The UN applauds Saudi Arabia’s efforts in promoting disability rights

Nathalie Fustier
Highlights on Saudi Efforts in Combating Trafficking in Persons Crimes

“Rules governing the reception of victims of Trafficking in Persons crimes, including their accommodation in shelter homes”.

Such rules included several measures to be taken by the competent authorities, whether in the course of arrest, investigation or prosecution, including:

- Receiving such persons in a suitable place.
- Drawing up a record which provides informing the victim of their legal rights.
- Using a language that they understand.
- Their right to seek legal, medical and psychological assistance.
- Their right to request the provision of shelter; and that the law enforcement authority notifies the Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons of the case immediately.
- Refer the arrested person to the competent shelter immediately upon completion, recording their statements in case there is a reason for providing them with shelter.
- Shelter homes will receive victims without condition or restriction and conduct the necessary medical examinations for the victim and provide them with the required medical and psychological care.
- Decide on the stay of the foreign victim in the Kingdom.

The said rules also include some tasks for the Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons, including:

- Monitoring the situation of the victim to ensure that he is not abused again.
- Supporting him to have a safe return to his native country or to his place of residence in any other country when he so requests.
- Recommend during the investigation or trial phase that the foreign victim be kept in the Kingdom and resolve his legal situation to be able to have a job.
The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is witnessing accelerating developments and unprecedented steps at all levels, especially in the field of protecting human rights, upon the guidance and support of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, who led the wheel of reforms, development and modernization throughout government agencies. The Kingdom witnessed about 60 reform decisions, the forefront of which is the launch of the Kingdom's vision 2030.

A Royal Order approved putting a national human rights strategy that includes all principles and foundations that aim to protect and promote human rights, and work to incorporate academic curricula in this field at higher education institutions. A Royal Decree was also issued, approving a memorandum of understanding for technical cooperation between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Human Rights Commission, and the International Organization for Migration with the aim of strengthening cooperation in combating trafficking in persons. This is in addition to Cabinet's decisions adopting the food security strategy, the national environment strategy, and the establishment of the national center to measure the performance of public bodies.

The Kingdom has also paid great attention to the promotion and protection of women's rights, and hastened steps to do so, as women have gained the lion's share of newly adopted package of 22 reform decisions.

In the field of protecting children's rights, a specialized center was established to receive complaints of domestic violence, including child abuse, negligence and exploitation, and a toll-free line established to support children and, accordingly, a number of programs and projects in the field of childhood were also launched, a new body was set up to look after their affairs, several programs and projects that promote their rights.

Several legal frameworks were issued to protect and promote human rights, the most prominent of which was the fight against harassment, Juveniles, NGOs, foundations, and distinguished residency "Iqama" system, in addition to organizing the alimony fund.

Finally, the Kingdom's reform process is continuing under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz to achieve sustainable development and the well-being of citizens, while ensuring the best levels of protection and promotion of human rights.

We look forward to another year of strong working relations with various ministries and United Nations along with International Agencies to Protect and Promote Human Rights in the Kingdom.
Empowering women has become a social reality no one can deny, especially in the work place. It is a by-product of empowering women’s rights, advancing their status in society.

On November 20th, Saudi Arabia celebrated the International Day of the Child. The Kingdom marked the occasion, as it does every year, with several events at the HRC and other agencies in various regions and cities.

Mandate specified in the Law of Procedures before Shaira Courts completes the specialized court system. It creates the necessary legal channels for labor cases and allows the selection of specialized labor judges from the Supreme Council of Magistracy.
Studies and research at the collegial level in Saudi universities focused much attention on the rights of persons with disabilities. Among the body of research conducted is a master's degree thesis entitled: “The Rights of Persons with Disabilities under Saudi Law: A Comparative Study”.

Denial of Rights and Exploitation on Innocence: Child Labor

Worker’s rights in case of work injuries, pursuant to the Saudi Labor Law
Vision 2030 Picks Up the Pace of Empowering Women and Protecting Their Rights
HRC President Thanks the Nation’s Sage Leadership for the Council of Minister’s Ratification of the Arab Protocol to Combat and Eliminate Trafficking in Persons

HRC President Dr. Awad Al Awwad extended his gratitude and thanks to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense – may God protect them – for the Council of Minister’s Ratification of the Arab Protocol to Combat and Eliminate Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. He also thanked them for the council’s ratification of the Arab Protocol to Prevent and Combat Maritime Piracy and Armed Robbery. Both protocols are annexed to and complete the Arab Agreement to Combat Transnational Organized Crime. Dr. Al Awwad reiterated the government’s commitment to the preservation of human rights and dignity. He added that Saudi Arabia put much focus on combating trafficking in persons crimes by passing legislations and signing agreements, protocols, and memoranda of understanding with pertinent international organizations.

Describing trafficking in persons as one of the most heinous crimes that violate a person’s rights and rob them of their freedom and dignity, Dr. Al Awwad stressed Saudi Arabia’s efforts in building a legal and institutional framework to indiscriminately protect individuals against trafficking crimes. This framework further enhances the prosecution and indictment of the perpetrators, ensuring they receive deterrent penalties and that victims receive the health, psychological, and legal assistance they need.

Dr. Al Awwad commended Saudi Arabia’s persistent efforts to protect and promote human rights in all fields based on its values, principles, and a commitment to the idea that those who live on Saudi soil are capable of enjoying the rights accorded to them by law.

HRC Commends Amendments to the Laws of Travel Documents and Personal Status

HRC stressed that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has been “making steady progress in terms of consecutive reforms and reviews of laws and regulations towards the empowerment and enablement of women, in accordance with our religious fundamentals, social values and our moderate approach, to preserve rights and identify duties, in line with the Saudi Vision 2030 that regards women as a key active partner. This is evident through the numerous national programs and initiatives that scales up ambitions in terms of women’s participation in development and economy, amid all the progress and success made across various domains.”

HRC issued a statement commending the Council of Ministers decision amending or revoking some articles and paragraphs under the Laws of Travel Documents, Personal Status, Labor and Social Insurance, in line with the women enablement movement that have accelerated in recent years, given that reforms and developments have been largely focusing on the empowerment of women and promotion and protection of their rights. As for the Law of Travel Documents, HRC affirmed that its amendments have protected the right of every Saudi citizen to apply and receive a passport, given that passports and travel permits shall be granted to persons under guardianship (or custody) and minors with deceased guardians in accordance with the provisions of the implementing regulations.

As for the Personal Status Law, HRC noted that a number of articles were amended to include provisions such as linking the domicile of a minor to the domicile of their parents or guardians; entitling mothers to register births or a relative, where previously it was only restricted to male relatives; and entitling wives to report marriages, divorces, remarriages, divorces by repudiation and khul (divorce initiated by the wife), and obtain the family register from the Civil Status Department. The amendments also included that the title of the head of the household may be attributed to the father or the mother of the minors in the household.

HRC Reviews Anti-Trafficking in Persons Efforts in the Madinah Region

At the directive of the HRC President and Chairman of its Anti-Trafficking in Persons Committee, a team was formed of the Committee members and general secretariat and tasked with visiting anti-trafficking entities in all regions of the Kingdom, beginning with the Madinah Region. The team first visited the Anti-Vagrancy Office and the Shelter for Domestic Workers in Madinah on Wednesday, 30/10/1440 H. During the visit, the team introduced the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law, the indicators of the exploitation of persons in forced begging, the indicators of the exploitation of domestic workers, and the rules governing the admission of victims of trafficking in persons as per Article 15 of the Law. The team reviewed the services provided to domestic workers, and drew the attention of the managers of such shelters to the importance of appointing a specialist who follows up on the cases of domestic workers in the labor court and coordinates with the Public Prosecution and regional police in the event of the relapse of begging cases referred to them. On the next day, the team visited the branches of the Public Prosecution and the police in the region to review their anti-trafficking in persons efforts and encourage to spare no effort towards the protection of society from such crimes.
Pledge of Allegiance

With hearts filled with love, peace, security, generosity, and pride in our accomplishment, the people of this country are witnessing the wheel of development and modernization turning in all walks of life as government agencies and institutions work together to implement educational, health, and developmental projects across the Kingdom.

