

ASSEMBLY OF PEOPLE OF KAZAKHSTAN - A NEW INSTITUTION OF INTERNATIONAL CONSENT AND INTERETHNIC TOLERANCE IN REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

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Today there is no necessity to prove that the cornerstone is the unity of the people. Kazakh proverb says “Life is where there is the unity”. Exactly this unity is driving life force of state development. Our country confidently moves forward without setbacks because of interpersonal and interethnic conflicts’ aggravation provoking political and economical collapse of any state. Unfortunately, there are a lot of such examples on international scene. Creating the conditions for communication, interaction of institutions of civil society with state institutions in formation of interethnic and interfaith dialogue, tolerant attitude towards each other underpin achievements of Kazakhstan including spiritual foundations of unity and consolidation of the people, particularly in difficult periods of turmoil. Herewith distinctive feature of Kazakh model is endeavour of all ethnic groups to construct multiplicity combination policy in whole. [1; 2]

Basic principles of state national policy are equal rights for all national and confessional (religious) groups’ representatives and formation of favorable conditions for all confessions’ activity. Owing to this in Kazakhstan during 15 years there was no political mass collision motivated by ethnic or religious disagreements.

It is possible to say without exaggeration that first legislative acts of independent Kazakhstan created legal framework which is based on civic and political unity of all citizens that provides equality of rights and freedoms (liberties) of all irrespective of ethnicity or religion. Experience of interethnic policy which is implemented in Kazakhstan was highly evaluated by world community and has attracted interest of countries with similar multi-ethnic population. [2; 2]

In international community Kazakhstan has obtained recognition as a country which conducts policy aimed at guaranteeing tolerance, interfaith and intercultural consent of all nationalities living in Kazakhstan and representing the people of Kazakhstan. The people who are actively building modern and competitive secular state. Kazakhstan is interested in broadening and deepening of so-called dialogue of civilizations, has always supported and expressed willingness to take the initiative aimed to closer understanding between East and West on key problems of modern world order. In the first years of independence very complex connected with spiritual life, social well-being of community, the revival of national consciousness processes took place. And just then, in early 90-ies of the last century Kazakhstan’s President N.A.Nazarbayev having rethought a lot in our history, in order to save our main property – friendship of peoples, on 1st forum of peoples of Kazakhstan suggested the need for transfer of this forum on permanent basis. And on 1st March 1995 on socio-political scene of Republic

there appeared a new institution in the field of national policy – Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan [3; 39-43].

Kazakhstan became the first country among the countries-members of CIS where a unique institution was founded – Assembly of People of Kazakhstan. This institution has greatly contributed to the establishment and approval of Kazakhstan's model of multi-ethnic society which is aimed to strengthening of interethnic and interfaith consent. Assembly of People of Kazakhstan since its formation played great role in strengthening of peace and consent between peoples living in Kazakhstan. But in recent years its role in society has become more appreciable.

In May 2007 Parliament of Kazakhstan adopted series of constitutional amendments which significantly changed the role of all representative branch of the government. One of the most important innovations of constitutional reform – increasing the number of deputies Parliament Mazhilis to 107 people, 9 of whom are elected by Assembly of People of Kazakhstan. This step, of course, raised the role of Assembly to a higher level. Besides, introduction of special seats for Assembly by increasing number of deputies made it possible to represent in Parliament the largest ethnic groups living in the territory of Kazakhstan.

Attention should be paid to the fact that amendments adopted in Constitution are about Assembly of People of, not about Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan. As it is known, until that time we had the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan, established by the Decree of the President. And it is important on a question of principle, because our Constitution begins with the words “We, the people of Kazakhstan...” We are united (unified) people of country. But our nation is diverse in its ethnic composition. This arouse (formed, turned out) historically. And this amendment brought out everything into line with Constitution. Besides it should be meant that all these years Assembly is headed by President N.A.Nazarbayev. And this initially highlighted exceptional importance of that body. Moreover, in constitutional law of Kazakhstan “About first President of the Republic of Kazakhstan” adopted on 20th July 2000, in Article 1 Paragraph 2, determining status of the First President of the Republic, it is pointed out that First president of Republic, by virtue of his historical mission, has lifelong right to be at the head of Assembly.

On 20th October 2008 law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “About Assembly of people of Kazakhstan” was adopted [4]. The law determines status, procedu-

re of formation and organization of work of Assembly of people of Kazakhstan aimed at realization of state national policy, guaranteeing socio-political stability in Kazakhstan and increasing efficiency of interaction between state and civil society institutions in the field of interethnic relations.

