

Code of Conduct for Police Officers

“In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful”

By The Ministry of Interior:

To the spectrum of Bahraini society, both citizens and residents, and to the police officers employed by the Ministry of the Interior.

The Ministry of Interior makes a gift of this code of conduct, which represents a new social treaty between members of Bahraini society and the police and which, by God’s will, will mark the start of a new era and a correct path to building bridges of confidence between the united Bahraini society and the police apparatus, based on the rule of law, integrity, transparency, tolerance, and the breaking of psychological barriers between them.

His Majesty the King, God protect him, in his royal speech that he delivered on Friday, December 26, 2011, on the occasion of the National Day and the anniversary of His Majesty’s accession to the throne, affirmed that “The Kingdom of Bahrain will remain a state of law and institutions and a country of freedom and tolerant coexistence between different religions, cultures and ideas... Bahrain is for all; we are confident that the next few days will reflect the true picture of the situation in our country such that only the truth will remain.”

In the same context, the Ministry of Interior has been working on activating the King’s initiatives for reform that aim to achieve prosperity and progress for Bahraini society through various steps, the first of which was the re-structuring of the Ministry to enable it to cope with the coming phase, and equipping it with cutting-edge equipment, technology and scientific systems. Moreover, the Ministry has paid special attention to improving the quality of its personnel through training and education delivered by international police experts.

The Ministry is completely aware that its objective is to achieve security for the State and its citizens within the framework of the law. This mission reflects a tradition which stems from society and which is in the interests of society; therefore, enforcing the law must be based on the values of justice, equity, integrity, and commitment to the standards of human rights. Thus, policemen must be committed to impartial professionalism when enforcing the law.

In fact, every career has rules and instruments to regulate its work. These rules are usually enacted within the “Law – Instructions – Regulations” frame. The Bahraini police does not function in a legislative gap - it operates in accordance with several legal authorities starting from the highest legal authority, the constitution, moving to the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Public Security Law, and finally the directions, orders and directives that are issued by the Ministry. This is in addition to the international conventions and treaties to which Bahrain is a signatory.

Given the importance of police work and the duties and specialties that policemen carry out, and the seriousness of their powers which impact directly on the individual, on society and on the Kingdom, the Ministry has issued this Code, in light of its keenness to enhance the principles of human rights and the supremacy of law. This Code is not only a repetition of the laws that regulate the work of police officers, but also includes the standards, values, customs and traditions that should control their behaviour, in addition to the characteristics, abilities and capabilities that they should possess.

The main objective of this Code is to create mutual confidence between police officers and all spectra of the society, as these represent a single unit and a single national fabric which is deeply-rooted in history. It is aimed at police officers so that they might adhere to it, and so that it might serve as their constitution and guiding beacon in their conduct. It also aims to guide both citizens and residents on how to deal with the policemen, allowing them to rely on its application and to call for those that violate it to be held accountable.

I should mention here that what is provided for in this code of conduct is compliant with our Islamic Shari'ah and our Arab culture, which always reminds us of the principles of justice, equity, and integrity.

Finally, I need to emphasise that the principles in this document are not for show, but for application, something which we hope will please God almighty and be in the interests of the whole country and its citizens. Through this, we hope to achieve a secure and stable Bahraini society which is moving towards further development and prosperity under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa.

All praise be to God,

Lieutenant-General
Minister of Interior
Rashid Bin Abdullah Al Khalifa

Introduction

- Policing is hard work, and a huge responsibility, which can only be undertaken by those that have the specific qualities necessary for the task. For the policeman is continuously interacting with all segments and spectra of society. He is the regulating instrument of society and the vital element for its security and stability.
- It is for this reason that civilized countries have paid special attention to building their security authorities on the basis of the highest quality of personnel, and have therefore selected those who possess the behavioural, moral, cultural and vocational abilities to perform this job. They have also been keen on equipping their authorities with the latest modern technologies to help them with the fulfilment of their duties.
- Police officers are, in fact, representatives of the State and are its active instrument for the exercise of its right to maintain stability for the public interest. This is something which adds a type of sanctity and dignity to their work, especially considering the scope and sensitivity of their powers in relation to people whose freedoms might often be affected by them in the name of the law and the State.
- Thus, police represent the State's just arm that applies the law without discrimination, and by reflecting and embodying the idea of the "rule of law" in every sense of the phrase. Police represent the prestige of the State and are a key factor in its stability, advancement and prosperity. The police force is the main actor in securing the interior against any attack on the

community. This is achieved through the protection of people and property, the prevention and combating of crimes, the maintenance of security and public order, the offering of security services to those who need them, and the guaranteeing of the state's authority and the rule of law. Therefore, the police force is an important part of the State's powers.

