nationalities and religions. Believers freely visit the mosque, temple, synagogue and Catholic Church.

We understand that it is interethnic and interfaith harmony that is the most important condition for the successful implementation of large-scale reforms in the political, economic and social spheres. But at the same time, currently favorable conditions are developing in Kazakhstan, contributing to a change in the established religious situation in the republic. In particular, the emergence of centers of radical religious communities is observed, the development of non-traditional religious beliefs and pseudo-religious organizations has been outlined. Often they seek to tear a person away from the family, society, cultural and social life of their people, using irrational, emotional methods, as well as psychological impact on a person, there are many who deny and ignore historical traditions, life and customs of peoples and harm the physical and psychological the health of our citizens by doing so, they undermine not only the foundations of traditional religions and beliefs, but also the state foundations of society.

The danger of such destructive religious organizations lies in the fact that their religious attitudes do irreparable harm to the mental and physical health of people, and negatively affect the process of forming national and civic identity. Of course, the constitutional principle of the secular nature of the state is implemented through a clear separation of the functions of the state and religious associations. But today we understand that religion is becoming the most important sphere of society's life, not only a factor of ethnicity, but also regulating social behavior. The state today already delves deeper into the content and meaning of cultivated teachings and the sphere of genuine interests of religious organizations. It is also necessary to conduct regular

propaganda and explanatory events with the population on the pages of the print media, as well as through public discussion and discussion in television and radio programs, by the relevant state bodies and representatives of the official clergy. Otherwise, all this in the long term may lead to a serious change in the religious situation and the religious structure of the population of Kazakhstan and, accordingly, an increase in religious conflict in our society.

Thus, the above tendencies in the development of the religious situation in Kazakhstan make it possible to give only an intermediate assessment of the existing and potential threats and challenges to interfaith harmony and tolerance in Kazakh society. It is strategically important to ensure a stable balance of interests of the state and religion in the person of religious associations. At the same time, it is important to build relations in such a way that there is no place for religious radicalism in them, the new model of relations should already a priori form in the consciousness and behavior of society immunity to destructive religious ideology and rejection of extremist views, as well as direct the energy of believers in a positive direction.

In this regard, the characteristic of the updated model should be the religious literacy of the entire people. Not the imposition of religion, but the creation of maximum conditions for obtaining basic knowledge about the foundations of world religions, primarily traditional for our country. An important role in this system will have to be played by a powerful layer of enlightened clergy, combining religious and secular education. The clergy is in demand, deeply aware of religious truths and at the same time taking a broad view of the processes taking place in the world, capable of responding to the challenges of both modernization and counter modernity in the face of religious extremism. Interfaith and interethnic harmony in the Republic of Kazakhstan is one of the necessary conditions for the integrity of the state and its advancement along the path of democratic transformations. Freedom of religion is a necessary condition for the operation of a democratic society, one of the main elements of the system of human rights and freedoms. The issue of freedom of religion always remains relevant for Kazakhstan as a multi-confessional country.

Peaceful coexistence of representatives of various national and religious groups largely depends on state policy, and in this regard, the experience of the Kazakh authorities deserves attention. At the same time, Kazakhstan is part of the world community, which is faced with modern challenges in the religious sphere and with the onset of radical types of religious movements. The foundations of a multi-confessional state were laid by legislation from the first years of the existence of an independent republic. In accordance with the Constitution, Kazakhstan is a secular state. The Republic of Kazakhstan is 80 a vivid example of a country of interethnic and interfaith harmony. Article 19 of the Constitution reads: «Everyone has the right to determine and indicate or not indicate his national, party and religious affiliation. Article 22 proclaims: «Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience» [4]. Freedom of religion is guaranteed in Kazakhstan and the separation of religion from the state is proclaimed. At the present stage, Kazakhstan is pursuing a balanced state policy in the field of religion and the interaction of religious confessions with each other and with state bodies. The Republic of Kazakhstan is a secular, democratic state in which everyone is guaranteed freedom of conscience, and adherents of all confessions are equal before the law. The main achievement over the past 29 years has been the complete absence of inter-confessional conflicts, which is extremely important for a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional state. Moreover, in the international arena, Kazakhstan has firmly secured its image of a global integrator, an initiator of dialogue platforms at regional, continental and world levels.

