

## **Interfaith and interethnic consent in the modern Kazakhstan**

Interfaith and interethnic consent in Kazakhstan is one of the necessary conditions of integrity of the state and its development on the way of democratic conversions. Freedom of religion is a necessary condition of activities of democratic society, one of basic elements of system of the rights and freedom of the person. For Kazakhstan as multi-religious country the question of religion always remains topical.

Peaceful co-existence of representatives of different national and religious groups in many respects depends on a state policy and in this regard the authorities of Kazakhstan should pay attention. At the same time Kazakhstan is part of the world community which faced with the modern issues in the religious sphere and approach of radical Islam. From the first years of Kazakhstan's independence the foundation of the multi-religious state is laid by the legislation. According to the Constitution Kazakhstan is the secular state. The Republic of Kazakhstan is a striking example of the country of an international and interfaith consent. Article 19 of the Constitution states: "Everyone has the right to define and specify or not to specify the national, party and religious identity" [1]. Article 22 proclaims: "Everyone has the right for a freedom of religion" [2]. In Kazakhstan the freedom of worship is guaranteed and separation of religion from the state is proclaimed.

At the present stage in Kazakhstan the weighed state policy in the sphere of religion and interaction of religious faiths among themselves and with government bodies is pursued. The Republic of Kazakhstan is the secular, democratic state in which the freedom of religion is guaranteed to everyone, and followers of all faith are equal before the law. The law of Kazakhstan "About a Freedom of Worship and Religious Associations" adopted in 1991, and which designated the basic principles of a confessional policy of independent Kazakhstan formulated above became one of the first acts of our young state. Total absence of the interfaith conflicts became principal achievement for last 22 years which is the extremely important for multiethnic and multifaitth state. Moreover, on the international scene Kazakhstan strongly secured image of the global integrator, the initiator of dialogue platforms regional, continental and world-class. So, the tradition of carrying out Congresses of leaders of world and traditional religions in Astana became a brand of Kazakhstan.

However, as time showed, total principle of freedom of religion embodied in the extremely democratic free religious legislation in a certain level became the reason of vulnerability of our country in front of many challenges and threats – starting from penetration in Kazakhstan of pseudo-religious identity of the people. It was caused by the necessity of acceptance in October, 2011 of the new Law "About Religious Activities and Religious Associations" reflecting need of society for more active involvement of the state for the processes in the religious field.

The new legal basis governing the religious relations was created in Kazakhstan later after adoption of the law. In 2012, the subordinate normative legal acts regulating legal aspects of religious activities and functioning of religious associations are adopted. In particular, the government resolutions regulating questions are adopted:

- implementation of missionary activities;
- carrying out theological expertize;
- coordination of construction of cult buildings and transmission to religious associations of cult (worship) building, constructions;
- coordination of activities of foreign religious associations in the territory of the republic, assignments by foreign religious centers of principals of religious associations in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

In the mentioned Law of Kazakhstan “About Religious Activities and Religious Associations” the order of creation, state registration, reorganization and elimination of religious associations is systematized.

According to the chairman of Kazakhstan Agency for Religious Affairs Lama Sharif’s speech, “Freedom of religion in Kazakhstan” conference (on March 19, 2013, Astana): “...all religious organizations operating in the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan till October 25, 2012 shall pass and successfully passed process of mandatory registration or a re-registration. It is known that as January 1, 2011 in the country 4551 religious combining worked.

After re-registration which came to the end in October 25, 2012 their number decreased to 3088. The majority of the association which did not take place re-registration simply did not function in view of extreme small number. Thus, registration only brought legal side of a situation into accord with objective reality. Besides, in some cases there was an enlargement of some religious associations thanks to what their interaction with government bodies was facilitated and arranged. Besides, the number of the faiths recognized in Kazakhstan decreased with 46 to 17 – not be “abbreviation” of a half of them, and only thanks to that in the course of a re-registration of religious associations their more adequate classification from especially scientific, theological point of view” was carried out [3].

As a result the re-registration allowed updating and obtaining the transparent data on a real-life religious situation which, like a mosaic, consists of activities of each religious combining. Besides, classification of faiths of Kazakhstan was improved.

The number of religious associations in Kazakhstan was reduced by 32 % after a re-registration, in the republic 17 faiths are set, the chairman of Agency on affairs of religions Kayrat Lama Sharif reported in interview to the “Kazakhstanskaya Pravda” newspaper: “... so, Islam in Kazakhstan represents Spiritual Administration of Muslims. On June 19, 2012 the republican Islamic Religious Association “Spiritual Administration of Kazakhstan’s Muslims” is registered. Now, 2 228 mosques in all regions of the country passed a re-registration” [4].

According to him, at the moment, Kazakhstan uniform monolithic Islamic organization is almost created. “This republican Islamic religious combining preaches an Islamic faith of the Sunni direction according to doctrines of a mazhab (school of Islamic jurisprudence) of Abu Hanifa and religious views of imam Matrudi, considering historical features of Islam in the territory of Kazakhstan.

Orthodoxy is provided by Orthodox Church of Kazakhstan in which there were changes connected to lining of its structure. On October 17, 2012 republican religious union – the Metropolitan district which integrated 9 dioceses and 261 arrivals received the certificate. Besides, within an orthodox field 8 Old Belief churches" started working under the new law Armenian Apostolic Church [5].

The modern confessional pattern of Kazakhstan is presented in following way: more than 130 ethnos relating to different religious faiths lives in our country. According to transcription of 2009, the most numerous religious associations represent Islam (70 % from number of all believers) and Orthodoxy (26 %). The Judaism and Buddhism have approximately equal number of believers (0,1 %). Remaining religions have 0, 2% of followers from total number of believers [6].

There are some aspects why the role of the state in prevention of religious extremism is necessary:

1. It is necessary to develop the effective concept and the program of a religious policy in the country.
2. Considering specifics of multifaith Kazakhstan society, gain of extremist religious communities the state shall carry the active policy in the field of religions.
3. It is supported to enter a position of the Minister of Religious Affairs.
4. It is necessary to strengthen social protection of lower-income level of the Kazakhstan society as they become objects of activities of missionaries of non-traditional religions. Students with small grants can be related to this.
5. The public servants involved in domestic policy shall take advanced training courses on knowledge of a religious situation in the country.
6. The state needs to activate dialogs and discussions with religious communities.
7. It is necessary to arrange and strengthen monitoring over activities of religious communities. Strict reporting is required.
8. To make a barrier to distribution of non-traditional religions as they destroy integrity of society and threaten national security.
9. The differentiated relation of the state to religions is necessary.
10. Some monitoring from the Ministry of Education and Science over the course of educational process is necessary.

Generally it is impossible to deny that acceptance and implementation in Kazakhstan of the Law “About Religious Activities and Religious Associations” and the normative legal acts accompanying it allowed revitalizing a religious situation in the country, to bring activities of religious associations into accord with requirements of time.

In Kazakhstan there was a steady model of interaction of ethos and religious that provides stability and atmosphere of consent in society. As our President noted, “our model of the international and interreligious consent is real contribution of Kazakhstan to universal process of interaction of different faiths” [7].

One of pacing factors of stable social development and improving of welfare of all people is the peace interfaith dialog on which way a number of noticeable steps is realized. Peaceful co-existence of religions, counteraction to distribution of extremism is priority factors of domestic and foreign policy of Kazakhstan.

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“An interfaith and interethnic consent in the modern Kazakhstan”//Materials of 4<sup>th</sup> International scientific and practical conference of young scientific historians “Gylymi Kazyna” and national history: contribution of young scientist”, Almaty, June, 2013.

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