- Police officers operate according to legislative, regulatory and procedural rules that define their functions and the ambit of their work, and which must not be transgressed or violated. In the case of any violations by any police officer, he will be subject to disciplinary and criminal actions if the violation amounted to a crime, since exceeding the boundaries of police duties is deemed in violation of the law as well as the disciplinary framework of the police force. The ministry is keen to advance the laws which regulate its work in order to allow it to cope with the next stage of improving police work and ameliorating the image of the police for citizens. To this end, new legislation is taking into account human rights and basic freedoms, as well as a respect for human dignity and humanity, in accordance with international human rights standards and religious, moral, legal and social principles.
- The Kingdom of Bahrain is no different from any other civilised country. It has a highly efficient and professional police force, capable of carrying out its duties, and capable of selecting, training, and rehabilitating on educational and cultural levels. Police in Bahrain are equipped with modern technologies and tools which help with coping with scientific advancements for tracking new types of crimes, such as money laundering, cybercrimes, anti-corruption, and terrorism...etc.

- The Code of Conduct being introduced here is the first step in this development.
- The aims of this Code of Conduct are as follows:
 - a. To set ethical rules for police officers that help bridge the gap between the police and the people of Bahrain.
 - b. To ensure that the police remains impartial and professional, playing a pivotal role in the quest to achieve and sustain the basic values of a state founded on rights and the rule of law.
 - c. Ensure that police work reflects an understanding of the nobility of the law, which guarantees to each individual their right to practice basic freedoms
 - d. The Code of Conduct will be considered an essential instrument that bestows legitimacy on the relationship between the police and Bahraini citizens and residents.

Code of Conduct References

The Code of Conduct was formed with the guidance of the following:

- The National Action Charter of Bahrain
- The Constitution of Bahrain
- The Code of Criminal Procedure of Bahrain
- The Public Security Law of Bahrain
- The Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, as approved by the United Nations General Assembly (No. 34/196, December, 17. 1979).
- Certain Codes of Conduct promulgated by Arab and foreign countries' (Arab Republic of Egypt, Code of Conduct of Northern Ireland, Code of Conduct of Australia and the European Code of Police Conduct.)
- The International Association of Chiefs of Police, "Police Code of Conduct".

Code of Conduct Principles

This Code of Conduct includes the following principles:

1. The Rule of Law
2. Duties of police officers
3. Use of force
4. Respect for human dignity
5. Policing principles
6. Achieving high quality policing
7. Doctrine of police officers
8. Prestige of police officers
9. Rights of police officers
10. Respect for the articles of the Code of Conduct

I: The Rule of Law

Police shall commit to the rule of law and implement it with the utmost impartiality, integrity and transparency without any form of discrimination and with particular commitment to the following:

- a. Loyalty to the Kingdom of Bahrain and preservation of its security, rights and achievements.
- b. Allegiance to the beloved King as head of state.
- c. Preservation of honour and arms.
- d. Performance of their duties with sincerity and integrity.

II: Duties of Police Officers

Police officers perform their duties in accordance with the Constitution, the law, international human rights charters and conventions ratified by the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Police officers shall abide by the Bahraini Public Security Forces Law, which requires them to carry out their tasks in compliance with the rules of discipline put in place by the police hierarchy. They commit, in particular, to the following:

1. A zero tolerance policy on torture and any other type of mistreatment. It is unacceptable to use the excuse of higher commands or exceptional circumstances, such as a state of war or security threats, as justification for torture.
2. Safeguarding the health of detainees
3. In the course of carrying out their duties, respecting the constitutional and legal rights of witnesses, defendants and suspects and abiding by human rights standards when dealing with them.
4. Conducting their duties with the highest level of accuracy in accordance with the law and the constitution, with regard to all measures required for their work.
5. Dedicating their work hours to diligently fulfilling their professional duties, including cooperation with their colleagues in order to ensure that the efficient progress of their work.
6. Maintaining the confidentiality of secret information in their possession, unless duty or justice requires otherwise.
7. Refraining from committing any act of corruption.

8. Avoiding arrogance and condescending attitudes when dealing with others. Modesty should be their prevailing ethical quality, and it should always be felt that they are servants to the Bahraini community, law and Constitution.
9. Police commanders must act as role models for officers working under their command. Officers must respect their superiors in accordance with the hierarchical rank structure of the security force.
10. Police officers are banned from:
 - a. Acts that trigger strife in the community.
 - b. Affiliation with any political, religious, or ethnic party or group
 - c. Misusing information obtained through their work for personal interests and gains.
 - d. Accepting personal help or gifts from any party or individual.
 - e. Publishing any documents or information related to their work for money-making purposes or for the realisation of personal interests, or keeping any official documents that fall into their possession.