Monumental Achievements
Since pledging allegiance to King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has witnessed monumental achievements across its expanse in various economic, educational, health, social, transportation, industrial, electrical, water, and agricultural sectors. All in all, these achievements also represent huge achievements in human rights and reflect a keen interest in the welfare of citizens and expatriates living in Saudi Arabia. This puts the Kingdom in a different ranking among the world's most developed countries. Saudi Arabia witnessed effective efforts and activities over the past year as well as many developmental leaps that have lit and continue to light the path for a proud nation, a nation that stands tall among the world's most advanced. It is because of this that Saudis will take pride in their country as it continues to progress in all fields. The Kingdom has also made significant contributions in the humanitarian and refugee relief fields through the financial and in-kind donations it made to UN and international organizations, regional development funds, and humanitarian philanthropic funds. Saudi Arabia donated 3.49 billion riyals ($929 million) through 489 contributions that went to a plethora of sectors and funds including budgets, development organizations general program funds, UN and international organizations emergency humanitarian aid and relief, regional and international social organizations.

Women’s Status
Saudi women are playing a key and effective role under the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques. The country has seen a succession of decisions aimed at empowering women, including the July Council of Ministers decisions and subsequent royal decrees amending the Travel Documents and Civil Affairs Law in support of women. The law now allows women to apply for and acquire passports just as men do. They may also travel upon reaching 21 years and may register their own newborn babies.
Empowering women has become a social reality no one can deny, especially in the workplace. It is a by-product of empowering women’s rights, advancing their status in society, and the access they gained in all walks of life under the direction of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and His Royal Highness the Crown Prince whose decisions reflect great commitment to women’s success in life and in the workplace.
Supporting Legislation

Article 8 of the Basic Law of Government prohibits discrimination against women. Saudi laws are complementary in prohibiting discrimination against women. Several legislations also contain provisions that prohibit other forms of discrimination, including racial discrimination and discrimination on the basis of disability. The Labor Law, the Health Law. This includes the Law of Civil Service. As members of the Shura Council, Saudi women participate in political and public life in general at the official and unofficial levels. 20% at minimum of the Shura Council’s seats have been reserved for women.

The Basic Law of Government Prohibits Discrimination against Women
The Labor Law contains provisions under which men and women are treated equally in terms of obligations within its legal framework. For example, Article 1 stipulates that all citizens have an equal right to work. Additionally, the law contains provisions that could be perceived as affirmative action in the case of women. This includes prohibitions on employing women in dangerous professions, hazardous industries, jobs seen as detrimental to the worker’s health, or jobs that may subject women to hazards listed in Article 149. Women may not be terminated from employment due to illness related to pregnancy or childbirth according to Article 156 of the law. The Minister of Labor further issued a decision on August 28, 2010, which “prohibits any form of discrimination in pay between men and women who perform work of equal value.”

Affirmative Action

Saudi Women Gain a Foothold in the Labor Market Many Opportunities

Manu Opportunities

Saudi Arabia’s Vision 2030 presents an important chance to leverage the local women labor force. Saudi women have been on the list of priorities for this vision, which set as a goal raising the number of women in the work force, developing women’s talents, investing in their energy, and enabling them to participate in social and economic development.

These new reforms are starting to take shape with Vision 2030 which, not only has allowed women to participate in practical life, but also stirred other important issues such the resistance to women in sports and the fact that physical education is not taught in girls schools. Perhaps one of the initiatives under the vision may require allocating 10 million riyals to improve licensing procedures for women’s sports centers. This would mean more opportunities for women in the work force.

Increasing the Percentage

It is expected that Vision 2030 will open up numerous fields for Saudi women who have waited long for this opportunity that will eventually allow some to take on leadership positions in the country in the years to come, especially that women constitute a large percentage of university graduates. Vision 2030 will offer women support by developing their talents, investing in their energy, and enabling them to access suitable opportunities in the work force. This runs in parallel with Saudi Arabia’s widespread plans for economic reform as it presents proposals for a social transition that creates room for women. Analysts and economists see Vision 2030 as delivering a new model of Saudi women. It is expected to raise the percentage of women in the work force to 30% as well as increase their numbers in senior civil service positions.

Goals of the Unified System Initiative for Women’s Work Environment

Enhancing an attractive work environment for women

Advancing the presence of women in the labor force

Attracting women to the private sector and empowering them
This women’s center aims to create more than 20 thousand employment opportunities for Saudi women over the next 10 years in the services sector, financing, accounting, human resources, and clerical services.

The General Authority for Vocational and Technical Training announced it would start operating 4 specialized centers for remote work for women in an attempt to achieve the goals of Vision 2030 and tap into Saudi women’s energies.

Any difference in labor wage for equal-value work is prohibited.

The Language of Numbers
Women have been given the opportunity to work within the economic development program. Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Development Ahmed bin Saleh Al Humeidan highlighted that more than 400 thousand jobs suited to Saudi men and women in terms of pay and work environment will be created every year as the vision aiming to reduce unemployment rates from 11.6% to 7%.

Finding Employment

Princess Nura University
City: Riyadh
Founded in H 1427
Operated in H 1428
Saudi Arabia has focused on the right of prisoners to connect with the community in view of the positive impact such connections have on prisoners' behavior inside the correctional facility. This helps with prisoners’ rehabilitation and allows them to reintegrate in community after serving their sentences as it rids them of the criminal propensity that led to their incarceration in the first place. Prison is a social facility that plays a role. It is essentially an educational institution through which the prisoner is reborn and emerges as an upright and productive member of the community.
Domestic Rights
Connection occurs through regular visits from friends and family members of prisoners, which is important for the inmate and the visitor alike. The visit serves to strengthen blood ties and intra-familial ties. Prisoners also have the right to process transactions, marry, and visit family members outside the prison facility if they submit proof that their family is unable to visit them. Inmates with family members in the same city may visit with them for no less than 24 hours. Inmates who have family members in a city other than that in which they are incarcerated are given 72 hours temporary release, which allows them to spend as much time as possible with their families. This also allows inmates to take care of their families. The privilege is extended to inmates who have already served half their prison sentence.

Privileges and Incentives
Prisoners are given certain privileges and incentives that help them stay connected to the outside world and rehabilitate them to prevent regression to crime. As indicated in Article 2 of the Prison and Detention Law and the Bylaw on Visiting and Corresponding with Prisoners and Detainees, these privileges include prisoners’ ability to bring in food at their own expense, wear their own clothing, and receive non-prohibited gifts. Additionally, the Minister of Interior’s Decision in 1411H. allows inmates who have served 3+ months of their sentences to have conjugal visits once every month for 3 hours. Correctional facilities have set up appropriate rooms for such visits, away from the eyes of prison workers and visitors, and have furnished them accordingly. The same decision allows prisoners with good conduct who have already served more than half their prison sentence and a minimum of one year the right to take 24 hours of leave outside the correctional facility for conjugal visits.
Privileges and Incentives Connecting Inmates to the Outside World

Correctional Programs

Correctional programs encourage prisoners to join various reform programs. These include vocational, educational, cultural, and religious programs, which add licensing to other privileges. Temporary release hours may be doubled from 24 to 48 for prisoners who sign up for, commit to, and benefit from these programs.

Visits may be permitted on days/times other than general visit times when necessary. Inmates may receive their visitors and interact with them face-to-face in prison offices during or after business hours.

Inmates are also allowed contact with the outside world through mail and telephone. Call booths have been installed to allow prisoners to contact family and friends which conveniently allows them to take care of family issues.

Family Day

Saudi correcational facilities run what is known as “The Family Day Program.” Special housing units have been constructed specifically to host family days. These facilities are fully equipped and furnished and are used as places where inmates could spend time with their wives and children from morning until evening as they might do in their own homes.

