

Strategic Development and Comprehensive Guidelines for State Policy in Kazakhstan's Religious Sphere

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Abstract

This research article delves into Kazakhstan's state policies in the religious realm, emphasizing the strategic objectives and primary routes that shape this sector. It explores significant trends and characteristics, framing its analysis within Kazakhstan's recent state-building efforts. The study meticulously evaluates current policy measures, legal frameworks, and operational mechanisms in the religious sphere, identifying essential areas that demand policy refinement and strategic development. The findings advocate for the creation of policies that not only protect religious freedom and enhance social cohesion but also correspond with Kazakhstan's broader goals of stability and advancement. The recommended policy approaches highlight the importance of collaborative endeavors among government entities, religious organizations, and civil society to develop policies that are fair, respect diversity, and support the peaceful coexistence of diverse religious communities. By presenting a thorough policy framework for improving state-religious relations in Kazakhstan, this article contributes significantly to the dialogue on managing state-religion dynamics, offering perspectives that may be relevant to other countries encountering similar challenges.

Keywords: *Religious Sphere, Interconfessional Relations, Interethnic Stability, National Security, Kazakhstan.*

INTRODUCTION

Throughout its 33 years of independence, Kazakhstan has established itself as a sovereign nation, gaining international recognition and distinguishing itself through its effective promotion of interreligious and interconfessional dialogue and harmony. Kazakhstan, a country characterized by the peaceful coexistence and mutual cultural enrichment of diverse ethnic and religious groups for centuries, has for the first time successfully developed the political, legal, and socio-economic frameworks necessary to foster the cultural heritage and traditional spiritual values of the Kazakh people.

Following the nation's Constitution, Kazakhstan has embraced a secular model for managing state-religious relations. This model ensures equality of all citizens before the law and respects each individual's beliefs, regardless of their language or religious affiliation.

In accordance with internationally recognized norms, the Kazakh government maintains the authority to regulate the activities of religious organizations to protect individual rights and public safety. The "Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Religious Activity and Religious Associations" provides the legal basis for this regulation. Anchored in international law and the national Constitution, this law affirms the right to freedom of conscience and establishes the legal framework for the state's involvement in regulating religious activities and protecting national interests in religious matters. This legal structure meticulously outlines the organization and operation of religious associations, missionary activities, religious events, assessments of religious materials, construction of places of worship, and distribution of religious literature, ensuring a balanced and respectful approach to religious practice and freedom in Kazakhstan.

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The government has implemented targeted strategies to foster stability in the religious sector, bolster interfaith harmony and tolerance within the community, and strengthen societal resilience to the ideologies of religious extremism and radicalism in their various manifestations (Akbergen et al., 2016). As of the end of 2023, systems were established to support the operations of 3,977 officially registered religious organizations, covering 18 denominations throughout Kazakhstan. This vibrant religious landscape includes 2,835 Islamic organizations, 342 Orthodox Christian organizations, 93 Catholic organizations, 586 Protestant organizations, 61 Jehovah's Witnesses organizations, 24 New Apostolic Church organizations, 13 Society for Krishna Consciousness organizations, 7 Jewish organizations, 6 Bahá'í organizations, 2 Buddhist organizations, 2 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon) organizations, and 1 Moonist organization.

As of the most recent registration, 486 missionaries are officially recognized, consisting of 416 foreign nationals and 70 citizens of Kazakhstan. The distribution by denomination includes 272 Catholic, 42 Orthodox, 59 Pentecostal, 17 New Apostolic Church, 40 Society for Krishna Consciousness, 22 Presbyterian, 5 Baptist, 4 Seventh-day Adventist, 2 Jewish, 2 Lutheran, 4 Jehovah's Witnesses, 2 Buddhist, and 15 Mormon representatives. Additionally, Kazakhstan is home to 14 religious educational institutions, serving a total of 4,395 students as of the end of 2023.

During the same period, authorities documented 53 cases of administrative offenses related to religious activities. Law enforcement and regional Directorates for Religious Affairs identified 29 of these cases under Articles 453 and 489 of the Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Administrative Offenses. Currently, state and law enforcement agencies are prioritizing preventive and educational efforts to minimize the use of administrative penalties (Kazakhstan, 2023a).

