

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain

Foreword to the Constitution

**Section 3
The Legislative Authority
National Assembly**

Article 51

The National Assembly consists of two Chambers: the Consultative Council and the Chamber of Deputies.

**Part 1
The Consultative Council**

Article 52

The Consultative Council is composed of forty members appointed by Royal Order.

Article 53

A member of the Consultative Council must be a Bahraini, enjoy full political and civil rights, be on an electoral list, must not be less than a full thirty five years of age by the Gregorian Calendar on the day of b. appointment, and must be experienced or hav

Article 54

The term of membership of the Consultative Council is four years, and members may be reappointed when their term has expired.

If for any reason the place of a member of the Consultative Council becomes vacant before his term is due to expire, the King shall appoint a replacement to serve until the end of the term of his predecessor.

Any member of the Consultative Council may ask to be exempted from membership of the Council by applying to the President of the Council, and the President is to submit the request to the King. Membership shall not terminate until the date on which the King accedes to the request.

The King shall appoint the President of the Consultative Council for the same period as the Council, and the Council shall elect two Vice-Presidents for each convening period.

Article 55

The Consultative Council shall meet when the Chamber of Deputies meets, and the convening period for both Chambers shall be the same.

If the Chamber of Deputies is dissolved, sessions of the Consultative Council shall be halted.

Part 2

The Chamber of Deputies

Article 56

The Chamber of Deputies comprises forty members elected by direct, secret general ballot in accordance with the provisions of the law.

Article 57

A member of the Chamber of Deputies must meet the following requirements:

- a. He must be a Bahraini enjoying his full civil and political rights, and his name must be on an electoral list.**
- b. On the day of his election he must be not less than thirty years of age by the Gregorian Calendar.**
- c. He must read and write Arabic fluently.**
- d. His membership of the Consultative Council or the Chamber of Deputies must not have been abrogated by decision of the Chamber to which he belonged due to loss of confidence and esteem or for being in breach of duties of membership. However, a person whose membership has been abrogated may put himself forward as a candidate if the legislative season during which the decision to abrogate his membership was taken has elapsed, or if the chamber of which he was a member adopts a decision to cancel the impediment to candidature entailed by abrogation of membership upon expiry of the convening period during which the decision to abrogate his membership was taken.**

Article 58

The term of the Chamber of Deputies is four years by the Gregorian Calendar from the date of its first session. Elections for a new Chamber of Deputies shall be held during the last four months of that term, while observing the provisions of Article 64 of the Constitution. A person whose period of membership has ended may be re-elected.

The King may, when necessary, extend the legislative season of the Chamber of Deputies by Royal Order for a period not exceeding two years.

Article 59

If for any reason the place of a member of the Chamber of Deputies becomes vacant before his term is due to expire, his replacement shall be elected within two months from the date of announcement of the vacancy by the Chamber, and the new member shall serve until the end of term of his predecessor.

If the vacancy occurs within the six months that precede the end of the legislative season of the Chamber, there shall be no election of a replacement member.

Article 60

At its first session the Chamber of Deputies shall choose from among its members a President and two Vice Presidents for the same duration as the Chamber's term. If the place of any of them falls vacant, the Chamber shall choose a replacement to serve out his term.

In all cases election shall be by an absolute majority of those present. If there is no such majority on the first ballot, the election shall be conducted again between the two who secured the most votes. If a third party tied with the second of the two, he shall participate with them both in the election in the second ballot, and in this case the election shall be by proportional majority. If this proportional majority results in a tie, the Chamber shall choose by lot.

The first session shall be chaired by the eldest member until such time as a President of the Chamber of Deputies is elected.

Article 61

The Chamber shall form the committees necessary for its business during the first week of its annual assembly. These committees may exercise their powers while the chamber is in recess.

Article 62

The Court of Cassation shall have jurisdiction to rule on challenges relating to elections to the Chamber of Deputies, in accordance with the relevant law.

Article 63

The Chamber of Deputies is the authority competent to accept a resignation from its membership. The resignation shall be deemed final only from when the Chamber decides to accept it, and the place shall become vacant from the date of that acceptance.