Assembly of people of Kazakhstan – establishment without formation of legal entity, composed by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, promoting development of state implementation of national policies. According to this law [4], Assembly is aimed to guarantee interethnic consent in the Republic of Kazakhstan in the process of forming Kazakh civil identity and competitive nation on the basis of Kazakhstan patriotism, civil inner(spiritual)-cultural unity of people of Kazakhstan considering consolidating role of Kazakh people.

The main tasks of Assembly are:

- guaranteeing effective cooperation between state bodies and institutions of civil society in the field of interethnic relations, creating favorable conditions for further strengthening of interethnic consent and tolerance in society;
- strengthening the unity of people supporting and developing society consensus on fundamental value of Kazakhstani people;
- rendering assistance to state bodies in counteraction to manifestation of extremism and radicalism in society and aspirations aimed at limitation of rights and freedoms (liberties) of person and citizen;
- forming political legal culture of citizens leaning at democratic norms;
- guaranteeing integration of efforts of ethno cultural and other public unions in order to attain objects and tasks of Assembly;
- revival, preservation and development of national cultures, languages and traditions of people of Kazakhstan.

Principles of Assembly's activity are:

- a) priority of rights and freedoms (liberties) of person and citizen;
- b) priority of interests of people and state;

c) equality of rights and freedoms (liberties) of person and citizen irrespective of his race, nationality, language, attitude to religion, persuasion or another circumstances;

d) equality of rights and personal responsibility of Assembly members for activity in its structure;

e) publicity.

Principal directions of Assembly's activity are: assistance in elaboration and realization of state national policy; assistance to formation of Kazakhstan patriotism; development of state language and other national languages of people of Kazakhstan; improvement of regional policy in interethnic field; participation in elaboration and realization of plans and events in the field of demography and migration; propaganda of Kazakhstan's model of interethnic and interfaith consent in the country and abroad; implementation of educational and publishing activity aimed at achieving interethnic consent; monitoring the state of interethnic relations, including in the field of application state language and other languages of people of Kazakhstan; participation in socio-political expertise of bills concerning state national policy; support of Kazakh diaspora in foreign countries in the matters of preservation and development of native language, culture and national traditions, strengthening ties with historical native land; production of recommendations and realization of practical measures on regulation of disagreements and disputes, avoiding conflicts in the field of interethnic relations and participation in their resolution; methodical, organizational and legal assistance to ethno-cultural associations; conducting seminars, conferences, engaging in other activities that provide a dialogue of state bodies with public associations on issues of interethnic relations; interaction with civil society institutions and international organizations on issues of guaranteeing interethnic and interfaith consent; rendering assistance in developing ties of other ethnic groups of Kazakhstan with their historical native land; other activities that promote interethnic consent and don't contradict legislation of Republic of Kazakhstan.

The structure of the Assembly is formed by Session of Assembly, Assembly Council, Staff (Secretariat) of the Assembly, regional assemblies (cities of republican status, capitals). Session of Assembly – meeting of members is convened by President of Republic of Kazakhstan as required but not less than once a year. Between sessions Assembly is directed by Assembly Council, formed by the

decision of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Membership of Council is approved by President of Republic of Kazakhstan. Council is a collegial body formed from members of Assembly: representatives of ethno cultural unions, leaders of regional assemblies (cities of republican status, capitals), of state bodies. By decision of the President of Kazakhstan other members of Assembly also can be introduced to Council.

Staff (Secretariat) is a working body of the Assembly entering into the Administration of President of Republic of Kazakhstan, whose activities are regulated by legislation of Republic of Kazakhstan. Staff (Secretariat) is headed by Head of the Staff who is simultaneously Vice Chairman of the Assembly. Chairman of the Assembly heads the Assembly, Assembly Council and provides overall supervision of the Assembly. Vice Chairmen of the Assembly are appointed by the President of Republic of Kazakhstan. Regional assemblies (cities of republican status, capitals) in carrying out their activities are accountable and responsible to the Assembly. Composition of Assembly and regional assemblies (cities of republican status, capitals) is formed by citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan – representatives of ethno cultural and other public unions, representatives of state bodies and other persons in accordance with their authority in society. Members of Assembly operate within the powers defined by law. Activities aimed at guaranteeing interethnic consent in Kazakhstan, organized by the Assembly, regional assemblies (cities of republican status, capitals), ethno cultural public unions, affiliated to the Assembly, are financed in accordance with legislation of Republic of Kazakhstan.