As an independent, multiethnic, and multiconfessional country, Kazakhstan is developing its unique model for the interaction between state authorities and religious organizations. Studies by Cottingham (2005) and Ismail (2016) indicate that religious beliefs constitute a realm that merges universal human values with potential challenges to spiritual harmony, social unity, and the well-being of citizens. Therefore, the strategies and principles underpinning state policy for regulating public relations in the religious sphere are specifically designed to reflect the country's distinct situation and the cultural-psychological characteristics of its people.

In 2019, two notable sociological studies, 'The Religious Situation in the Republic of Kazakhstan' and 'The Population's Assessment of State Policy in the Religious Sphere,' were conducted. These studies found that a significant 92.8% of respondents consider themselves religious, despite a noted decrease in religious beliefs in certain regions. Islam (70.2%) and Orthodoxy (26%) emerge as the primary religions among the Kazakhstani population. Additionally, a substantial majority, 89.5%, support the government's handling of religious affairs, with 63.04% backing the nation's principles of secular development. There is also a high level of awareness, at 76.9%, regarding initiatives to counteract religious extremism across the country. According to the surveys, 83% of respondents perceive the religious climate in Kazakhstan as "prosperous" or "relatively prosperous" (Kazakhstan, 2023b).

These results highlight the effectiveness and broad societal support for the government's interventions in the religious sector, which have contributed to the stability of the religious landscape. However, the current era is characterized by significant shifts and transformations in both worldview and socio-economic conditions, driven by a combination of objective and subjective factors. These changes often result in the erosion of established priorities and values, as well as the rise of new global threats, including in the religious domain. There is a considerable risk of religious dangers that could lead to social instability within Kazakhstani society, a risk that the existing legal framework and the present level of state management have not yet adequately controlled.

LITERARY REVIEW

Several researchers have dedicated their works to studying the Kazakhstani model of state-religious relations, including Muratzhan et al., 2021; Amrebaev et al., 2018; Kusack, 2023; Podoprighora & Kassenova, 2017; Almasovich & Zhalgas, 2022; Kozhambekov et al., 2019; Sikhimbayeva et al., 2021; Yerekesheva, G., 2020; Aimukhambetov et al., 2019; Burova et al., 2020; Bizhanov et al., 2019. There are also studies focused on

classifying the trends in the development of religiosity in Kazakhstan: Burova et al., 2023; Amanbayev et al., 2021; Zakhay et al., 2022; Utebayeva et al., 2017; Aydingun, 2010; Shabdenova & Alimbekova, 2019; Sharipova, 2020; Buzheyeva et al., 2018; Telebaev, 2003; Kulsaryieva et al., 2013; Yerekesheva, 2004; Altoma, 2018. These scholarly works discuss the attitudes of Kazakhstanis towards religious radicalism and ways and means of its prevention, as well as issues of practical importance: Begalinova et al., 2020; Raibyaev, 2015; Kuanyshevich et al., 2017; Aimaganbetova et al., 2023; Murat, 2012; Omelicheva, 2011.

There are works by Kazakhstani jurists on issues of personal rights in the realm of religion, analyzing the situation of freedom of religion within the existing legislation: Podoprighora, 2003; Podoprighora et al., 2019; Iskakova et al., 2016; Podoprighora & Klyushev, 2018; Podoprighora, 2020. Research on the problems of forming religious identity in Kazakhstan and its role in various historical periods is of interest: Zhapekova et al., 2018; Bodeyev et al., 2019; Zholdassuly, 2020; Jalilov & Batyrkhan, 2019; Sarsembayev et al., 2020; Spehr & Kassenova, 2012; Lipina & Shapoval, 2021; Aydingun, 2010; Rorlich, 2003; Tazmini, 2001; Saktaganova et al., 2018; Zhapekova Saktaganova et al., 2018; Teleuova et al., 2017. Issues of religious education include: Podoprighora, 2018; Erpay et al., 2014; Kabidenova et al., 2016; Zhampetova, 2021; Knysh et al., 2019; Nadirova et al., 2016; Bayurzhan et al., 2018. This article explores the complexities of religious conversion and changes in religious awareness among women in Kazakhstan, as highlighted in the research conducted by Kabidenova et al., 2020; Beissenova et al., 2022; Bolysbayeva et al., 2021; and Snajdr, 2005.