Privileges and incentives are given to prisoners with exemplary conduct. They also serve as incentives for prisoners who see in themselves the ability to adapt to the various reform programs made available to them, leave behind their past reprehensible acts, and look to a brighter future. It encourages them to work hard to achieve exemplary status in order to access these unique and important privileges.

The General Prisons Directorate

Year Founded: 1388H.
Mandate: Reports to the executive authority
Headquarters: Riyadh

Privileges and Incentives Connecting Inmates to the Outside World

- Ability to connect with the outside world via telephone and mail
- Permission to bring in food at their own expense
- Permission to wear their own clothes and receive gifts
- Chances for conjugal visits
- Access to vocational, educational, and religious programs
Paragraph 6, Article 5, of the Human Rights Commission Law gives the HRC the right to conduct visits to prison facilities and detention centers at any time, without prior notice, and write reports based on such visits. This mandate is a reflection of the importance of prison visits in assessing the extent to which sentenced and detained prisoners are able to access rights owed to them under Sharia and relevant Saudi laws and the level to which this complies with the international standards for prisoners’ rights.

Paragraph (d), Article 11, lists the responsibilities of the HRC’s Oversight and Investigation Department. It requires investigations to be conducted if necessitated by suspicion of violation of human rights. The HRC steps up visits to prisons and detention facilities through specific programs and annual plans. Visits are conducted as rounds, surprise visits, or visits in response to complaints to the HRC or issues highlighted on social media platforms, or other channels of monitoring.

Several prison facilities have unique building designs and inmate wards that allow inmates to access reform programs or leave the facility for specified periods to attend weddings, funerals, visit an incapacitated parent who is unable to visit their child in prison, and attend college or school. Correction centers use the Tawasul system to log prisoners’ data and information and facilitate communication between inmates and their families. Tawasul is also used by inmates to file visitation and temporary release requests, submit proposals, and file complaints or expenses. Once a month, inmates are granted temporary release to spend one full day with their families.
The government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques is deeply committed to disability rights and aims to see these rights promoted, protected, and made accessible at the highest standards. Vision 2030 stands in testament to this policy with components that ensure empowering disabled persons. Saudi Arabia has also taken numerous legislative and institutional steps in this direction. Among these measures was the promulgation of the Disability Care Law, which provides a legal framework for the protection of disabled persons. Saudi Arabia further established the Commission for the Care of Disabled Persons, adopted the Labor Law bylaw and its annexes, established the King Salman Center for Disability Research, and enacted the Anti-Harassment Law among other things.
The Assistant UN Resident Representative acknowledged that Saudi Arabia made progress on the labor and social welfare fronts of disability care through Tawafuq, a program that aims to employ and encourage establishments to employ persons with disabilities. Moreover, Tawafuq makes social welfare payments to families caring for disabled persons and establishes and supports institutions and centers that run care and rehabilitation programs.

**A Value-based Heritage**
Saudi Arabia’s value-based Islamic heritage encourages the promotion of disability rights. Given that promotion of disability rights is an ongoing process, periodical reviews of legislations, institutional performance, and related measures are necessary to ensure compliance with criteria set forth by Saudi laws as well as regional and international agreements.

**International Commendations**
UN Resident Coordinator Nathalie Fustier said the UN commends Saudi Arabia for its distinguished efforts in promoting disability rights through partnerships with stakeholders and disability workers aimed at increasing the participation of persons with disabilities in determining the challenges they face. She added that the workshop recently organized by the HRC to discuss disability issues in education, work, health, security, habilitation, and rehabilitation is considered a best practice, both in implementing human rights agreements, and during the various stages of national reporting which include consultation and dialogue. Saudi Arabia’s ratification of the 2008 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its optional protocol reflects a commitment to promoting disability rights in accordance with local Saudi laws and international human rights.
The General Authority for Technical and Vocational Training plays a role and participates in promoting disability rights by prioritizing technical and vocational habilitation for disabled persons. The authority enrolls persons with disabilities in all specialties wherever the nature of the disability is suited to the work the disabled person wishes to train for. This allows disabled persons to integrate with other trainees.

Training and Habilitation

The General Authority for Technical and Vocational Training plays a role and participates in promoting disability rights by prioritizing technical and vocational habilitation for disabled persons. The authority enrolls persons with disabilities in all specialties wherever the nature of the disability is suited to the work the disabled person wishes to train for. This allows disabled persons to integrate with other trainees.

Saudi efforts in the area of disability rights have also garnered international attention. Assistant UN Resident Representative Maysam Wafiq Tamim noted that Saudi Arabia has made progress on disability rights under the convention. This was done through continued work to increase the number of associations and habilitation centers and raise the quality of services provided to persons with disabilities.

The Education Field

Local legislations and international agreements further protect the rights of disabled persons to education. Saudi Arabia’s education policy pays special attention to disabled persons and sets special educational, cultural, and training curricula that vary according to the condition of the learner. The policy addresses needs such as educational materials or compensatory equipment that may be required. The total number of disabled students in Saudi Arabia, including kindergarten students and adult learners, is 76,514 with varying types and degrees of disability. The Ministry of Education’s plan aims to provide educational services at 12% of the total number of students enrolled in higher education institutions by 2030, and 50% of the total number of students enrolled in the school system by 2030.
Judicial Efforts

Judicial authorities have made significant contributions to the services of persons with disabilities, a posture that stands in testament to Saudi Arabia’s commitment and responsibility toward human rights. Article 26 of the Basic Law of Government states that: “The state shall protect human rights in accordance with Sharia.” Article 24 further states that: “The state shall guarantee the rights of the citizens and their families in cases of emergency, illness, disability, and old age. The state shall uphold the Social Insurance Law and encourage organizations and individuals to participate in philanthropic activities.” Numerous other laws and regulations have given persons with disabilities other rights.

Development and Social Programs

The Ministry of Labor and Social Development has played a major role in providing services to persons with disabilities. The ministry runs numerous programs and services, including rehabilitation centers for the disabled and Tawafuq, a program that allows applicant data collection and matching disabled persons with appropriate jobs. The ministry runs social ha-
bilitation centers, day care centers, and vocational habilitation centers with the aim of improving the quality of services provided to persons with disabilities.

The Civil Service
The Ministry of Civil Service has also given special attention to persons with disabilities. The ministry works to support and empower persons with disabilities to ensure their participation in the government given that they are one of the primary contributing groups to the Kingdom’s Vision 2030 which aims to raise public sector efficiency. Recent policy is moving in the direction of dealing with disabled persons with sustainable opportunities in mind, which requires habilitating them to occupy value added jobs on a sustainable basis and ensuring they are properly matched with jobs suited to their disabilities. This would allow disabled persons to transition from dependency on assistance to sustainable employment.

The Role of Public Security
Like other government agencies, Public Security is moving in the direction of empowering persons with disabilities, enabling them to live independently, and facilitating their access to public and government places. This includes modeling Public Security buildings, passages, and hallways to ensure accessibility; giving disabled persons priority parking near their homes; waiving traffic violations for parking in the wrong place if specific parking is not available for the disabled; opening driving schools for the disabled; and facilitating filing police reports.