On 23rd October 2008 was held XIV Session of the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan with the agenda: “The strength of the country is in unity”. At the forum were discussed issues of further development of unique basis of interethnic and international consent. Particularly, the President proposed to develop a doctrine of national unity for inclusion it in the Strategic Plan of the country’s development until 2020 year [2; 2].

On 6th March 2009 President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev in his address to the people of Kazakhstan “Through crisis to renewal and development” appealed to the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan, all political forces: “now, not on words, but on deeds is verified, who is really thinking of people, who – not. Let’s join together to overcome the most severe crisis in the history of the planet” [5; 2].

Kazakhstan, on whose territory peacefully coexist representatives of more than 130 nationalities, 3 thousand religious associations, representing over 40 confessions, is ideally suited for carrying out Congress of World Religions. On 1st-2nd July 2009 in Astana took place 3rd Congress of World and Traditional Religions. Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, initiated by Kazakhstan for development of issues on interreligious consent became an effective tool to develop interreligious consent and basis for meeting of representatives of World Confessions.

The Congress consisted of plenary session on topic: “Role of Heads of religions in promoting peace at the basis of tolerance and mutual respect”, and also sectional conferences on topics: “World ethic of humanism and inner (spiritual) values” and “Consent in crisis”. The congress was attended by delegations from various confessions of three world religions and also special guests, representatives from international organizations – UN, OSCE, UNESCO and OIC.

Next year Kazakhstan will be presiding in OSCE. The fact that among the CIS countries Kazakhstan is presiding in such authoritative international organization shows that policy of our President is far-sighted, balanced, well-founded, well-reasoned [1; 2].

On 26th October 2009 XV Session of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan with agenda: “National unity - our strategic choice” took place [6; 1- 2]. The President shared his vision of the processes, which should lead out activity of the Assembly of People of Kazakhstan to a new level, having pointed at necessity of working out integral action program of state and society on a whole range of interethnic and interfaith relations. The session was attended by leaders of republican and regional ethno cultural unions, deputies of Parliament, heads of central executive organs, political parties, religious confessions, NGO (non-governmental organizations), heads of diplomatic missions of foreign states, representatives of international organizations and mass media.

Nursultan Nazarbayev in his speech at XV session of Assembly of People of Kazakhstan, in order to strengthen the capacity of interethnic consent, suggested to implement a number of measures in following directions: first of all develop civil identity, tolerance in society of Kazakhstan through system of education and upbringing, correct lighting of the topic of ethnic relations in the mass media, raising the legal culture of Kazakhstan’s people. It is intended to work out conceptual proposals for the development of ethno- and multicultural edu-

cation in accordance with specificity of Kazakhstan society. Proposal to introduce optional course “Basics of Tolerance” in schools and higher educational institutions seems quite valuable.

At session of the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan it was stated that a condition for stability of Kazakhstan society is creating conditions for free development of native language, cultural heritage and traditions of all ethnic groups living in Kazakhstan.

An important component of national unity is an interreligious consent in our society. Principles of legal equality and dialogue of religions are stable in Kazakhstan. Simultaneously state will oppose the activities of pseudo-religious groups. It will also require active position of all religious associations of country.

The strength of national unity is directly related to improving the performance of the Assembly of Peoples of Kazakhstan and all ethno-cultural associations. First of all, it is necessary to strengthen coordinating role of Secretariat of Assembly of people of Kazakhstan, create Council of Elders attached to the Assembly. Scientific-expert Council of Assembly should work actively. It is necessary to establish a grant for scientists, carrying out applied researches on issues of interethnic relations. Assembly of people should do more work with Congress of youth, such as co-hosting the nationwide forum “Youth for the unity of the people of Kazakhstan”. It is necessary to elaborate deeper, on the level of Government and regional akimats, issue about the expansion of state support of ethno cultural associations including mechanism of social order. It is necessary to promote widely Kazakhstan’s model of interethnic and interfaith relations. With this object, it is important to use forthcoming chairmanship of Kazakhstan in OSCE, whose key priority is interethnic and interfaith tolerance. It is reflected in State program “Way to Europe”.

The task of Assembly is generalizing of Kazakhstan’s experience in international consent and on this basis is supposed issuing of special publication entitled “Kazakhstan: integral matrix of unity and consent” on major European languages. Thus, the establishment of Assembly became logical extension of domestic and external policy of Kazakhstan and its leader since independence. Kazakhstan originally headed for construction of modern, secular state committed to the ideals of peace, tolerance and constructive dialogue. Establishment of Assembly of people of Kazakhstan became institutionalized field of interethnic relations in republic, a kind of public diplomacy body. Assembly was created as a principally new institution of civil society which did not have at that time analogues, both in a previous Soviet



epoch, and in world modern practice. Now it can be said with confidence that owing to Assembly it was possible to avoid politization of interethnic relations, direct available at that time potential for conflict in constructive course [7; 3].