Although scholarly work on state-confessional relations frequently focuses on the socio-cultural and historical factors shaping religious policies, there has been a relative lack of in-depth exploration and strategic evaluation of the evolution of state policy in Kazakhstan's religious sector. This study examines Kazakhstan's distinctive stance at the intersection of religion and its identity as a multi-confessional, multi-ethnic state. With a constitutional dedication to secularism, Kazakhstan has diligently worked to refine its approach to religious policies. Efforts include regulating religious organizations in accordance with democratic standards and clarifying the complex relationship between the state and religious groups. It is particularly important for Kazakhstan to define its model of secularism, notably as a country where Islam is the majority religion. This research sheds light on the unique interactions between the state and various religious confessions, with the goal of mapping out key directions for future policy development and identifying the specific attributes of these relationships.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach to this research is grounded in a comprehensive analysis of the management processes within the realm of religion, employing a systemic approach to gain a deep understanding of this subject. Various general scientific methods were applied in this work, including expert assessments, comparative and situational analyses, as well as abstract-logical reasoning. Additionally, the research relied on structural, logical, historical-legal, comparative-legal, and formal-legal methods of analysis, enriching the methodology with specialized approaches for a detailed examination of the subject.

This research is anchored in systematic and comparative analyses, offering a thorough examination of the dynamics and intricacies within the religious domain, taking into account both the external and internal factors that influence it. Through systematic analysis, the study highlights key elements that play a significant role in the formation and evolution of state policies in the realm of religion, as well as the connection between socio-economic factors and national objectives in managing religious affairs. The application of modeling and forecasting techniques has enabled the creation of a conceptual model for overseeing religious activities and the projection of possible future scenarios for its refinement. Furthermore, this analytical effort examines specific cases and political developments that affect religious trends, thus facilitating a review of important measures undertaken by government agencies.

A hermeneutical approach was utilized to interpret both international and national legal documents and to analyze the interactions between government agencies, religious organizations, and civil society in shaping state religious policies and setting the course for the future development of Kazakhstan's model of state-confessional and inter-confessional relations. This method is grounded in the historical and cultural heritage of the Kazakh

people, aiming to develop a strategic framework for the ongoing evolution of Kazakhstan's distinctive model of religious harmony and administration.

DISCUSSION

The Main Trends in The Development of The Religious Situation

The analysis of the religious sphere in the country highlights the following trends that require solutions:

1. Globalization's Impact on Kazakhstan's Religious Dynamics. As part of the global community, Kazakhstan faces the risk of importing interreligious and interdenominational conflicts, as well as witnessing the rise of radical religious groups within Central Asia. The globalization process often leads to the manipulation of religion by certain political groups for their own purposes, accompanied by an increase in religious extremism and terrorism worldwide. In response, there is a growing demand in Kazakhstan for regulatory oversight of religious organizations and the enforcement of freedom of conscience rights. It is vital to develop a forward-thinking conceptual framework for the country's religious policy for the foreseeable future.

2. Revising Legal Frameworks in the Religious Sector. The changing landscape of the religious sector calls for a comprehensive review and update of existing religious laws to reflect ongoing changes and events. The revision of legal frameworks regulating religious practices must take into account global and regional trends that directly impact the religious climate in Kazakhstan. Establishing new legal provisions designed to prevent the spread of religious radicalism and extremism in society is crucial.

3. Preserving the Secular Foundation of the State. The majority of Kazakhstan's population takes a moderate approach to religious practice and respects the principles of secular governance. However, there has been a recent increase in religiosity among the populace, with many religious traditions becoming seen as modern trends. A portion of the population shows a preference for visible expressions of piety and a heightened interest in the public aspect of religious life. Furthermore, some individuals mistakenly equate secularism with atheism, highlighting the importance of educational initiatives to reinforce the secular basis of the Kazakhstani state.