Services Provided by the Kingdom for Persons with Disabilities

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia’s education policy pays special attention to persons with disabilities and sets special and varied education, cultural, and training curricula.</td>
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<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Providing health services to persons with disabilities at 284 hospital and health institution as well as 2,390 primary care centers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Enrolling persons with disabilities in all training specialties as long as the disability is suited to the work they are training for.</td>
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<td>04</td>
<td>Assigning a disabled parking spot near homes of persons with disabilities and waiving traffic violations.</td>
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<td>05</td>
<td>Recent policy is moving in the direction of dealing with disabled persons in the work force by providing sustainable employment opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Social habilitation centers, day care centers, vocational training centers, and improving quality of services provided to persons with disabilities.</td>
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Labor Courts: Rights to Obligations

Saudi Arabia opened labor courts in order to create a safe and attractive labor environment and a stable labor market. Opening labor courts and allowing them to operate under the mandate specified in the Law of Procedures before Shaira Courts completes the specialized court system. It creates the necessary legal channels for labor cases and allows the selection of specialized labor judges from the Supreme Council of Magistracy. In the opening of these courts, specific selection criteria based on competence, knowledge, and experience were taken into account. “Labor courts have jurisdiction over law suits filed under the labor law”
Labor courts have jurisdiction over lawsuits filed under the labor law. These types of cases include disputes over pay, contracts, and rights; work-related injuries and compensations thereof; disputes related to disciplinary action taken by the employer against the employee or requests to have such actions repealed; law suits seeking penalties specified in the Labor Law; or disputes arising from the application of the Labor Law and the Social Insurance Law. According to Ministry of Labor and Social Development reports, 73% of all verdicts are linked to compensation cases. The rate of verdicts issued per day ranges from 99 to 412 representing a daily average of 196.

Labor disputes between workers and employers go through a three-stage process:
- Amicable Resolution: “The investigator provides the service with 21 days and attempts to reconcile the disputants in an effort to reach an amicable agreement.”
- Court of First Instance: “The case is referred to a judge at the Court of First Instance who works to broker an amicable agreement between the parties or issues a verdict in the case within four sessions.”
- Supreme Court: “The case is referred to a Supreme Court circuit where the judges, having listened to arguments from both parties, review the verdict issued by the Court of First Instance. They either amend the verdict or uphold it.”
Underage marriage is one of the most serious problems facing societies in various countries, and one that has negative ramifications. According to UNICEF’s definition, under age marriage is the formal marriage or unofficial attachment of a child under the age of 18. While the facts show that this happens to both boys and girls, girls are disproportionately affected by the problem. The negative effects of this kind of marriages involve physical, psychological, and social problems to underage mothers and their newborns, which creates an additional economic burden to both the health and the social welfare sectors. One of the results of the spread of underage marriages is a rise in the rate education dropout.
Saudi Arabia is moving in the direction of curbing underage marriages. At its regular 14th session in January 2019, the Shura Council passed underage marriage regulations relegating the authority to execute marriage contracts for males and females under the age of 18 to the concerned court, or an authority functioning on behalf of the court in accordance with the regulations governing the matter.

The decision followed a review of the position of the Islamic and Legal Affairs Committee whose members provided their views and opinions during deliberations on the question of early and underage marriages for girls at a previous committee hearing presided over by Chairman of the Committee Dr. Ali Al Shahrani.

The Shura Council decision calls for banning the execution of marriage contracts involving males and females under the age of 15. According to the regulations set forth by the council, the authority to execute marriage contracts involving individuals between the ages of 15 and 18 rests with the pertinent court, or an authority acting on behalf of the court.

### Binding Regulations

Saudi media outlets have reported that the regulations passed by the Shura Council include the following: securing the consent of the girl and her mother, and providing a medical report from a specialized committee that attests to the girl’s physical and psychological ability to marry. The husband’s age may not exceed double that of the wife and the marriage contract must be executed by a pertinent judge.

The Shura Council was scheduled to deliberate legal regulations on early marriage age last December, but the Islamic and Legal Affairs Committee requested time to study the matter. Assistant Speaker of the Shura Council Yahya Al Sam’an said: “The council made its decision having reviewed the position of the Islamic and Legal Affairs Committee and the comments and views of its members on the matter.”

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**Marriage Contract Regulations for Individuals 15-18 Years**

1. **The Shura Council**
   - **Members:** 150
   - **Number of Seats:** 150
   - **Meeting Venue:** Al Yamama Palace, Riyadh

2. **The marriage contract must be executed by a pertinent judge**

3. **The husband’s age may not exceed twice the age of the wife**

4. **A medical report confirming the girl’s ability to marry**

5. **The consent of the girl and her mother**
UNICEF reports indicate that evidence shows girls who marry at an early age often drop out of the education system and become pregnant. Maternal mortality related to pregnancy and childbirth are a strong factor in the death of girls ages 15-19 around the world with the death toll reaching 70 thousand per year.

Mothers under the age of 18 face a 60% higher chance of their newborn baby dying in their first year than mothers age 19 or older. Even if the child survives, they run a higher risk of being under weight, malnourished, or physically and mentally under-developed. Girls who marry in their childhood years are at risk of domestic violence, according to UNICEF reports. Finally, child marriage often leads to separation from family and friends as well as lack of freedom to participate in social activities which could have far reaching ramifications on the mental and physical prosperity of such girls.

HRC Efforts
For over five years, the HRC has led relentless efforts, in collaboration with the pertinent agencies, to look into a mechanism that would set an appropriate marriage to safeguard girls’ interests and protect them against those who do not fear God or those who would abuse their guardianship. The HRC pushed for legislation that offers girls protection and safeguards their rights and interests first and foremost. In doing so, it has studied a number of cases in recent years in which girls’ rights were abused, hence the need to combat the phenomenon and pass legislation that regulates it and penalize those who violate those regulations.

Maternal Mortality

UNICEF reports indicate that evidence shows girls who marry at an early age often drop out of the education system and become pregnant. Maternal mortality related to pregnancy and childbirth are a strong factor in the death of girls ages 15-19 around the world with the death toll reaching 70 thousand per year.

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Children of Saudi Women ..

Rights and Privileges

Saudi Arabia facilitated many things for the children of Saudi women given the importance and special nature of the issue. It did so in an effort to provide families with secure, stable, and decent lives. The children of Saudi women married to non-Saudi men enjoy the same rights and privileges as children born to Saudi couples.

Special Arrangements

The HRC shed light on the arrangements in place for the children of Saudi women married to non-Saudi men. This includes giving those of them living in the Kingdom residency permits. Saudi mothers have the right to issue residency visas for children living abroad so they may live with their mothers in the Kingdom. In such cases, residency permit fees are waived by the government and they may work in the private sector without the need to transfer sponsorship. They are also counted in private sector Saudization quotas and have the same privileges as Saudis in terms of access to education and healthcare. Other arrangements give Saudi women the right to issue residency visas for foreign husbands, if that husband is residing outside the Kingdom. She may also sponsor her husband if he is residing in the Kingdom. In this case, the residency permit will clearly state that he is the spouse of a Saudi citizen. This allows the husband to work in the private sector. However, regulations stress that the marriage must have occurred with the permission of the pertinent authority, that the marriage contract is authenticated, and that the children of a Saudi mother and a non-Saudi father have identification documents.

Citizenship Rights

Article (8) of the Saudi Citizenship Law gives the children of a Saudi mother and a non-Saudi father the right to apply for citizenship upon reaching the age of majority, provided the following conditions are met: “That the child was a permanent resident of the Kingdom at the time he/she reached the age of majority. The child must have good record and conduct and must not have received a criminal or prison sentence of more than 6 months for a crime of moral turpitude. The child must be proficient in the Arabic language and must apply for citizenship within one year of reaching the age of majority.”

The decision to grant Saudi citizenship to the spouse or children of a Saudi woman or to others is a decision immune to objection or appeal. Under no circumstances may any of those mentioned herein or others object to the decision to deny them Saudi citizenship, even if no reasons are provided for the decision.

The Right to Work

The law gives many rights, privileges, and services to the children of Saudi mothers similar to Saudi citizens. It facilitates a wife’s ability to issue a residency visa for her foreign husband if that husband is residing abroad. It also allows the Saudi wife to take her husband under her sponsorship if that husband is residing in the Kingdom and wishes to do so. In such cases, the spouse’s residency permit clearly states that he is the “husband of a Saudi citizen” and is consequently allowed to work for the private sector. Having the husband sponsored by the wife is an optional, not a compulsory, measure as the husband of Saudi citizens are not obligated to transfer sponsorship to their wives. They may continue on retain the sponsorship of the entity they work for provided they hold a recognized passport that enables them to travel to their home country at any time.