Article 64

- a. **If the Chamber of Deputies is dissolved, elections for a new Chamber of Deputies must be held not later than four months from the date of dissolution. If elections are not held during that period the dissolved Chamber of Deputies shall regain its full constitutional powers, and meets immediately as though the dissolution never occurred, and shall continue its business until a new Chamber is elected.**
- b. **Notwithstanding the preceding clause, the King may defer election of the Chamber of Deputies if there are compelling circumstances whereby the Council of Ministers considers holding elections is not possible.**
- c. **If the compelling circumstances mentioned in the preceding clause continue, the King, taking the opinion of the Council of Ministers, may restore the dissolved Chamber of Deputies and invite it to convene. This Chamber of Deputies shall be regarded as extant from the date of promulgation of the Royal Decree restoring it. It shall exercise its full constitutional powers. The provisions of this Constitution shall apply to it including those pertaining to completion of the Chamber's term and dissolution. The session the Chamber holds in such a case shall be regarded as its first session irrespective of the date of its commencement.**

Article 65

Upon an application signed by at least five members of the Chamber of Deputies, any Minister may be questioned on matters coming within his sphere of competence.

The question must not pertain to a private interest of the questioner or his relatives to the fourth degree, or be made by his proxy.

The question shall not be debated until at least eight days after the day on which the question was posed, unless the Minister agrees to bring the debate forward.

The question may lead to the matter of confidence in the Minister being put to the Chamber of Deputies under the provisions of Article 66 of this Constitution.

Article 66

- a. **Each Minister shall be responsible to the Chamber of Deputies for the business of his Ministry.**
- b. **A question of confidence in a Minister may be put forward only at his own wish or upon an application signed by at least ten members of the Chamber of Deputies following the debate of the question put to him, and the Chamber may not give its decision on the application until seven days after its submission.**
- c. **If the Chamber of Deputies decides by a majority of two-thirds of its members to give a vote of no-confidence in a Minister, he shall be regarded as having withdrawn from the Ministry from the date of the no-confidence vote, and he shall submit his resignation forthwith.**

Article 67

- a. **The subject of confidence in the Prime Minister shall not be raised in the Chamber of Deputies.**
- b. **If, two-thirds of members of the Chamber of Deputies consider it not possible to cooperate with the Prime Minister, the matter will be referred to the National Assembly to consider it.**
- c. **The National Assembly cannot issue its decision on the lack of possibility of cooperating with the Prime Minister prior to seven days from the date the matter was referred to it.**
- d. **If the National Assembly decides by a majority of two thirds of its members that it is not possible to cooperate with the Prime Minister, the matter is submitted to the King for a decision, either by relieving the Prime Minister of his post and appointing a new Government, or by dissolving the Chamber of Deputies.**

Article 68

The Chamber of Deputies may express its wishes in writing to the Government on public matters. If the Government finds itself unable to meet these wishes, it must give its reasons in writing to the Chamber.

Article 69

The Chamber of Deputies may at any time form commissions of inquiry or delegate one or more of its members to investigate any matter coming within the powers of the Chamber stated in the Constitution, and the commission or member is to present the findings of the inquiry not later than four months from the date of commencement of the inquiry.

Ministers and all State employees are to provide such testimony, documents and statements as are asked of them.

Part 3

Provisions common to both chambers

Article 70

No law shall be promulgated unless approved by both the Consultative Council and the Chamber of Deputies, or the National Assembly as the situation demands, and ratified by the King.

Article 71

The National Assembly shall convene on the second Saturday in the month of October unless the King decides to invite it to convene before this date. If that day is an official holiday, it shall convene on the first working day following that holiday.

Article 72

The normal convening period for both the Consultative Council and the Chamber of Deputies shall last for at least seven months, and this convening period may not be closed before the budget is approved.

Article 73

As an exception to the provisions of the two foregoing Articles, the National Assembly shall convene on the day following the expiry of one month from the date of appointment of the Consultative Council or election of the Chamber of Deputies whichever occurs later, unless the King decides to invite it to convene before that date.

If the date of convening the National Assembly in that period is later than the annual date prescribed in Article 71 of the Constitution, the convening period prescribed in Article 72 of the Constitution shall be reduced by the amount of the difference between the two aforesaid dates.

Article 74

The King shall inaugurate the ordinary convening period of the National Assembly with a royal address. He may delegate the Crown Prince or whomever he decides to inaugurate the convening period and deliver the royal address on his behalf. Each of the two chambers shall choose a committee from among its members to prepare the draft reply to the address, and each chamber shall submit its reply to the King after it is approved.

Article 75

Both the Consultative Council and the Chamber of Deputies shall be called, by Royal Decree, to meet in extraordinary session if the King deems it necessary, or if so requested by a majority of members of either chamber.

When in extraordinary session the two chambers may not consider matters other than those for which it has been called to convene.

Article 76

The King shall declare ordinary and extraordinary convening periods closed by Royal Order.

