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Legal Glimpse

Racism & Discrimination Under the UAE Law



United Arab Emirates is considered a global center of more than 200 nationalities. And the citizens of the seven Emirates co-habiting and working in this diversified country.

UAE is intolerant to racial discrimination and strives to protect and maintain an equilibrium between all the residents of UAE. The government of UAE has undertaken initiatives to prohibit racism and discrimination and enacted Decree Law No. 2 of 2015 for Combating Discrimination and Hatred (“Law”).

The Law criminalizes and penalizes several actions including hate speech, discrimination, disrespecting, defaming the religions, destroying religious books, places of sanctity. Committing the act of blasphemy under the Law will result in imprisonment of a period of not less than five (5) years and fine and penalty of AED 250,000 to AED 1,000,000.



The Law punishes the act of showing contempt to the divine and to the holy messenger and their descendants with imprisonment for a period of not less than five (5) years and fine and penalty of AED 250,000 to AED 2,000,000. In addition to the aforesaid punishment and penalty, the Law may further order deportation of the perpetrator.

The Law further penalizes several other offences such as being in possession of documents, recordings, software, etc., intended for distribution to offend religion, provoke discrimination, hate speech and setting up of associations to encourage or promote the aforesaid offences.

The Law has a very wide ambit and applies to any person who by any means of expressions or by any other form or means commits any of the offences stated in the Law. The definition of “means” includes electronic, print, audiovisual and “means of expression” includes signs, gestures, words, drawings, etc.

UAE has widened the application of this Law to persons who participate and assist the violator, if the perpetrator is a legal entity, then it extends to agents, directors of the legal entity. The Law provides for exemption of penalty under the Law if there is self – reporting of the crime prior to it being discovered.

There are more in-depth details concerning Law No. 2 of 2015 – Combating Discrimination and Hatred Law and we can assist you in detail upon request.

Please read our disclaimer\*

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