*Concerned authorities must grant permission for the marriage of a Saudi woman to a non-Saudi man*
Accused Rights

The accused shall, when arrested or detained, be informed of the following:

- Reasons for detention or arrest.
- His right to seek assistance of an attorney or an attorney-in-fact during investigation and trial.
- His right to contact any person he may choose to inform him of his arrest or detention.

The accused shall sign a statement to prove his knowledge of the abovementioned rights. If he refuses to sign, a report shall be drafted to this effect.
PREMIUM RESIDENCY PERMIT

Types

1. For an unspecified period.
2. For one renewable year.

Application Requirements

- Hold a valid passport.
- Be at least 21 years of age.
- Provide proof of financial solvency.
- Submit a criminal record proving he has no criminal precedents.
- Provide a medical report, issued in the last six months, proving he has no communicable diseases.
- Be legally residing in the Kingdom if applying from within the Kingdom.

Rights, Privileges, and Obligations

- Residence in the Kingdom with his family.
- Recruitment of domestic workers from abroad according to his needs.
- Ownership of private means of transportation, and other movables the acquisition of which is permitted under the law in the Kingdom.
- Working at private establishments with the ability to change jobs; this shall extend to family members. Professions and jobs limited to Saudis shall be excluded. This privilege shall not prejudice fees applicable to non-Saudis.
- Ownership of real estate for residential, commercial, and industrial purposes, in areas other than the cities of Mecca and Medina and border areas, in accordance with the Regulations.
- Visit visas for relatives, as determined by the Regulations.
- Engagement in business activities, in accordance with the Foreign Investment Law.
- Use of lanes designated for Saudis at the Kingdom’s exit and entry points.
- Usufruct rights on real property located in the cities of Mecca and Medina for a period not exceeding 99 years. The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Commerce and Investment shall set the procedures necessary for obtaining usufruct deeds from a notary public.
- Exiting and entering the Kingdom at his own accord.

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Exiting and entering the Kingdom at his own accord.
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
Studies and research at the collegial level in Saudi universities focused much attention on the rights of persons with disabilities. Among the body of research conducted is a master's degree thesis entitled: "The Rights of Persons with Disabilities under Saudi Law: A Comparative Study". The graduate research was done at Naif University for Security Sciences, School of Islamic Criminal Legislation, by Abdulaziz bin Youssef Al Mutlaq. Al Mutlaq's thesis aims to showcase Islam's focus, in general, and Saudi Arabia's focus in particular on disability rights.
The Media’s Role

Saudi Arabia is also committed to raising public awareness through the media of the types, causes, detection, and prevention of disability. It aims to enhance the social status of persons with disabilities; raise awareness of their rights, needs, capabilities, and contributions to society. It further aims to raise the awareness of persons with disabilities of the services available to them, their responsibility towards themselves, and their role in society.

Achieving Integration

The state supports programs that promote developing the capabilities of persons with disabilities to allow their normal integration in different aspects of life and mitigate the negative effects of disability. This support extends to creating and making cultural and sports facilities and events available so that persons with disabilities are able to participate in domestic and international events suited to their abilities.

The Disabled Care Law

The Disabled Care Law, promulgated on 14/9/1421H under royal decree no. (M/37), which approved the Council of Ministers’ decision no. (224) on 14/9/1421H ratifying the law was a crowning moment in the care and habilitation of persons with disabilities.

The law is comprised of 16 articles. Article (1) defines terminology used in the text of the law which, in turn, defined disability and the disabled. The law went into effect following its publication in the official gazette Um Al Qura. Article (2) speaks of the state guaranteeing the rights of persons with disabilities to access preventive, care, and health sector services provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to persons with disabilities:

- Preventive genetic predisposition guidance services
- Early detection of diseases through clinical and laboratory testing
- Training the families of persons with disabilities on caring for their loved ones
- Raising the standard of medical care provided to persons with disabilities
- Registering new born babies more prone to disability
- Preventive, medical, and habilitation services

Health Sector Services Provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Persons with Disabilities:
Article (5) allows for the extension of professional and commercial start-up soft loans to persons with disabilities to launch businesses suited to their capabilities. These may be individual or group loans. Article (6) stipulates that equipment and devices used by disabled persons may be imported duty free provided they are included on a list of devices approved by the Ministry of Finance and National Economy. Articles (7) through (16) establish the Disability Fund and the Supreme Council for Disability Affairs. The council submits an annual report to the Prime Minister detailing its work and appraising the status of persons with disabilities and services provided. It also provides an update on the difficulties they face and efforts to support disability services. The report further provides information on the council’s session and budget.

Soft Loans

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Thiqa and Ishraqa Centers

Initiatives to integrate inmates and rehabilitate them
ISHRAQA Center

ISHRAQA Center was founded by the General Directorate of Prisons in 1436H. It targets inmates ages 18-35 years old and aims to help drug addicts among the prison inmate populations recover physically and psychologically. The center does so by housing rehabilitated inmates in a special ward designed based on group therapy theories. The ward represents a miniature model community where the inmate learns to share and take on responsibilities. Inmates are also trained to engage in an appropriate manner with other inmates. They share in the responsibility of keeping up the ward in addition to their participation in the medical, psychological, social, religious, and professional guidance programs offered by the center.

The center treats addicts inside the correctional facility by subjecting them to programming designed to return them to the community as upright members, free of addiction. The center aims to help patients recover from addiction, enhance the psychological wellbeing of recovered addicts, and encourage them to forge healthy social relations replacing reprehensible behaviors with creditable ones. ISHRAQA is the first center of its kind in the Saudi prison system. The center has already had notable successes. There are plans to extend the program to all Saudi prisons, including women’s correctional facilities.

The center offers a three-phase treatment program. Each phase lasts 3 months. Phase 1 focuses on treatment programs. Phase 2 introduces habilitation and vocational activities, and phase 3 prepares the inmate to reintegrate into the community following their release.

An Available Job

Upon completing treatment, the inmate graduates the program with a job. The General Directorate of Prisons has signed agreements with supporting agencies, businessmen, and employment companies to match ISHRAQA graduates with jobs right away. More than 200 employment opportunities have been offered to program graduates so far. The inmate receives training during the program to include computer training and other skills. The General Directorate of Prisons facilitated many processes for businessmen and conducted special visits with them to enhance social responsibility and encourage the employment of recovered individuals.
On the International Day of the Child
Saudi Arabia Adopts
Regulatory Measures to
Protect the Child and Develop
Their Potential
On November 20th, Saudi Arabia celebrated the International Day of the Child. The Kingdom marked the occasion, as it does every year, with several events at the HRC and other agencies in various regions and cities. Events included seminars, workshops, and exhibitions that represent the importance and meaning of childhood and shed light on children’s rights.
Applying the Law

Nationally, the rate of physical abuse cases involving children in the Kingdom has recently gone down, according to HRC reports. This reflects increased public awareness among Saudis. It is also the result of the strict application of the law to those who commit violence against children. In 2014, the Ministry of Justice began enforcing the provisions of the Law of Protection against Abuse to address domestic violence. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs set up a 24/7 center to receive domestic violence complaints. This ensures fast intervention and coordination with the appropriate agencies. The Ministry of Education also participated by drafting a law that ensures limiting violence against children in the educational system, intensifying instructions aimed at students, and raising awareness among the student population.

Leadership’s Commitment

His Excellency President of the HRC Dr. Awwad bin Saleh Al Awwad noted the unwavering commitment of the Saudi government under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to the issue of childhood. He noted the government’s desire to create a safe and healthy environment for children that enables them to develop their potential and skills and protects them both mentally and psychologically. The government stepped up its efforts by passing legislations including the Child Protection Law, the Law of Protection against Abuse, the Anti-Harassment Law, the Juvenile Law, and the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law. It also launched numerous projects and programs such as the National Family Safety Program, the National Child Strategy Project, the Anti School Peer Bullying Project, and Kindergarten Personal Safety Project, RIFQ – a project that aims to reduce violence against school children – in addition to other initiatives and projects that protect and enhance the rights of the child.