III: Use of force:

- Police officers shall use force only in accordance with the principles provided for in Bahraini law and the international conventions that specify when and where such force may be used.
- Force shall not be used except when absolutely necessary or where it is used in self-defence in accordance with the law.
- Deadly force can only be used by an officer where it is the last resort to defend against aggression against the police officer, or where it is necessary in order to save the officer's life or the lives of others.
- Police officers commit to the principle of using only such force as is proportional to the danger posed to life or public or private property.
- The use of live weaponry should be considered a last resort, and every effort should be made to avoid it.
- Once the reason for using force no longer exists then the use of force must end.

IV: Respect of human dignity as enshrined in the constitution, law and international human rights principles:

- The task of the police is to maintain security, public order and safety by enforcing the law.
- A police officer should perform his duties, and enforce the provisions of the law, with transparency and integrity in accordance with the constitution, the law and international human rights principles and standards.
- The police are the guarantors of rights, public freedoms, and human dignity for Bahraini citizens and residents in the territory of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

V: Policing Principles:

The police force is committed to the application of the following principles while carrying out its operations.

- Speed of response: The ability to provide for rapid response to emergency calls and incidents.
- Effectiveness: Dealing with all incidents competently and effectively.
- Transparency: Clarity and simplicity of procedures, so that they are characterised by integrity, objectivity and sincerity on the part of the police officer as well as individuals in the community.
- Accountability: All members of the community will be held accountable without bias.
- Humanitarianism: Deal with all members of society in a civilized and humane manner.
- Partnership: Create partnerships with citizens and groups and create a healthy and safe environment, thereby putting into practice the slogan, "security is everyone's responsibility."

VI: Achieving high-quality policing:

Police officers affirm that, in striving to carry out their duties, they will ensure the highest quality of police work by adopting a disciplined methodology that helps maintain a consistent police service for all citizens and residents. They will take all required legal measures to prevent crimes from occurring and to arrest offenders. All arrests will be carried out in accordance with the human rights standards in the Constitution, the law and all international laws and conventions that promote respect for all persons regardless of colour, race, gender or creed. Furthermore, officers must perform their duties using methods that accord with human rights standards, and must deal decisively with violators of the law without harming their human dignity.

Police officers commit to the development of a sense of security for citizens and residents, given that they are partners in the preservation of public security in the full sense through their active participation in the solution of community problems, something which provides security and stability to all.

VII: Doctrine of police officers:

It is the well established doctrine of police officers to defend people's rights, support righteousness, and face oppression, injustice and aggression. Police officers are the most visible representatives of the government and as such, are required and trusted to work within the law. The fundamental duties of a police officer include serving the community, safeguarding lives and property, protecting the innocent, keeping the peace and ensuring the rights of all to liberty, equality and justice.

VIII: Prestige of Police Officers

Police officers are a part of the Bahraini community and they carry out their work in the service of this community. They are a principle part of the state's powers. They represent the prestige of the state and are the principle instruments for regulating conduct, ensuring stability and maintaining order. Therefore, they commit to maintaining a professional appearance and conducting themselves with sincerity, a lack of discrimination, integrity, courage and self-control. These qualities give police officers power and prestige that enables them to carry out their duties and is derived from respect, not fear of violence, abuse or discrimination.

IX: Rights of Police Officers

Considering the many vital responsibilities they shoulder, police officers are granted a variety of rights to ensure they perform their duties in an environment of financial and psychological stability. These rights include:

1. Strong community support. Police officers should be viewed as the central pillar of national security. Cooperating with media to accomplish this goal and to positively enhance the image of security officers.
2. Equipping police officers with the most up-to-date supplies and equipment to help them perform their duties to the fullest.
3. Continuous training for public security staff members, regardless of rank and age. Training courses must be a pre-requisite for promotions and the extension of other privileges.
4. Social and health insurance and sufficient wage increases to ensure that police officers do not resort to illegal means in order to improve their living standards.
5. Taking into consideration the totality of the circumstances involved and the character of the police officer when considering the appropriateness and justice of disciplinary action against that officer.

X: Respect for the Code of Conduct

Police officers shall adhere to the articles stated in this code, and shall consider them to be their guide and compass while at work. This code shall be seen as a social contract between police officers and the Bahraini community. It is a step on the road towards a better future for Bahrainis, characterised by mutual respect and trust between the police and the community.