There are risks of radicalization among the youth who turn to religion but are ignorant of religious teachings and, for this reason, are easily susceptible to destructive influences. There are instances of individual citizens refusing to fulfill constitutional and civic duties towards society. Cases of disrespectful attitudes towards laws, state symbols, national-cultural traditions of the people, and generally accepted norms of ethics and behavior have become more frequent.

4. Rise of Religious Radicalism and Extremist Ideologies Among Youth. The spread of harmful information has distorted the perceptions of some individuals with radical religious ideologies, leading to a decline in social trust in the government, erosion of patriotism and unity, shifts in value systems and moral principles, family breakdowns, and societal divisions. The deliberate dissemination of radical religious beliefs creates a fertile ground for recruiting individuals into terrorist and extremist groups.

Proponents of religious extremism challenging the principles of the secular state and the civic identity of its citizens significantly risk escalating societal conflict and increasing the number of radical religious followers. This includes individuals who may seek to join international terrorist organizations illegally. The vulnerability of youth to destructive ideologies is heightened by socio-economic challenges, a sense of social injustice, a lack of life experience, and deficient critical thinking skills.

5. Challenges in the National Religious Landscape. The religious sector's dynamics are significantly shaped by the interactions among various religious associations, the wider society, and government and administrative bodies. The existence of radical, unregistered religious movements and organizations classified as terrorist or extremist under Kazakhstani law presents considerable challenges. There are instances where radical group members provoke conflicts with official religious leaders, and some believers cast criticism and blame on those who do not share their religious views. Violations concerning the organization of religious events, the distribution of religious literature and materials, and the involvement of minors in religious activities underscore the necessity for enhanced regulatory oversight in the confessional sphere.

6. **Growing Need for Specialists in the Field of Religions.** The demand for qualified personnel in the fields of religious studies, theology, and Islamic studies is increasing. These specialists are capable of actively participating in the prevention of religious extremism among various societal groups. The unregulated acquisition of religious education abroad by the country's citizens leads to their involvement in destructive religious ideologies and their redundancy as specialists in their own country. The issue of the return of Kazakhstanis who have studied in questionable foreign religious educational institutions remains relevant.

In this regard, the procedure for citizens to obtain theological education in foreign religious educational organizations requires regulation. Ensuring the possibility for citizens of the country to obtain religious education in Kazakhstan is necessary. There is an urgent need to upgrade the skills and knowledge of staff within state agencies, institutions, and organizations, as well as the experts and analysts involved in implementing state religious policies.

7. **Challenges in State Bodies' Response to Religious Policy Implementation.** The effectiveness of central and local executive bodies in preventing and combating religious extremism has been found wanting. Cultivating a societal intolerance for any radical activities in religious contexts necessitates targeted educational and preventive measures for groups vulnerable to extremist religious ideologies. Furthermore, the level of collaboration between state agencies and civil society institutions, including public and religious organizations, the media, and sectors like education, culture, and sports, in combating religious extremism, terrorism, and deradicalizing followers of radical religious movements, needs significant enhancement.

Considering these points, it's crucial to define clear conceptual priorities for developing state religious policy in the short to medium term.

Vision for the Development of State Policy in the Religious Sphere

In our view, the state's main efforts should be focused on the following tasks:

- 1) Strengthening the secular principles of state development and ensuring citizens' rights to freedom of conscience;
- 2) Improving legislation regulating the religious sphere;
- 3) Enhancing the cooperation and unified efforts of state agencies at every level and civil society organizations in implementing Kazakhstan's national religious policy, dedicated to reinforcing the secular foundations of the state and mitigating religious extremism;
- 4) Ensuring the rights of citizens to freedom of conscience and respect for religious beliefs, as enshrined in legislation;
- 5) Fostering a supportive environment for the legitimate activities of religious associations, while simultaneously restricting the influence of harmful religious sects that pose a threat to national security, contravene the constitutional principles of a secular state, and contribute to the radicalization of specific demographic groups;
- 6) Amplifying public education and awareness campaigns regarding the government's measures to uphold societal stability, promote interethnic and interreligious harmony, and build public immunity against detrimental religious ideologies.

