

**Article 1:** In applying the provisions of this law, the following words and expressions shall have the intended meanings:

1. Church: a distinct building topped by one more domes, where prayers and the religious rites of Christian denominations are practiced in their traditional form. The building may be composed of one or more floors and one or more roofs, with a wall around the building if it occupies more than 300 square meters, and may include the following:

- a. Altar or pulpit: the place where men of religion, qualified to lead prayers and religious rites according to church principles, shall stand.
- b. Nave: the place where participants in prayers and religious rites shall be.
- c. Baptismal hall: a place used for carrying out baptisms; it shall be equipped with water, electricity, and sewer service.
- d. Tower: a part elevated above the main church building —square, rectangular, octagonal, cylindrical, or of other shapes; connected to the main building or separate therefrom—according to the religious traditions like the bell and the cross, of an appropriate height and with appropriate engineering design.

2. Church annex: a building of the church including, according to the needs of the area, the church administration and places for its religious, social, and cultural services.

3. Services building: a building owned by a denomination allocated for a variety of services, including for immigrants, the elderly, the sick, and those in need.

4. Retreat house: a building owned by the church, including places of residence and places to practice spiritual, cultural, and religious activities.

5. Place to manufacture the Eucharistic elements: a place inside the church or church annex, equipped to manufacture the Eucharistic elements, completed to comply with health requirements and legal standards of safety.

6. Relevant religious chief: the supreme religious leader of a Christian denomination recognized by the Arab Republic of Egypt.

7. Relevant governor: the governor responsible for issuing licenses under this law.

8. Denomination: a religious sect recognized by the state and granted corporate personhood.

9. Legal representative of the denomination: a natural person, other than a religious leader, authorized to take the procedures related to any of the actions for which a permit is required according to the provisions of this law. He shall be appointed by the [authorized/relevant religious chief] of the denomination in all cases.

10. Actions for which permission is required: building, expanding, enhancement, reinforcement, destruction, or external detailing of a church, church annex, services building, or retreat house.

**Article 2:** Provided, that the size of the church for which permission is being sought, and its annex, shall take into account the number and need of the citizens of the Christian denomination in the area where it shall be situated, with respect to changes in population growth. It is permitted for the church to include one or more altars or pulpits, one or more naves, a baptism hall, and a tower.

**Article 3:** The legal representative of the denomination shall submit to the relevant governor a request to obtain the legally required permissions to carry out any of the actions for which a permit is required. Administrative bodies shall give the submitter of the request an item indicating receipt of the application on the day of submission. Attached to this request must be evidence of ownership and any necessary documents to indicate the nature of the requested work. In all cases, no application shall be accepted without the aforementioned documentation.

**Article 4:** It is permissible for the legal representative of the denomination submitting to the relevant governor a request to obtain necessary approvals required by law to demolish and rebuild a church built under license or in agreement with the provisions of this law, and that by following the procedures herein.

**Article 5:** The relevant governor is mandated to decide on the application referred to in Articles 3 and 4 of this law, and must issue approval and relevant licenses of all legally required conditions in a period not to exceed four months from the date of submission. The governor is further mandated to notify the applicant by registered letter of the outcome of the request. In the case in which the application is rejected, the rejection must be justified.

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**Article 6:** It is forbidden to take any action in Articles 3 and 4 of this law, after obtaining a license from the administrative body for planning and organizational affairs in accordance with the provisions of the Construction Law (Law 119 of 2008) and its regulations, not to conflict with the provisions of this law. The license shall be issued in the name of the religious community.

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**Article 7:** It is not permitted to change the purpose of any licensed church or licensed church annex to any other purpose. If prayers and religious rites cease therein, any new usage of the property shall be considered legally void.

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**Article 8:** The legal representative of the denomination shall submit the requested materials and statements of an inventory of buildings referred to in Articles 9 and 10 of this law within one year of its effective date, to a committee to be formed and its scope of work by a decree from the prime minister. The scope of work by a decree from the prime minister. The membership of the committee shall include relevant ministers and authorities, and a representative of the relevant denomination.

The committee shall study the conditions of these buildings and propose the necessary solutions to reconcile their situation [to this law].

It is impermissible for the committee to review any applications received after the time limit set in the first part of this article. The committee is to submit its opinion to the Cabinet to take procedures necessary to reconcile the situation of these buildings and resolve any disagreements on them. It is permissible for the Cabinet to issue necessary decisions on this issue, if the need arises according to the committee.

In no other instance is it permissible to stop or prevent the practice of religious rites and activities in any of the buildings referred to, or in any of their annexes, for any reason.

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**Article 9:** Every church building in existence at the effective date of the provisions of this law, in which Christian religious rites are performed, shall be considered to be licensed as a church. This is subject to evidence of structural integrity in the form of a report from a certified consulting engineer from the Engineers Syndicate, compliance with the approved structural requirements, commitment to the rules and regulations required by the defense affairs of the state and the organizing laws of property of the state, public and private, and a decision from the Cabinet to reconcile the conditions according to Article 8 of this law.

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**Article 10:** Every building used as a church annex, services building, or retreat house shall be considered licensed from the effective date of this law, if it is owned or affiliated with the denomination and fulfills the terms and conditions established in Article 9 of this law.

