

**Federal Law No. (3) of 2024  
Regarding the UAE Council for Fatwa**

**We, Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates,**

- Having reviewed the Constitution;
- Federal Law No. (1) of 1972 Regarding the Competences of Ministries and the Powers of Ministers, as amended;
- Cabinet Resolution No. (31) of 2017 Regarding the Establishment of the UAE Council for Fatwa, as amended; And
- Upon the proposal of the Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of the Presidential Court, and the approval of the Cabinet, the Federal National Council, and the ratification of the Federal Supreme Council,

**Hereby promulgate the following Law:**

**Article (1)**

**Definitions**

For the purposes of implementing the provisions of this Law, the following terms and expressions shall have the meanings assigned to each of them, unless the context requires otherwise:

<b>State</b>	:	The United Arab Emirates.
<b>Court</b>	:	The Presidential Court.
<b>Council</b>	:	The UAE Council for Fatwa.
<b>Chairman</b>	:	The Chairman of the UAE Council for Fatwa.
<b>General Secretariat</b>	:	The General Secretariat of the UAE Council for Fatwa.
<b>Secretary General</b>	:	The Secretary General of the UAE Council for Fatwa.
<b>Fatwas</b>	:	The expression of a Shari'ah opinion on any matter of public or private concern.

- Public Fatwas** : The expression of a Shari’ah opinion on contemporary issues that affect the political, economic, and social stability of the State, or that stir sedition, sectarianism, and division in society.
- Private Fatwas** : The expression of a Shari’ah opinion on matters related to acts of worship and transactions of individuals, which are not considered Public Fatwas.
- Concerned Authorities** : The federal and local entities empowered to issue Fatwas in the State in accordance with the applicable legislation.
- Means** : The information networks, communication networks, websites, digital platforms, social media sites, information technology means, or any other print, audio, or visual means.
- License** : The granting of permission to issue Private Fatwas, or in one of their fields, at the Concerned Authorities or through the Means for a period of (3) three years, renewable upon the request of the Concerned Entities.
- Permit** : The granting of permission to issue Private Fatwas, or in one of their fields, at the Concerned Authorities or beneficiary entities or through the Means, for a short, specified period not exceeding (30) thirty days, which may be renewed for similar periods.

## **Article (2)**

### **Objectives of the Law**

This Law aims to achieve the following:

1. Consolidate the status of Fatwa in accordance with the national identity of the State, locally and globally.
2. Develop directives, policies, and legislation related to Fatwa, and regulate its affairs in the State.

3. Empower the Emirati society through proactive Fatwas, to enhance its standing in global competitiveness indicators.
4. Establish a civilized model for Fatwa that responds to emerging developments and strengthens the global reputation of the State and its humanitarian vision.

### **Article (3)**

#### **Scope of Application**

The provisions of this Law shall apply to all Concerned Entities, and to natural or legal persons.

### **Article (4)**

#### **Establishment of the Council**

1. Pursuant to the provisions of this Law, a council named the "UAE Council for Fatwa" shall be established, having all the competences and powers necessary to implement the objectives of this Law. The Council shall have legal personality, financial and administrative independence, and the legal capacity to act. It shall be attached to the Chairman of the Presidential Court.
2. The Council established pursuant to the provisions of this Law shall supersede the "UAE Council for Fatwa" established pursuant to the aforementioned Cabinet Resolution No. (31) of 2017. All employees of the former Council shall be transferred thereto, and all its assets, rights, and obligations shall be transferred to the new Council.

### **Article (5)**

#### **Headquarters of the Council**

The main headquarters of the Council shall be in the city of Abu Dhabi. The Chairman of the Council may, subject to the approval of the Chairman of the Presidential Court, establish branches or offices in any other Emirate of the State.

## **Article (6)**

### **Formation of the Council**

1. The Council shall be composed of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, and a number of members representing the Emirates of the State, as well as others with expertise and specialization, provided that they possess competence, knowledge, and a good reputation. A Federal Decree shall be issued for the formation of the Council, appointing its Vice-Chairman and members, and determining their remuneration.
2. The term of membership of the Council shall be (4) four years, automatically renewed for similar periods, unless a Federal Decree is issued to restructure the Council.
3. The Council may seek the assistance of whomever it deems appropriate from among those with expertise and specialization, and form the necessary committees to assist it in performing its duties.
4. The Chairman shall issue an internal regulation to organize the work of the Council.

## **Article (7)**

### **Competences of the Council**

In order to achieve the objectives of this Law, the Council shall undertake the following competences:

1. Issue public, contemporary, urgent, and proactive Fatwas that are suitable to the reality of the Emirati society, in pursuit of societal stability.
2. Issue Public Fatwas in the State, on various issues and topics, or upon the request of official entities, institutions, or legal or natural persons.
3. Issue policies and resolutions regulating Fatwa affairs in coordination with the Concerned Authorities in the State.
4. Express the Shari'ah opinion on matters related to offenses against sanctities and sectarian intolerance.
5. Issue studies and research related to various domains of Fatwa, and review the fatwa content received from official entities, so as to entrench the national identity and enhance societal values.