The implementation of state policy in the religious domain should be undertaken by an authority specifically tasked with overseeing religious affairs, in collaboration with pertinent government agencies and civil society organizations. The management of religious issues, at both the national and local levels, should adhere to the following core principles:

- 1) Employing a comprehensive approach in the formulation and execution of state policy in the religious sector;
- 2) Encouraging interagency cooperation that utilizes the strengths and resources of both state and civic organizations to achieve the designated goals and tasks in the religious arena;

- 3) Introducing advanced methods of monitoring and diagnosing the situation in the religious sphere for making systemic management decisions;
- 4) Preventing unlawful actions by religious associations.

Opportunities For Strengthening Secular Principles of State Development

Kazakhstan's evolution into a secular state represents a significant historical achievement for its people. Set against a backdrop of unique historical and cultural conditions, distinct social development trajectories, and the particularities of its religious landscape, Kazakhstan has developed a unique model for managing state-religious relations, which has gained international recognition. The constitutional affirmation of the state's secular identity is a foundational element of Kazakhstan's framework for state-religious interactions. According to this principle, all aspects of societal life—including services provided by the government, education, culture, healthcare, family and marriage, and other areas under state jurisdiction—are unequivocally regulated by statutory laws. The government's approach in the religious domain is dedicated to reinforcing the secular basis of the state, conserving the national cultural and historical traditions, and limiting the sway of religious organizations, all while upholding a commitment to moral principles and high ethical standards.

Thus, the principles of secularism entail:

1. In the system of state administration and civil service, secular principles are the basis for the development and functioning of modern Kazakhstan. In their daily activities, all citizens, regardless of their attitude towards religion, are primarily guided by laws, requirements of other normative legal acts, and internal rules of organizations of all forms of ownership, provided they do not contradict current legislation.

The constitution mandates a clear demarcation between religious interests and the legislative framework, the establishment and functioning of governmental bodies, and the ethical guidelines for officials. It establishes a distinct relationship with religious organizations, ensuring no religion receives state endorsement or becomes compulsory. State policies are designed to prioritize the well-being and security of its citizens, the societal fabric, and the state as a whole, without favoring any religious doctrine. In Kazakhstan, a country dedicated to democratic, secular, legal, and social ideals, state-level decisions are determined by the collective interests of society rather than the preferences of any single religion or its followers.

Kazakhstan champions the freedom of conscience for all individuals, empowering citizens to independently determine their religious orientation or to opt-out of religious association altogether, free from institutional influence. The government and its representatives are strictly prohibited from imposing any form of religious adherence or denial on citizens, aiming instead to foster an atmosphere of respect and understanding among individuals of various faiths and those without religious affiliations, as well as between different religious communities.

In the interest of national and public security, the state maintains regulatory oversight over religious matters in the public domain. This includes the capability to offer guidance to religious organizations and enforce legal constraints, when necessary, all while respecting personal religious convictions and practices.

Secular principles are integral to the governance and civil service ethos. Upon entering public service, civil servants commit to a set of responsibilities and restrictions that ensure impartiality and autonomy from religious entities in their official duties. They are expressly prohibited from using their positions to support religious organizations or to disseminate their own religious beliefs.

Officials, including those in leadership roles, must refrain from publicly manifesting their religious beliefs in the workplace or coercing subordinates to engage with religious entities. Employees of government institutions and businesses are required to separate their religious beliefs from their professional duties. Moreover, religious teachings are not to influence administrative decisions.

2. Within Law Enforcement, Security Agencies, and the Armed Forces. The promotion of religious beliefs within the realms of law enforcement, security agencies, and the Armed Forces is expressly forbidden. Although

military service does not compel individuals to forsake their religious convictions, personnel may engage in religious practices provided these do not impede their professional responsibilities.

3. In the Sphere of Mass Media. Mass media outlets are designed to cater to the entire population, without bias towards any religious or other group affiliations. Their mandate includes delivering impartial coverage on issues pertaining to religion and its interaction with state policies and religious organizations. Mass media are charged with endorsing secular values in the administration of the state, nurturing the Kazakhstani approach to interfaith concord, preventing religious extremism, and addressing issues of religious conflict and xenophobia. Reporting on the specific tenets of religious beliefs is restricted to media platforms established by legally registered religious entities.