Al Awwad made this statement during his inauguration of the Bullying and Children’s Rights Workshop organized by the HRC at its headquarters in Riyadh on November 20th to mark the International Day of the Child. 50 government agencies and NGOs participated alongside legal experts, specialists, and elementary school children.

Protecting Children

Al Awwad stressed that the International Day of the Child offers an inspiring gateway to the protection, promotion, and celebration of children’s rights. “These protections must translate into discussions and measures that build a better world for children, which is why the HRC is using this workshop to shed light on an issue that has expanded globally, creating a status quo that dictates the issue be addressed at the local level as well.” Saudi Arabia eagerly engaged in talks with partners to devise mechanism to support child protection against bullying. Discussions included ways of isolating the phenomenon, addressing it, and new tools and initiatives to do so.

International Day of the Child

Initiated in 1950

Celebrated on November 20th

Based on a 1954 UN General Assembly recommendation
Saudi Arabia reiterates its commitment to preserving children’s rights without distinction based on gender or ethnicity. In fact, the Kingdom is committed to preserving the child’s rights before he/she is born, including their right to life, breast feeding, child support, protection, education, and health care.

The Basic Law

The Kingdom has focused much attention on the rights of children. It passed legislations, based on the revered provisions of Islamic Shari’a, and in compliance with international conventions designed to safeguard these rights. Saudi Arabia also put in effect national monitoring and oversight mechanisms to ensure the effective enforcement of children’s rights laws in effect. It devised the National Child Protection Strategy to enhance the capabilities of institutions that deal with children and their families in accordance with the Kingdom’s 2030 vision for sustainable development.

The Basic Law of Government further guarantees the right of every family member to care and comprehensive protection. The law focused special attention on every aspect of the child’s interests, including the provision of free health care such as free mandatory inoculations. The law also guarantees children, both male and female, free education from elementary through college and the government dispenses stipends as incentives to college students.

Preserving Rights

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia the rights of children without distinction based on gender or race. These rights are preserved before the child is born and include the child’s right to life, breast feeding, child support, protection, education, and health care. Of note in this matter is the Secretary General’s recommendation in a report entitled: The Female Child on educating girls. The Secretary General writes that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia focused much attention on developing education and physical education programs for girls. It has also awarded many scholarships to top-tier international universities and offered training at the best scientific centers at the government’s expense.

Employing Children


As a result, a circular was issued by His Royal Highness the Minister of Interior and Chairman of the Labor Force Council to all regions and pertinent government agencies to take the necessary measures to prevent the employment of children in street vending and other jobs all over the country.

Islamic Perspective

On the Islamic side, Saudi Arabia also ratified the Organization of Islamic Conference’s Covenant on the Rights of the Child under Islam. It ratified the 10-year plan adopted at the OIC Summit at Mecca Third Extraordinary Session in 1426H. The plan contains several important factors related to the child as it underscores the importance of making free quality elementary education available to all children. The plan further calls for enhancing laws that aim to ensure suitable care for children, including top quality health care, putting in place effective measures to eradicate polio, and protecting children against all forms of violence and exploitation. It encourages member states to ratify the OIC Covenant on the Rights of the Child in Islam, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Islam, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and Attached Protocols on the Rights of the Child.

Saudi Arabia remains committed to working with the UN, the international community, and international child right organizations to participate in enhancing and protection children’s rights.
Measures to Protect Women’s Rights
Measures and Legislations

Saudi Arabia put in place a number of measures to empower women and protect their rights. The most prominent of these measures has been the creation of the Encyclopedia of Legal Sentences, a royal order instructing all pertinent government agencies to eliminate the requirement that women secure their guardian’s approval before accessing services or initiating procedures, especially in matters related to travel or residency. Legislations and laws were passed to protect women. These laws include the Law of Protection against Abuse and its bylaw. The government also created a domestic violence helpline to receive tips and complaints. The helpline serves as added protection and has contributed to combating all forms of violence against women. In an effort to promote freedom of movement, a royal order was issued enforcing the provisions of the Traffic Law and its bylaws, including the issuance of driving licenses to both men and women.

Enough Violence

The HRC organized a seminar entitled “Enough Violence” to mark the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The event drew wide attendance and participation in various sessions. Dr. Maha Al Munif, Dr. Hala Al Tuwajiri, and Dr. Ghada Al Ghoneim participated in a session entitled: “The Standard Framework of Protection Women against Violence.”

The seminar shed light on the role of civil society organizations in limiting violence against women, the economic side effects of violence against women, and the national and international legal framework to eliminate violence against women. The seminar discussed recent leaps in women’s rights in Saudi Arabia, including for instance, amendments to the Law of Civil Affairs, the Travel Documents Law, the Labor Law, the Social Insurance Law, the Traffic Law, and others to ensure equality and eliminate gender-based discrimination. The event shed light on efforts to maximize women’s gains in the Kingdom. Vision 2030 gave women’s rights a strong push bringing them in line with agreements signed under the umbrella of the UN and designed to raise women’s participation. These agreements also enhance the protection of women against verbal or physical abuse, discrimination in education or employment, and other rights.
Major Statistics of the Human Rights Commission for the Year 2018

1438 visits to prisons and detention centers to check the rights of convicts and detainees.

338 visits to public prisons

461 visits to public investigation prisons

581 visits to detention centers

44 visits to social observation homes

14 visits to girls’ care institutions

274 visits to governmental agencies to ensure the enforcement of laws.

2726 complaints received

243 abuse cases detected and required measures taken.

350 accused persons attended trial hearings to ensure their obtainment of their legal rights.

2018 also saw the issuance of many decisions that contributed to the support and empowerment of Saudi women and their entry to many new domains.

The Kingdom has reiterated its commitment to the implementation of international resolutions on women empowerment.
### Amendments to the Travel Documents, Labor, and Social Insurance Laws

#### Travel Documents Law

**Before Amendment**

A passport shall be granted to Saudi applicants. The Minister of Interior may, when necessary, issue a temporary passport or laissez-passer to a non-Saudi for use while traveling abroad and re-entry to the Kingdom. The Implementing Regulations shall specify cases where they may be issued or withdrawn as well as the addition of the spouse and children thereto.

A passport may include the bearer’s Saudi wife, unmarried daughters and minor sons, in accordance with the Implementing Regulations.

A separate passport shall be issued to persons under custody, trusteeship or guardianship in accordance with the Implementing Regulations.

**After Amendment**

1. A passport shall be granted to any applicant who has a Saudi citizenship in accordance with the Implementing Regulations.
2. The Minister of Interior may, when necessary, issue a temporary passport or laissez-passer to a non-Saudi for use while traveling abroad and re-entry to the Kingdom. The Implementing Regulations shall specify cases where they may be issued or withdrawn.

### Labor Law

**Definition of a worker, as set out in Article 74, Paragraph 4**

Worker: Any natural person working for an employer and under his management or supervision for a wage, even if he is not under his direct control.

Work is the right of every citizen. No one else may exercise such right unless the conditions provided for in this Law are fulfilled. All citizens are equal in the right to work.

An employer may not terminate the employment of a female worker or give her a warning of the same while on maternity leave.

An employer may not terminate the employment of a female worker during illness resulting from pregnancy or delivery, and such illness shall be established by a certified medical report, provided that the period of her absence does not exceed one hundred and eighty days. The employment of such female worker may not be terminated during the one hundred and eighty days preceding the expected date of delivery in the absence of one of the legitimate causes provided for in this Law.

**Before Amendment**

The worker shall attain the age of retirement, which is sixty years for males and fifty five years for females, unless the two parties agree upon continuing work after this age. The retirement age may be reduced in cases of early retirement as provided for in the work organization regulations. If it is a fixed-term work contract which extends beyond the retirement age, it shall terminate at the end of its term.

An employer may not terminate the employment of a female worker or give her a warning of the same while on maternity leave.

### Social Insurance Law

**Before Amendment**

A female contributor, who is no longer subject to the provisions of this Law, may receive her due pension upon attaining the age of fifty five provided that she has completed a contributory period of at least 120 months.