Major modern politicians, religious leaders and representatives of public organizations provide the utmost appreciation of Kazakhstan's experience on strengthening international and interfaith consent. The leader of parliamentary German-Central Asian group of Bundestag Hedi Wegener: "A country whose territory is inhabited by more than 120 different nations, ethnic groups and which is able to organize their peaceful life is of great interest. Assembly of the People is a tool, a bridge between them".

"Leaders of Kazakhstan propose specific mechanisms, practical ways and measures to direct development intercultural and interreligious dialogue. The Assembly of people of Kazakhstan is ready to collaborate with UN in this direction", - said Deputy Chairman of the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan E. Tugzhanov in an interview with UN Radio. Thus, during 17 years of independence in the country there formed Kazakhstan's model of multiethnic society between representatives of over 130 nationalities living in republic. From this point of view, the Assembly of people of Kazakhstan plays an important role as an institution in the field of national policy.

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Resumen: En el presente artículo, se realiza un estudio del proceso de formación y desarrollo de la “Asamblea de la Gente” de Kazakstán como una nueva institución para prestar consentimiento internacional y caracterizada por la tolerancia interétnica en la República de Kazakstán. Los autores revelaron el papel de Asamblea en la política doméstica y externa de Kazakstán desde la independencia. Así, se ponen de relieve, de un lado, el papel de la actividad sociopolítica de la Asamblea en el curso del desarrollo positivo de tendencias etnopolíticas en la república Kazajstán; de otro, su estructura propia de un Estado legal, de la Asamblea de la Gente de Kazakstán como un nuevo cuerpo constitucional en la república de Kazakstán. En definitiva, se muestra la función positiva de esta institución de Kazajstán, modelo de sociedad multiétnica.

Palabras clave: Asamblea de la Gente de Kazakstán (APK), asambleas regionales (ciudad de estado republicano, capital), estructura del APK, Sesión de APK, Consejo de APK, Personal (Secretaría) de APK, Doctrina de Kazakstán unidad nacional, unidad nacional, comunidad de valores, tolerancia, Mazhilis del Parlamento de la república de Kazakstán. ¿Asamblea de la Gente de Kazakstán (APK)? establecimiento sin formación de persona jurídica, formada por el presidente de la república de Kazakstán, promoviendo desarrollo de realización estatal de políticas nacionales. ¿asambleas regionales (¿ciudad de estado republicano, capital)? Los establecimientos sin la formación de la persona jurídica formada por el akims de áreas (la ciudad del estado republicano, capital) qué actividad es coordinada por la Asamblea. la estructura de la Asamblea de la Gente de Kazakstán es formada por la Sesión de Asamblea, Consejo de Asamblea, Personal (la Secretaría) de la Asamblea, asambleas regionales (ciudades del estado republicano, capitales). ¿Sesión de Asamblea de la Gente de Kazakstán? la reunión de miembros de la Asamblea de la gente de Kazakstán es el cuerpo de supervisión más alto de la Asamblea de la Gente de Kazakstán. El consejo de la Asamblea de la Gente de Kazakstán es un cuerpo colegial formado de miembros de la Asamblea: representantes de uniones culturales ethno, líderes de asambleas regionales (ciudad de estado republicano, capital), de cuerpos estatales. El personal (la Secretaría) de la Asamblea de la Gente de Kazakstán es un cuerpo trabajador de la Asamblea que firma la Administración de presidente de la república de Kazakstán, cuyas actividades son reguladas por la legislación de la república de Kazakstán. La doc-

trina de Kazakstán unidad nacional - el programa se desarrolló con una vista de mantenimiento del consentimiento de interfe y consentimiento interétnico, unidad civil en la república de Kazakstán. unidad nacional - integridad de existencia de comunidades étnicas como una parte del grado estatal, alto uniforme de autoidentificación de ciudadanos del país con república de Kazakstán, con sistema existente de valores e ideales. la comunidad de valores - una base de la unidad nacional de la sociedad de Kazakstán que están cerca de la mayoría aplastante de la gente de Kazakstán y consolidan una sociedad en un todo solo. ¿tolerancia? reflexión de tendencias globales en refuerzo de diálogo intercultural e intercivilisation. Mazhilis del Parlamento de la república de Kazakstán - la cámara del Parlamento que consiste en 107 autoridades, voto directo seleccionado por ciudadanos de república de Kazakstán.