Article 77

Any meeting of the Consultative Council or the Chamber of Deputies which is not held at the prescribed time and place shall be null and void and decisions taken thereat shall be invalid.

Article 78

Every member of the Consultative Council or the Chamber of Deputies shall take the following oath in public session, prior to pursuing their work in the Chamber or its committees:

“I swear by Almighty God that I shall be loyal to the country and the King, shall respect the Constitution and the laws of the State, shall defend the freedoms, interests and assets of the people, and shall perform my work honestly and sincerely.”

Article 79

Sessions of the Consultative Council and the Chamber of Deputies shall be open to the public. They may be held in secret at the request of the Government, the President of the Chamber, or ten members, and the request shall be debated in secret session.

Article 80

For a meeting of both the Consultative Council or the Chamber of Deputies to be valid, a quorum of more than half the members of each chamber must be present. Decisions shall be taken on an absolute majority of members present, except in cases where a special majority is stipulated. In the event of a tied vote, the matter shall be decided in favour of the side that includes the President of the chamber. If the voting relates to the Constitution, voting shall be conducted by calling upon members by name.

If there is a lack of quorum for either chamber to convene on two successive occasions, the meeting of the chamber shall be deemed valid provided that the number of members attending is not less than one quarter of the chamber's members.

Article 81

The Prime Minister shall present bills to the Chamber of Deputies, which is entitled to pass, amend or reject the bill. In all cases the bill shall be referred to the Consultative Council, which is entitled to pass, amend or reject the bill or to accept any amendments which the Chamber of Deputies had introduced to the bill, or had rejected or amended them. However, priority of debate shall always be given to bills and proposals put forward by the Government.

Article 82

If the Consultative Council does not approve a bill passed by the Chamber of Deputies, whether the Consultative Council's decision involves rejection, amendment, deletion or addition, the President of the Council shall return it to the Chamber of Deputies for reconsideration.

Article 83

If the Chamber of Deputies accepts the bill as it receives it from the Consultative Council, the President of the Consultative Council shall refer it to the Prime Minister who will submit it to the King.

Article 84

The Chamber of Deputies may reject any amendment made to a bill by the Consultative Council, and may insist on its previous decision without introducing any new amendments to the bill. In such a case the bill shall be returned to the Consultative Council for reconsideration. The Consultative Council may accept the decision of the Chamber of Deputies or insist on its previous decision.

Article 85

If the two Chambers differ twice over any bill, the National Assembly shall convene in joint session under the chairmanship of the President of the Consultative Council to discuss those clauses in dispute. For the bill to be accepted, the decision of the National Assembly must be taken on a majority of members present, and when the bill is rejected in this manner it shall not be presented to the National Assembly again in the same convening period.

Article 86

In all cases in which a bill is approved, the President of the Consultative Council shall refer the approved bill to the Prime Minister so that he submits it to the King.

Article 87

Every bill that regulates economic or financial matters, and the Government requests its urgent consideration, shall first be submitted to the Chamber of Deputies so that it takes a decision on it within fifteen days. When that period elapses, the bill is presented to the Consultative Council with the opinion of the Chamber of Deputies if there is such an opinion, so that the Consultative Council decides on it within a further period of fifteen days. If the two Chambers should disagree on the bill in question, the matter is referred to the National Assembly for a vote on it within fifteen days. If the National Assembly does not reach a decision on it within that period, the King may issue the bill as a Decree that has the force of a law.

Article 88

As soon as it is formed, each Government shall submit its programme to the National Assembly which may put forward any observations it deems appropriate regarding the programme.

Article 89

- a. **A member of either the Consultative Council or the Chamber of Deputies represents the people and cares for public interest. He shall not come under the sway of any authority in his work in the either chamber or its committees.**
- b. **No member of the Consultative Council or the Chamber of Deputies shall be called to account for expressing his opinions or ideas in the Council or its committees unless the opinion expressed is prejudicial to the fundamentals of the religion or the unity of the nation, or the mandatory respect for the King, or is defamatory of the personal life of any person.**
- c. **Other than in a case of *flagrante delicto*, it shall be impermissible during the convening period for any detention, investigation, search, arrest or custodial procedures or any other penal action to be taken against a member except with the permission of the chamber of which he is a member. Outside the convening period, permission must be sought from the President of the relevant chamber.**

The non-issue of a decision by the chamber or its President on the permission which is being sought within one month from the date of receipt of the request shall be regarded as permission.

The chamber must be informed of any measures which may be taken under the preceding paragraph while it is convened, and it must invariably be informed at its first session of any action taken against a member during the chamber's annual recess.