Thus, the tradition of holding the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in Astana has become a brand of Kazakhstan. However, as time has shown, the absolute of the principle of freedom of religion, embodied in an extremely democratic free religious legislation, to a certain extent became the reason for the vulnerability of our country to a number of challenges of the time and new threats - from the penetration of pseudo-religious extremism and terrorism into Kazakhstan and ending with the erosion of traditional values and religious identity of the people. This necessitated the adoption in October 2011 of a new Law «On Religious Activity and Religious Associations» [5], reflecting the need of society for more active

participation of the state in the processes taking place in the religious field. Since the adoption of the Law, a new legal framework has been formed that regulates religious relations in Kazakhstan. In 2012, by-laws were adopted to regulate the legal aspects of religious activity and the functioning of religious associations. In particular, the Government adopted decrees regulating issues of: - carrying out missionary activity; - conducting a religious examination; - approval of the construction of religious buildings and the transfer of religious (prayer) buildings and structures to religious associations; 81 - coordination of the activities of foreign religious associations on the territory of the republic, appointment by foreign religious centers of leaders of religious associations in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The aforementioned Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan «On Religious Activities and Religious Associations» systematizes the procedure for the creation, state registration, reorganization and liquidation of religious associations. As you know, as of January 1, 2011, there were 4551 religious associations in the country. After re-registration, which ended on October 25, 2012, their number dropped to 3088. Most of the associations that did not undergo re-registration simply did not actually function due to their extremely small number. Thus, the registration only brought the legal aspect of the situation in line with objective reality. In addition, in a number of cases there was an enlargement of some religious associations, which facilitated and streamlined their interaction with state bodies. In addition, the number of confessions recognized in Kazakhstan decreased from 46 to 17, not by «reducing» half of them, but only due to the fact that in the process of re-registration of religious associations a more adequate classification was carried out from a purely scientific, religious point of view.

As a result, re-registration made it possible to update and obtain transparent data on the real-life religious situation, which, like a mosaic, is made up of the activities of each religious association. In addition, the classification of confessions in Kazakhstan has been improved. The number of religious associations in Kazakhstan decreased by 32% after re-registration, 17 confessions were established in the republic, the chairman of the Agency for Religious Affairs Kairat Lama Sharif said in an interview

with the newspaper –«Kazakhstanskaya Pravda»: «... so, Islam in Kazakhstan is represented by the Spiritual Administration of Muslims. On June 19, 2012, the Republican Islamic Religious Association «Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan» was registered. At present, 2,228 mosques have been re-registered as branches in all regions of the country» [6]. According to him, at the moment, a single monolithic Islamic organization of the Republic of Kazakhstan is practically formed: «This republican Islamic religious association preaches the Islamic faith of the Sunni direction in accordance with the teachings of the Abu Hanifa madhab and the beliefs of Imam Maturidi, taking into account the historical characteristics of Islam in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Orthodoxy is represented by the Orthodox Church of Kazakhstan, which has undergone changes related to building its structure. On October 17 in 2012, the republican religious association 82 - the Metropolitan District, uniting 9 dioceses and 261 parishes - received a certificate. In addition, within the framework of the Orthodox field, the Armenian Apostolic Church and 8 Old Believer churches began to operate under a new law. Also, 79 subjects of the Roman Catholic Church operate in Kazakhstan, registration of 4 Jewish communities and 2 Buddhist associations has been completed. The modern confessional picture of Kazakhstan is presented as follows: in our country there are more than 130 ethnic groups belonging to various religious confessions. According to the 2009 census, the largest religious associations are Islam (70 percent of all believers) and Orthodoxy (26 percent). Judaism and Buddhism have approximately equal numbers of believers (0,1 percent each). Other religions have 0,2 percent of the total number of believers» [7].

Conclusion. It is important to note that it is nevertheless necessary to strengthen the role of the state in the prevention of religious extremism:

a) It is necessary in the country to develop an effective concept and program of religious policy.

b) Taking into account the specifics of the poly-confessional Kazakhstani society, the strengthening of extremist-minded religious communities, the state must pursue an active policy in the field of religions.

c) It is necessary to strengthen the social protection of the low-income strata of Kazakhstani society, since it is they who become the object of the missionaries of non-traditional religions. These include students with small scholarships.

d) Civil servants involved in domestic politics should take advanced training courses on knowledge of the religious situation in the country.

e) The state needs to intensify dialogues and discussions with religious communities.

f) Block the spread of non-traditional religions, as they destroy the integrity of society and threaten national security.

In our opinion, some control by the Ministry of Education and Science over the course of the educational process is necessary. In general, it is impossible to deny that the adoption and implementation in Kazakhstan of the Law «On Religious Activities and Religious Associations» and accompanying regulatory legal acts made it possible to improve the religious situation in the country, to bring the activities of religious associations in line with the requirements of the times.

A stable model of interaction between ethnic groups and religions has developed in Kazakhstan, providing stability and an atmosphere of creativity and harmony in society. As our President noted, «our model of interethnic and interreligious harmony is a real contribution of Kazakhstan to the global process of interaction of various confessions» [7]. With the strengthening of the economy and the democratization of society, the destabilizing potential of a number of alarming trends in the religious sphere will weaken. One of the main factors for stable social development and improving the well-being of all peoples is peaceful interfaith dialogue, on the way of which a number of significant steps have been taken. Peaceful coexistence of religions, counteraction to the spread of extremism are priority factors of Kazakhstan's domestic and foreign policy.

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