**After Amendment**

Cancelled.

### Cancelled Articles

- Article 4
- Article 155
- Article 156
An Unwavering Stance

On the occasion of the 89th National Day, HRC affirms that the Kingdom has adopted an unwavering stance on the promotion and protection of human rights, stemming from its belief in the provisions and values guaranteed by Islamic Sharia that protect legitimate rights and freedoms and criminalize their violation in any way. The Basic Law of Governance further reaffirms the noble principles and values that safeguard human dignity, stipulating in Article 26 thereof that, “The state protects human rights in accordance with the Islamic Sharia.”

The Law also guaranteed the rights of the citizen and his family in times of emergencies, illnesses, disabilities and old age. The right to work was also guaranteed by laws that protect the rights of both the worker and the employer, with the state also providing access to public education and committing to the prevention of illiteracy. Collectively, national legislations in the Kingdom serve to protect and promote human rights, notably laws related to the judiciary, criminal justice, health, education, labor, culture, women and children rights, and other laws that ensure the realization of all rights.
The Saudi Vision 2030 reflects the great importance placed on the human element across all development plans, and ensures all his social, cultural and economic rights, among others, and builds cooperation both regionally and internationally towards the protection and promotion of the rights of man as an integral part of the continuous national efforts in this domain.

HRC also affirmed the efforts made by the Kingdom towards sustainable development, in accordance with a national vision that secures a safe future, solid economy and decent living for future generations.

Education

The Kingdom has made tangible achievements with regard to human rights, particularly in the areas of education and culture, as they are important tools in raising social awareness regarding human rights, including the rights of women, enabling them to perform their role in society effectively. Furthermore, laws on the protection from abuse and child protection were issued to protect all society members from wrongful practices.

Additionally, the provisions of the Traffic Law and its implementing regulations – including the issuance of driving licenses – were applied to both males and females, in a culmination of all the rights enjoyed by women and the promotion of their contribution to developmental progress.
“The Saudi woman has proven her worth and distinction across various domains.”

**Combating Trafficking in Persons**

The Kingdom sought to develop legislations and other mechanisms that contribute to combating trafficking in persons. In 1426 H (corresponding to 2006), it issued a legislation prohibiting forced labor and withholding wages without a legal document, stressing the need for respectful treatment and preservation of dignity. Furthermore, the National Anti-Trafficking in Persons Committee was established to monitor the status of victims, comprising in its membership representatives of the Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Labor and Social Development, Culture and Media, the Human Rights Commission and the Public Prosecution.
The Kingdom has focused on protecting labor rights and started attracting job seekers.

Labor Rights

The Kingdom is an attractive hub for job seekers, and hosts over nine million expats working across a variety of fields; accordingly, it seeks to take all the procedures and measures necessary to protect their rights, create suitable humanitarian conditions, and enable them to fulfill their tasks. As such, the Kingdom has issued a number of laws, legislations and decisions, among others, and has adopted monitoring mechanisms that contributed to improving the conditions of these workers and promoting their rights, such as promulgating the Law of Domestic Workers and Equivalents and obliging private sector employers to provide health insurance for their workers.

Prohibiting Discrimination

The Kingdom has entered into several bilateral agreements with countries exporting human resources, and ensured the implementation of and compliance with the ban on forcing workers to operate under sunlight between 12 and 3 p.m. during the period between the 1st of June and 31st of August of every year.

Furthermore, the laws of the Kingdom prohibit religious discrimination in the workplace, with Article 61 of the Labor Law providing that employers are to refrain from all expressions or actions that violate the dignity or religion of their workers, and must provide them with time to exercise their lawful rights without any deduction in wages. Under Article 104, the Law also required employers to enable workers to perform their religious duties.

The Rights Guaranteed by the Saudi Vision 2030

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Acceleration of the Empowerment of Women

The Council of Ministers, headed by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, approved amendments to the Laws of Travel Documents, Civil Status, Labor and Social Insurance. These amendments enabled women to obtain passports, just like men, upon attaining the age of twenty-one years.
The Human Rights Commission praised the accelerated empowerment of women in the Kingdom and the enhancement and protection of their rights. In a statement, the Commission affirmed that Saudi Arabia “is proceeding steadily through its successive reforms and revisions to laws and regulations to support and empower women, in accordance with our religious principles, social values, and moderate approach, in a manner that preserves rights and defines duties, and in line with the Kingdom’s Vision 2030 that considers women as an important and effective partner. This has been translated through many national programs and initiatives that place higher expectations on women’s participation in development and the economy in light of their progress and success in all fields.

Travel Documents

The Human Rights Commission has expressed its appreciation of the Council of Ministers Resolution stipulating amendments to the laws of Travel Documents, Civil Status, Work, and Social Insurance. These amendments included the cancellation, amendment, and removal of a number of articles and paragraphs, in line with the accelerated changes towards women’s empowerment during the past few years. Therefore, the area of women’s rights protection and promotion and their empowerment has received the greatest share in reform and development. The Human Rights Commission has indicated that the
amendments to the Travel Document Law include the right to grant a passport to all applicants who have Saudi citizenship. Besides, passports and travel permits may be granted to persons under custody or minors under custodianship whose guardian is dead in accordance with the Implementing Regulations of the Law.

**Promotion of Rights**

The Commission highlighted that the amendments also strengthened a woman’s right to work by preventing an employer from dismissing her from work for the duration of illness resulting from pregnancy or delivery, provided that the period of her absence (whether consecutive or intermittent) does not exceed one hundred and eighty days per annum and that such illness is established by a certified medical report.

The Commission also noted that the amendments to the Social Insurance Law “strengthened the right of women to work regardless of age, in line with the amendment of the retirement age in the Labor Law. These amendments to the Law included removing paragraph 1-c of Article 38, stipulating: “A female contributor, who is no longer subject to the provisions of this Law, may receive her due pension upon attaining the age of fifty five provided that she has completed a contributory period of at least 120 months”.

**Persons in charge of reporting births**

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International Humanitarian Law

The Kingdom offers a global model in compliance with the International Humanitarian Law (IHL)
Protection of Civilians

“Protection of Civilians” has been a high-level course and workshop on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) organized by the Ministry of Defense with the participation of the Human Rights Commission at the military base in Taif, in which more than 1,200 military personnel members participated. The workshop covered issues raised during the five-day session, namely IHL and Islam; mechanisms for detecting IHL violations; role of the military commander; contemporary challenges to IHL and humanitarian action; role of the National Commission on International Humanitarian Law; IHL and peace operations; implementation of IHL; preventive and control mechanisms; and the penal system of the IHL. Participants in the course also learned about the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which aims to strengthen civilian protection, its operation methods with regard to paying visits to detainees, and its role as a neutral intermediary in situations of armed conflict.
Worker's Rights
pursuant to the
Saudi Labor Law

Rufid bin Saleh Al-Anzi
Legal adviser to the Human Rights
Commission

Saudi Arabia has set up laws and regulations for compensating work injuries in order to preserve the rights of workers, whether they are residents or nationals, including medical care. Therefore, medical services are provided to injured workers through several hospitals and health centers under contracts that include providing medical services, diagnostic services, treatment, medicines, medical supplies and prosthetics. Saudi laws and regulations provide for financial compensations for injured workers. Such compensation is determined on the basis of the degree of injury; that is, compensation for an injury leading to a temporary disability differs from that for an injury resulting in total disability. The laws also provide for bearing all the expenses of preparing and transporting the body of a deceased resident worker who dies because of a work injury.
Saudi Arabia has made and continues to make great efforts to preserve the rights of widows and divorced women, improve their position in society, increase their opportunities to work and have a decent life. The Council of Ministers and the Shura Council made several resolutions related to widows and female divorcees at the economic and social levels. The Ministry of Social Affairs has provided widows with social insurance services, since the law has specified an annual pension for them. Besides, widows have become able to obtain a copy of the family register separately from that of the head of the family.
Definition of Widows and Female Divorcee
A widow is a term that refers to every woman whose husband has died and who has not yet married despite her poverty and need. The widow may have young children, which increases her suffering; she becomes a widow supporting orphans.

