

Decree on Management and Protection of Religious Activities in the Lao People  
Democratic Republic,  
Prime Minister's Office No. 92/PM

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LAO PEOPLE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC  
PEACE INDEPENDENCE DEMOCRACY UNITY PROSPERITY

No 92/PM

Prime Minister's Office

**Decree**  
**On Management and Protection of Religious**  
**Activities in the Lao PDR**

- Based on article 9 of the Constitution number 01/PSA, dated 15 August 1991;
- Based on the Law on Government number 01/95 NA, dated 8 March 1995;
- Based on the proposal of the president of the Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction number 46/CCLC dated 13/02/2001;
- Based on the resolution of the Government meeting on 26-27 November 2001

**Prime Minister**  
**Issues decree:**

**Section I**  
**General provisions**

**Article 1.** This decree defines principles and rules concerning the management and protection of religious activities in the Lao PDR, with the aim of making religious activities conform to laws and regulations, and ensuring the exercise of the right of Lao people to believe or not believe.

**Article 2.** Various religions existing in the Lao PDR have been established with the consent of believers without any coercion or bribing from any political institutions or individuals from outside or inside the country. The goal of activities of whatever small or big religions in the Lao PDR is based on and aimed at serving the development of the country and at educating the population of various strata to follow the progressive teachings of their religion such as:

- Avoiding badness, doing good and having a pure heart;
- Teaching humans in the spirit of solidarity, mutual assistance and love;
- Assisting humans in the spirit of equality, justice and peace.

**Article 3.** The State respects and protects legitimate activities of believers.

All Lao citizens are equal before the law in believing or not believing religions as provided by the Constitution and laws of the Lao PDR.

**Article 4.** Lao citizens, aliens, stateless persons and foreigners in the Lao PDR have the right to carry out undertakings or organize religious ceremonies where their monasteries or churches are located,

**Article 5.** Believers of all religions in the Lao PDR shall observe and implement the Constitution and laws of the Lao PDR, and preserve and expand historic traditions, cultural heritage and Lao National Unity.

**Article 6.** Individuals and religious organizations in the Lao PDR shall provide and be authenticated by the following documents:

- Organizations of each religion shall establish a register;
- Monks, novices, clergymen in white clothes and nuns shall have an identity card;
- Organization members, priests and religious teachers shall be provided and put on a specific inventory.

## **Section II**

### **Religious organizations and religious management**

**Article 7.** Any religion in the Lao PDR intending to be registered and to establish its organizations shall provide a comprehensive set of documents required by regulations and submit them to them to the Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction through the concerned local administrative authorities. Regulations related to the registration and composition of organizations are provided separately by the Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction.

**Article 8.** Staff which will be selected or nominated to the administrative committee of various levels of each religion which has been duly registered in the Lao PDR shall be known to the administrative authorities and the Lao Front for National Construction.

**Article 9.** Monks, novices, clergymen in white clothes, nuns, priests, believers or organization members of each religion in Lao PDR who will be selected or granted any status, and who will accept any title or honorific distinction from a foreign country, shall seek approval from the Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction, which will submit the matter to the relevant competent organ for approval.

**Article 10.** The Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction has the right to manage, promote theology and give instructions, report to, give opinions on or submit to administrative authorities of each level concerning the activities of each religion in order that such activities in conformity with its own principles and with laws and regulations of the Lao PDR.

## **Section III**

### **Activities**

**Article 11.** Religious organizations and believers of each religion in the Lao PDR have the right to organize meetings of their own believers for the purpose of delivering sermons, disseminating religious teachings, conducting religious ceremonies, organizing festivals or praying on normal important days of each religion where its own monastery or church is located.

**Article 12.** Congregations of Lao believers or individuals of any religion have the right to preach or disseminate their religious teaching in villages or district where it is located with the approval of the village Lao Front for National Construction, the head of that village, the district Lao Front for National Construction, or the head of that district.

The governor, mayor or head of special zone shall approve activities conducted outside the district which is relevant to them through the approval of the Lao Front for National Construction of that level. In cases where these activities will be conducted outside the province, they shall be approved by the Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction.

**Article 13.** Believers of any religion in Lao PDR disclosing or participating in disclosure of State secretary to other persons residing inside or outside the country; conducting activities against Lao People's Democratic Republic regime, and dividing ethnic groups or religions in order to cause social disorder, will be punished in conformity with laws and regulations of the Lao PDR.

**Article 14.** The printing of books, documents for dissemination, signs and various plates related to religion shall be authorized by the Ministry of Propaganda and Culture with the approval of the Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction.

It is forbidden for believers in the Lao PDR to publish or possess books, documents, photographs, photography, distortions of truth, slandering or obstructing the progress of the nation, or the production and duties of citizens towards the country.

**Article 15.** Believers of various religions in the Lao PDR have the duty to preserve sacred sites, articles of historical heritage, fine Lao national culture, customs and traditions.

The repair or destruction of these sacred sites or artifacts for renovation shall be authorized by the relevant responsible organ with the approval of the Lao Front for National Construction and local administrative authority of that level.

**Article 16.** Building of new monasteries, churches, Dharma council halls, offices or dormitories of each region shall be approved by the governor of the province, the mayor of the prefecture or the head of the special zone with the approval of the Lao Front for National Construction of the province, prefecture or special zone and of the concerned local administrative authority. The building of Buddhist temples shall be approved by the Prime Minister with the approval of the president of the Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction.

**Article 17.** Believers of each religion have the right to communicate with foreign organizations, religious agencies, believers and individuals. These communications shall be in conformity with foreign policy, laws and regulations and shall be approved by the Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction.

**Article 18.** Religious organizations, monks, novices, clergymen in white clothes, nuns, clergymen or believers of all religions in the Lao PDR desirous of participating in meetings, seminars, training, study tours, friendship visits or religious festivals abroad by their own resources, their organization resources or by foreign resources, must seek approval from the Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction through the different relevant levels of administrative authorities.

Studies abroad in theological matters shall be approved by the Ministry on Education.

**Article 19.** Religious organizations or individuals in the Lao PDR desirous of inviting foreign religious delegates for friendship visits, exchange of experience, or participation in religious festivals shall seek approval from the Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction and the concerned organ.

**Article 20.** The acceptance of assistance from foreign religious agencies, believers or international organizations shall be in conformity with policy and management regulations of the Lao PDR.

Religious organizations and individuals in the Lao PDR intending to request or accept assistance from foreign religious agencies, believers or from international organizations, or intending to give assistance to other religious individuals or organizations, must seek approval from the Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction. Every handover of properties for assistance shall be undertaken in the presence or representatives of concerned Lao Front for National Construction and of the local administrative authority.

#### **Section IV Final provisions**

**Article 21.** The Central Committee of the Lao Front for National Construction has the duty to implement this decree.

All State agencies, mass organizations, social organizations, religious organizations, believers and multi ethnic Lao people shall acknowledge and implement strictly this decree.

**Article 22.** This decree takes effect from the day of its signature. Any provisions contradicting this decree shall be cancelled.

Vientiane, date 05-07-2002

Prime Mister

Signed and Sealed

Bounnhang VOLACHITH