4. Within the Educational Framework. The educational sector plays a crucial role in promoting patriotism towards Kazakhstan and fostering respect for the country's national and spiritual heritage among individuals and throughout society. At the heart of the educational institutions' philosophy, with the exception of those with a religious orientation, lie the following principles:

Ensuring the educational system's secularism, as required by the state.

Requiring educators to adopt an impartial approach, avoiding the endorsement or propagation of any religious viewpoint.

Ensuring the independence of the internal organization and activities of educational organizations from any religious principles.

Providing students with exclusively scientific knowledge about religions during their education and upbringing.

Prohibiting coercion in education to join any religious association or to remain in it.

Prohibiting students from refusing to attend educational classes for religious reasons.

Prohibiting the conduct of religious events and missionary activities in educational organizations.

Adhering to the dress code requirements established in educational organizations.

5. In the healthcare context, it is crucial for religious groups and their representatives to avoid encouraging individuals to reject medical treatment when such care is essential to maintaining health and saving lives.

Healthcare organizations are required to:

Engage in informative discussions with individuals who decline vaccination, organ transplantation, blood transfusion, and other medical treatments due to religious beliefs.

Ensure that medical and pharmaceutical personnel, when providing medical care, do not engage in any actions (or inactions) rooted in their religious beliefs. Additionally, they should refrain from conducting or participating in religious rites and ceremonies that could potentially endanger the life and health of patients.

6. In Kazakhstan, the secular policy framework promotes equal opportunities for the cultural development of all ethnic and religious communities within the country. Every citizen of Kazakhstan is afforded the right to preserve and promote their cultural, traditional, and linguistic heritage, ensuring their inclusive representation in public and government sectors. The state is dedicated to respecting the national traditions and customs of both the Kazakh people and other ethnic groups. Furthermore, it is imperative for all religious organizations in Kazakhstan to show respect for state symbols, and observe national and public holidays.

Preserving the nation's historical and cultural heritage, including significant contributions to both the global and national cultural and artistic landscape, is a state priority, independent of religious affiliation. Kazakhstan serves as the guardian of sites of considerable cultural and historical significance, including those with religious relevance. These sacred locations, associated with the founders of Islam and various other beliefs, are essential to the country's heritage and are protected by the government. Kazakhstan's distinctive secularism is rooted in the civic and cultural identities of its people, underscoring the government's commitment, at both central and

local levels, to preserve and enrich the spiritual and cultural legacy that reflects the ethnically and religiously diverse composition of the Kazakhstani community.

7. In Kazakhstan's initiative to strengthen family structures, religious rituals commemorating key family milestones such as weddings, births, or funerals are permitted. Nonetheless, only marriages that have been officially registered with the appropriate authorities are legally recognized, carrying specific legal implications. As such, any religious wedding ceremonies should take place only after the marriage has been legally formalized in accordance with the prescribed legal process.

Consistent with the country's secular constitutional principles, the state may intervene in the parenting process if the manner of upbringing endangers the welfare of the child or infringes upon their rights. Furthermore, individuals who have reached adulthood are entitled to independently decide on their religious or non-religious beliefs, irrespective of the religious views held by their parents or legal guardians.

Kazakhstan's legal framework protects the rights of minors. According to the "Law on Religious Activities and Religious Associations," religious leaders are obligated to prevent minors from participating in religious organization activities without the consent of at least one parent or a legal guardian. Furthermore, the "Law on the Rights of the Child," enacted on August 8, 2002, stipulates that religious rituals involving minors may only be conducted with the explicit consent of the parents or their legal surrogates, emphasizing that the involvement of minors in such practices necessitates the approval of both parents or designated legal guardians.

8. In the dynamic between the state and religious organizations, the state monitors and guides the efforts of religious groups towards promoting humanistic ideals within society. To effectively accomplish this, several measures are essential:

Enhance the collaboration between national and local government agencies and religious organizations to foster a unified approach towards societal development.

Provide comprehensive support for initiatives by religious groups that align with the state's religious policy goals, ensuring these efforts contribute positively to societal values.

Proactively engage with religious organizations across a broad spectrum of issues to reduce radicalization among followers, neutralize the impact of extremist religious ideologies, and challenge their doctrines on a theological basis.

Ensure transparency in the organizational, financial, operational, and proselytizing activities of religious organizations within the country to foster accountability.