Article 90

The King may by Royal Order postpone the convening of the National Assembly for not more than two months, and such postponement shall not be repeated more than once in any one convening period. The period of postponement shall not be counted within the convening period provided by Article 72 of this Constitution.

Article 91

Any member of the Consultative Council or the Chamber of Deputies may direct written questions at Ministers to clarify matters coming within their sphere of competence, and only the questioner may comment once on the reply. If the Minister adds anything new, the member shall be further entitled to comment.

The question may not relate to an interest of the questioner or his relatives to the fourth degree, or be made by proxy.

Article 92

- a. Fifteen members of the Consultative Council or the Chamber of Deputies are entitled to request proposing an amendment to the Constitution. Any member of the two chambers is entitled to propose laws. Each proposal shall be referred to the relevant committee in the chamber in which the proposal was made for an opinion. If the chamber sees fit to accept the proposal, it shall refer it to the Government to formulate it as a draft amendment of the Constitution or as a draft law and present it to the Chamber of Deputies during the same or succeeding period.**
- b. Any proposal for a law which has been presented in accordance with the preceding paragraph and rejected by the chamber to which it was presented may not be re-represented during the same convening period.**

Article 93

The Prime Minister and Ministers may attend sessions of the Consultative Council and Chamber of Deputies, and both chambers shall listen to the Prime Minister and Ministers whenever they ask to speak. They may co-opt such senior officials or their deputies as they may wish.

A chamber may require the competent Minister to attend when a matter relating to his Ministry is being debated.

Article 94

- a. **The regulations for the course of business in both the Consultative Council and the Chamber of Deputies and their committees, and the principles governing debate, voting, questioning, cross-examination and all the powers prescribed in the Constitution shall be prescribed by law, and similarly the penalties for a member being in breach of the regulations or failing to attend chamber or committee sessions without acceptable excuse.**
- b. **Each chamber may add to the law that regulates it such supplementary provisions as it sees fit.**

Article 95

Maintenance of order within the Consultative Council and Chamber of Deputies is a matter for its President. Guards shall be allocated to each chamber and they will receive their orders from the chamber's President.

No armed force may enter either chamber of the National Assembly or remain in the vicinity of its doors unless so requested by its President.

Article 96

The remuneration of members of the Consultative Council and Chamber of Deputies shall be laid down by law. If this remuneration is amended, such amendment shall not take effect until the start of the next legislative season.

Article 97

Membership of the Consultative Council and Chamber of Deputies may not be combined, nor may membership of either chamber be combined with the assumption of public office.

Other cases of non-combination shall be prescribed by law.

Article 98

During his period of membership a member of the Consultative Council or the Chamber of Deputies may not be appointed to the board of directors of a company or participate in contracts concluded by the Government or public institutions except in those cases prescribed by law.

Nor during that period may he purchase or rent a State asset, or lease, sell or barter any of his assets to the State, unless by way of public auction or invitation to tender or application of the regulations governing expropriation in the public interest.

Article 99

If a state of incompetence arises with respect to a member of Consultative Council and Chamber of Deputies during his membership, his membership shall be abrogated, and his place become vacant on a decision taken by two-thirds of the members of the chamber of which he is a member. The membership of a member of the Consultative Council or Chamber of Deputies may also be abrogated for loss of confidence or esteem or for being in breach of the duties of membership. A decision to abrogate membership must secure a two-thirds majority of the members of the chamber of which he is a member. If taken by the Consultative Council, the decision shall be submitted to the King for approval.

Article 100

Members of the Consultative Council and Chamber of Deputies shall not be awarded medals or decorations during their term of membership.

Part 4

Provisions on the Convening of the National Assembly

Article 101

In addition to the occasions when both chambers of Consultative Council and Chamber of Deputies, that is the National Assembly, convene as a congress under the Constitution, the King may call such a meeting of his own initiative or at the request of the Prime Minister.

Article 102

The joint National Assembly meeting shall be chaired respectively by the President of the Consultative Council, or in his absence by the President of the Chamber of Deputies, followed by the First Vice-President of the Consultative Council, followed by the First Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies.

Article 103

In the cases other than those in which the Constitution requires a special majority, joint sessions of the two chambers of the National Assembly shall not be deemed legally valid unless they are attended by the majority of the members of each individual chamber. Decisions shall be taken by a majority of the votes of members present with the exception of the President, who is to cast the decisive vote in the event of a tie.

e rendered distinguished services to the Nation.