6. Ascertain the crescents in the State, including the sighting and verification of the crescent of the holy month of Ramadan, Shawwal, and Dhul-Hijjah, in coordination with the competent authorities.
7. Qualify, train, and develop the skills of Fatwa specialists, upon the request of the Concerned Entities, and attract and nurture distinguished Fatwa talents.
8. Promote strategic partnerships within the Council's competences with moderate global Fatwa centers and religious institutions, taking into account the legislation in force in the State.
9. Provide Fatwa services to respond to Shari'ah inquiries and develop a digital services system.
10. Express the Shari'ah opinion on legislation and laws related to Fatwa that are presented to the Council by the authorities competent to issue them.
11. Any other competences or tasks assigned to the Council by virtue of a decision from the Chairman of the Presidential Court.

## **Article (8)**

### **Chairman of the Council**

The Council shall have a Chairman, who shall be appointed and have their grade determined by a Federal Decree upon the proposal of the Chairman of the Presidential Court.

## **Article (9)**

### **Powers of the Chairman of the Council**

1. The Chairman shall be responsible before the Chairman of the Presidential Court. They shall supervise the work of the Council and shall exercise the following competences:
  - a. Approve the policies, strategies, plans, regulations, and bylaws of the Council, and submit them to the Chairman of the Presidential Court for issuance.
  - b. Approve the organizational structure of the Council and submit it to the Chairman of the Presidential Court for approval.
  - c. Approve the draft annual budget and the closing account of the Council and submit them to the Chairman of the Presidential Court for approval.

- d. Represent the State in conferences, seminars, and meetings related to Fatwa affairs, both inside and outside the State.
  - e. Appoint a rapporteur for the Council's meetings from among the employees of the General Secretariat.
  - f. Receive grievance applications against administrative penalties decisions for violating the Shari'ah fatwas according to the provisions of this Law and the resolutions issued in implementation thereof and initiate their procedures according to the grievance policy approved by the Council.
  - g. Any other competences or tasks assigned to them by the Chairman of the Presidential Court.
2. The Chairman of the Council may delegate some of their **competences** to their Vice-Chairman or to the Secretary General.

## **Article (10)**

### **General Secretariat of the Council**

The Council shall have a General Secretariat, which shall manage the Council's affairs and conduct its business. It shall be composed of the Secretary General and a number of employees.

## **Article (11)**

### **Appointment of the Secretary General**

The Council shall have a Secretary General, who shall be appointed and have their grade determined by a Federal Decree based on the nomination of the Chairman of the Presidential Court.

## **Article (12)**

### **Powers of the Secretary General**

1. The Secretary General is the legal representative of the Council in its relationship with third parties and before the judiciary. They shall manage the affairs of the Council and its

daily operations and shall be responsible before the Chairman of the Council for the proper conduct of work therein. They shall, in particular, have the following powers:

- a. Prepare the necessary policies, plans, regulations, and bylaws, and submit them to the Chairman for approval.
  - b. Prepare the organizational structure of the Council and submit it to the Chairman for approval.
  - c. Prepare the draft annual budget and the closing account of the Council and submit them to the Chairman for approval.
  - d. Issue the necessary decisions to ensure the proper conduct of work in the Council.
  - e. Develop the necessary programs for the implementation of the approved policies and plans, and submit periodic reports to the Council thereon, their achievements, and the challenges they face.
  - f. Appoint the employees, experts, and consultants of the Council in accordance with the legislation in force at the Council.
  - g. Undertake the financial transactions of the Council in accordance with the legislation in force at the Council.
  - h. Propose the agenda of the Council and prepare the working papers presented thereto.
  - i. Any other related tasks assigned to them by the Chairman or the Chairman of the Presidential Court.
2. The Secretary General may delegate some of their competences to any of the senior employees of the General Secretariat.

## **Article (13)**

### **Controls for Issuing Fatwas**

1. The Council, the Concerned Entities, and holders of Licenses or Permits are prohibited, each within their scope of competence, from the following:
  - a. Issuing a Fatwa on any case pending before the judicial authorities, except pursuant to a decision of the Public Prosecution or the competent court requesting a statement of the Sharia opinion on the matter.

- b. Issuing a Fatwa on matters and topics regulated by laws or resolutions in force in the State.
  - c. Issuing a Sharia Fatwa on draft laws related to Fatwa, except upon an official request from the authorities competent to issue the legislation.
2. The Concerned Authorities may issue Private Fatwas and grant Licenses and Permits to their Fatwa personnel within their scope of competence, in accordance with their applicable legislation and systems.