Prevent activities by religious groups and their representatives that encourage followers to breach constitutional laws, especially those upholding the state's secular principles. Additionally, initiate measures to curb the propagation of religious extremism and terrorism, in compliance with, among other provisions, Article 3 of the "Law on Religious Activities and Religious Associations" enacted on October 11, 2011, by the Republic of Kazakhstan.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Our research enables us to recommend the following comprehensive set of sought-after measures aimed at enhancing the quality of state governance and policy.

Strengthen the accountability and oversight of both central and local governmental bodies in executing state religious policies. Develop a comprehensive model for interagency collaboration, clearly defining the roles and duties of central and local government units, as well as civil society organizations, in carrying out these religious policies. Establish and implement precise criteria and indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of local government efforts in adhering to state religious policies.

Formulate a distinct Kazakhstani methodology for the government's engagement with religious organizations. Enhance cooperative mechanisms among governmental agencies, the scholarly and expert community, the media, and public and religious associations to promote state religious policies effectively.

Within their scope of authority, both central and local government bodies should implement administrative and supplementary measures to mitigate the impact of destructive religious movements. This should include actions to counter the spread of religious extremism and prevent the enlistment of individuals into organizations that resort to violence or the threat of violence under the guise of religious activities.

Improve the mechanisms of interaction between authorized state agencies and local executive, law enforcement, and special bodies in organizing preventive work for the deradicalization, rehabilitation, and re-socialization of individuals affected by the ideology of radical religious movements, including those currently serving or who have served sentences in places of incarceration.

Upgrade media practices to emphasize the promotion of secular principles that underpin the country's development, alongside celebrating the diverse spiritual traditions of the Kazakh people. Develop a comprehensive strategy aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of communication and educational campaigns in the realm of religion.

Develop strategies to enhance the system of religious studies and religious education. Investigate the integration of measures in the educational process of middle general education institutions within the republic to counter religious extremism.

Actively involve public associations, including veterans', women's, and youth non-governmental organizations, as well as cultural and sports figures, in informational and explanatory work addressing current issues in the religious sphere. Ensure the operation of centers dedicated to the deradicalization, rehabilitation, and further re-socialization of individuals influenced by radical religious ideologies.

The anticipated outcomes of implementing the suggested improvements to state policy in the realm of religion include:

- 1) establishing a mechanism for interdepartmental coordination and interaction between government bodies at all levels and civil society institutions;
- 2) forecasting trends and identifying patterns in the development of the religious situation for both the near and long-term future;
- 3) strengthening foundational secular values in the public consciousness;
- 4) achieving zero tolerance in society for any actions associated with radical and extremist manifestations in the sphere of religious relations;
- 5) further developing the unique Kazakhstani model and defining the framework for interaction between state authorities and religious associations;
- 6) refining targeted and specific rehabilitation efforts for adherents of destructive religious currents, those convicted under articles related to extremist and terrorist activities, and the families of the convicted;
- 7) intensifying informational and explanatory work among the population, especially among targeted and "problematic" groups, aimed at discrediting the ideology of radical religious currents by involving professionally trained clergy and propagandists;
- 8) developing theoretical and methodological frameworks that support the secular identity of the state and combat the ideologies of religious extremism and terrorism;
- 9) enhancing and expanding the educational and informational initiatives of rehabilitation centers targeting groups and individuals convicted of religious extremism and terrorism. This effort also addresses the issue of revoking citizenship as a consequence of such convictions;
- 10) promoting the traditional spiritual heritage of Kazakhstan's people, both within the nation and internationally.

Executing the recommended strategies will advance the realization of Kazakhstan's constitutional values and principles in the face of changing geopolitical dynamics and the swift addressing of national security challenges,

both internally and externally. The cornerstone of security, peace, and stability in Kazakhstan hinges on the constructive collaboration and the conscious, proactive participation of governmental and non-governmental organizations, civil society institutions, and every individual, collectively dedicated to defending the state's interests. The implementation of these state policies within the religious sector is key to achieving essential goals towards establishing a secular Kazakhstan and ensuring a future where individuals of various faiths and ethnicities coexist in peace and unity.

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