The case of divorced women is more evident. A divorced woman may be defined as every woman who has been separated from her husband in his life with his divorce of her. There are different types of female divorcees according to the type of divorce. Clearly, the common factor between a divorced woman and a widow is that each of them has been separated from her husband either by divorce or death. Death refers to an irrevocable separation between husband and wife, but in case of separation by divorce, it may be revocable as a wife may return to her husband, or they might enter into a new marriage contract.
Child Labor...

Denial of Rights and Exploitation of Innocence
The Human Rights Commission is working to combat child labor and disallow their exploitation by any person. The Commission, in collaboration with these agencies, carries out inspections of establishments to ensure that children are not exploited in such cases. Child exploitation is classified as a crime of trafficking in persons because this type of crime depends on the extent of exploiting these children in work and the achievement of huge financial profits from the jobs they perform. The Saudi Labor Law prohibits hiring children under the age of 15 years. Reporting such cases falls within the jurisdiction of more than one body, as the case may be. Usually, search and investigation teams and secret patrols, after coordination with the relevant agencies, track and chase criminal gangs that exploit children to identify their level of organization and goals. Minors violating the Labor and Residence laws are deported, in coordination with the passport departments and diplomatic representation offices in the Kingdom, provided that judicial rulings rendered against minor violators are executed in observation homes, or else the relevant agency would consider exempting

Health and psychological effects
Extreme noise and heat
Exposure to dust
Malnutrition
Exposure to intake of rotten foods.

Kingdom’s Efforts

HRC is working in collaboration with the Ministries of Interior and Labor and other related agencies to combat child labor.
Child labor is considered a type of violence since these children are supposed to be at school.

Such violator from punishment. An adult offender is tried and then deported. The police only interfere in criminal offenses and misdemeanors within the Kingdom.

Child labor is also considered a type of violence since these children are supposed to be at school but have been exploited by their parents or relatives to do hard jobs. Hence the role of society to verify such cases.

As for cases where the child is forced to work, especially in the absence of the head of the family or his involvement in addiction, the family situation is studied. An orphan child is registered in the Social Security is given a chance to go to school. In case of a child belonging to a poor family, the situation of his family is examined for the purpose of supporting it by the Charity Fund for Combating Poverty and by charities.

Worthy of note is that juvenile labor in Saudi Arabia is not a phenomenon or a problem, at least for the time being, due to several social and economic considerations.

The violations detected in Saudi Arabia, especially during vacations, are committed by the children of expatriates and are quite limited and contrary to the Labor Law. Most establishments that exploit children in work are those depending on manual labor.

**Most common jobs performed by children in the Arab World**

- **01** Craft workshops
- **02** Chemical plants
- **03** Textile workshops
- **04** Carpet weaving
- **05** Domestic service
- **06** Vegetable markets

**Estimates of Child Labor (UNICEF)**

- **Ages between 5 and 14**
- **In developing countries**

**Ages between 5 and 14 million children 150**
Women’s Rights .. Practical Steps towards Empowerment

By: Editor in Chief

During the past few years, the world’s attention turned to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its achievements in women’s rights, as all human rights organizations have welcomed these accelerating steps to assure the appropriate place of women in society. Saudi Arabia, has managed to reassure the world community, through accredited international platforms, its continuation to enhance and protect all issues related to women’s rights, according to the concepts of Islamic Sharia law.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia occupied the headlines in the Arab and international media due to a number of changes that granted women in Saudi Arabia new freedoms.

The Kingdom’s institutions have put in place all legislative, legal and administrative measures to implement women’s human rights decisions, especially as they are consistent with Article 26 of the Basic Law of Governance which provides for the State’s protection of human rights, in accordance with Islamic law, in addition to the Kingdom’s 2030 vision, as well as being consistent with the most important international conventions ratified by the Kingdom.

Over the past two years, the Kingdom has moved towards empowering women, starting to lift the ban on driving cars together with a voting of Shura Council on a resolution that would allow women to issue Fatwas, a characteristic exclusively reserved for men for 45 years, allowing them to attend football stadiums since January 2018, and joining regular forces, and assuming leading positions.

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz has also ordered drafting a new system to combat “harassment against Women”, given the dangerous effects it poses on the individual, family and society, and its contradiction with the values of the Islamic religion and the customs and traditions prevailing in the Kingdom. A decision was also issued to review the procedures, requests and services provided for women, and to enumerate all requirements needed to obtain the consent of the woman’s guardian to complete any procedure, or service, clarifying its legal basis and reporting about it within a period no more than three months from the date of the order.

The last period witnessed several political gains for Saudi women, including appointment of Princess Rima Bint Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz as the Kingdom’s first ever ambassador, Hind bint Khalid Al Zahid as Undersecretary of the Ministry of Civil Service as per a decision issued by the Minister of Civil Service Suleiman bin Abdullah Al-Hamdan; and each of Tamadhur Al-Ramah as Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Development, and Nura Al-Fayez as the first Deputy Minister of Education.

Among the most prominent human rights decisions that have enhanced the position of women in society was the issuance of a decision to set up Alimony fund for divorced women, and another by the Supreme Judicial Council, allowing the foster mother to request proof of custody without the need to file a lawsuit for this , and the issuance of a decision allowing a Saudi woman to obtain lawyer license after having been trained at a three-year training institute, and joining all government services without requiring the guardian’s consent, and preventing discrimination against women in places the work.

The Human Rights Commission affirms the Kingdom’s continuing international cooperation with human rights mechanisms through its membership in United Nations bodies or through the conclusion of cooperation agreements, the latest of which was an agreement with the International Organization for Migration, fulfilling the desire of both parties to continue close cooperation to promote, develop and protect human rights, and recognize interest in the growing global on combating trafficking in persons.
The Kingdom Affirms Implementation of its International Women Empowerment Commitments

As an active member of the Executive Board of United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (also known as UN-Women) and the Commission on the Status of Women under the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has long maintained its focus on supporting and cooperating with the United Nations for the interest of women empowerment.

The Kingdom has ratified many legislations towards the empowerment of women, as it strongly believes in their social significance and their role in strengthening economic balance. Accordingly, it has launched a comprehensive review of all the laws that would previously hinder the progress of women, and made strides towards achieving further women’s empowerment, while also overcoming any impeding economic and social challenges.

Stemming from its keen interest in ensuring the right to education for all across every level, the Kingdom has also established literacy schools in rural areas and several capability-building programs for women to facilitate their integration in the labor market, such as the Sustainable Rural Agricultural Development Program that supports small agricultural producers of both genders.

The Kingdom has also established the Productive Families Program, supervised by the Social Development Bank, with an annual allocation of USD 240 million, which contributes to the regularization of the status of productive families, the creation of a suitable environment, and their financial and moral support, which will help promote and spread their products both locally and internationally.

Several laws have been issued towards the promotion of women’s rights, notably the High Order on allowing women access to government services without the permission of their guardian. 2018 also saw the issuance of many decisions that contributed to the support and empowerment of Saudi women and their entry to many new domains.

Furthermore, the Kingdom has recently adopted substantial amendments to personal status laws, penalties and others relating to the rights of guardianship, wardship, trusteeship, equality in marriage and divorce rights, and all civil rights related to women, thus granting them the rights to work, education, residency, travel, movement and others, independent of any guardianship.

The Kingdom affirms that the progress of society is dependent on women’s advancement, which can only be achieved through true equality reflected in their role on the ground.

The Kingdom has reiterated its commitment to the implementation of international resolutions on women empowerment, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and its determination to cooperate with international mechanisms with regard to monitoring charts, and participating in the review of national achievements and the alignment of the Saudi Vision 2030 with the sustainable development goals.

From the speech of the Kingdom’s representative at the Third Committee meeting to discuss the advancement of women (26), within the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly.
Communication with the Human Rights Commission and its branches