## **Article (14)**

### **Binding Nature of Public Fatwas and Mechanism for Reconsideration**

1. The Concerned Entities, federal and local government entities, and natural and legal persons shall be bound by the Public Fatwas issued by the Council.
2. It is not permissible for the Concerned Entities, government entities, or any natural or legal person to challenge or question the Public Fatwas issued by the Council through any of the Means.
3. Without prejudice to the provisions contained in this Law, the Council shall issue a decision determining the mechanism for submitting a request for reconsideration of the Public Fatwas issued thereby.

## **Article (15)**

### **Financial Affairs**

1. The Council shall have an independent budget attached to the budget of the Presidential Court.
2. The revenues of the Council shall consist of:
  - a. The annual appropriations allocated to the Council from the budget of the Presidential Court.
  - b. Gifts, grants, bequests, donations, and endowments approved by the Chairman of the Presidential Court.

- c. Revenues obtained by the Council from the services provided thereby. Such services and their fees shall be determined by a decision of the Chairman of the Presidential Court.

## **Article (16)**

### **Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the Council shall begin on the first day of January and end on the thirty-first day of December of each year, with the exception of the first fiscal year, which shall begin from the date this Law enters into force and end on the thirty-first day of December of the following year.

## **Article (17)**

### **Auditor**

The Secretary General, with the approval of the Chairman of the Court, shall appoint one or more auditors for a renewable term of one year, provided they are among the accredited auditors in the State. The resolution for the appointment of auditors shall determine their remuneration. The auditor(s) shall submit quarterly reports to the Chairman of the Presidential Court.

## **Article (18)**

### **Applicable Legislation in the Council**

The human resources, financial, contractual, accounting, and procurement legislation issued by a decision of the Chairman of the Presidential Court shall apply to the Council. The legislation applicable to the Council's employees at the time this Law enters into force shall continue to apply until it is superseded.

## **Article (19)**

### **Penalties**

1. Without prejudice to any more severe penalty stipulated in any other law, a fine of not less than (AED 10,000) ten thousand dirhams and not exceeding (AED 200,000) two hundred thousand dirhams shall be imposed on anyone who:
  - a. Issues a Public Shari'ah Fatwa in the State on any of the issues and topics that fall within the competence of the Council.
  - b. Issues a Private Shari'ah Fatwa to the public without being licensed or permitted to do so.
  - c. Publishes a Shari'ah Fatwa in circumstances other than those permitted under this Law or the decisions issued by the Council.
  - d. Publishes a Shari'ah Fatwa to the public that would incite discord, sectarian intolerance, or sedition in society.
  - e. Issues a Shari'ah Fatwa on cases pending before the judicial authorities in the State or on matters or topics regulated by laws in force in the State.
  - f. Challenges or questions, by any public means, the Fatwas issued by the Council.
  - g. Fails, as a media institution, website, or social media user in the State, to obtain a license or permit from the Council before establishing a website to publish Shari'ah Fatwas or organizing a program for Shari'ah Fatwas.
2. The fine stipulated in Clause (1) of this Article shall be doubled in the case of recidivism.

## **Article (20)**

### **Closure of the Establishment and Blocking of the Website**

The court may order the closure of the violating establishment or institution, or the blocking of the platform or website that published the Fatwa in violation of the provisions of this Law or the resolutions issued in implementation thereof, for a period determined by the court, which shall not exceed one year.

## **Article (21)**

### **Initiation of Criminal Action and Settlement in Crimes Stipulated in this Law**

1. Criminal action shall not be initiated for any crime committed in violation of the provisions of this Law, except upon a written request from the Chairman of the Council or their delegate.
2. The Chairman of the Council or their delegate may settle any of the crimes punishable under this Law before permission is granted to initiate criminal action, provided that the violator pays the minimum fine prescribed for the crime.
3. If the violator refuses settlement, the matter shall be referred to the Public Prosecution.

## **Final Provisions**

### **Article (22)**

#### **Repeals**

1. Cabinet Resolution No. (31) of 2017 Regarding the Establishment of the UAE Council for Fatwa is hereby repealed, as shall any provision that contradicts or conflicts with the provisions of this Law.
2. The regulations and resolutions in force at the Council shall continue to be applied to the extent that they do not conflict with the provisions of this Law, until they are superseded.

## **Article (23)**

### **Publication and Entry into Force of the Law**

This Law shall be published in the Official Gazette and shall enter into force (3) three months after the date of its publication.

**Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan**

**President of the United Arab Emirates**

Issued by us at the Presidential Palace in Abu Dhabi:

On: 25 Ramadan 1445 A.H.

Corresponding to: 4 April 2024 A.D.