



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES

HAUT-COMMISSARIAT DES NATIONS UNIES AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

REFERENCE: BN/follow-up/UnitedArabEmirates/91

4 July 2025

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur on follow-up on concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), I have the honor to refer to the examination of the fourth periodic report of the United Arab Emirates, at the Committee's eighty-second session, held in June 2022. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations ([CEDAW/C/ARE/CO/4](#)) were transmitted to your Permanent Mission. You may recall that in paragraph 63 on follow-up to the concluding observations, the Committee requested the United Arab Emirates to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 31, 41 and 47 (a) the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report ([CEDAW/C/ARE/FCO/4](#)) received with over five months delay on 29 November 2024 under the CEDAW follow-up procedure. At its ninety-first session, held in June and July 2025, the Committee examined this follow-up report and adopted the following assessment.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 31** of the concluding observations which called upon the State party to **“amend article 30 of Federal Law No. 28 of 2005 to repeal all exceptions to the minimum age of marriage at 18 years for women and men, in line with joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It further recommends that the State party adopt legislation that specifically criminalizes guardians and marriage officiators who conduct or facilitate child marriages, and provide capacity-building programmes for the judiciary on the criminal nature and negative consequences of child marriage on girls' education, human rights and development”**:

The Committee takes note of the State party's reference to Cabinet Decision No. 71 of 2020, which sets out procedures for marriage authorization for those who have reached legal age but have not completed 18 years of age. The Committee notes, however, that it does not address the specific recommendation to remove all exceptions to the minimum age of marriage of 18 years. The Committee regrets that no measures have been taken to amend article 30 of Federal Law No. 28 of 2005 to eliminate

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exceptions that permit marriage below 18 years of age. It further regrets the absence of information on legislation criminalizing guardians and marriage officials who perform or facilitate child marriages, as well as the lack of information on capacity-building programmes for the judiciary on the criminal nature and negative effects of child marriage.

The Committee considers that the State party has not taken steps to implement the recommendation. It therefore considers that the recommendation has **not been implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party does not relate to the recommendation and refers to measures that predate the concluding observations. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **unsatisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 31** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

The Committee recommends that the State party amend article 30 of Federal Law No. 28 of 2005 to repeal all exceptions to the minimum age of marriage at 18 years for women and men, in line with joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and target 5.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals. It further recommends that the State party adopt legislation that specifically criminalizes guardians and marriage officiators who conduct or facilitate child marriages, and provide capacity-building programmes for the judiciary on the criminal nature and negative consequences of child marriage on girls' education, human rights and development.

Regarding the recommendation made in paragraph 41 of the concluding observations that the State party **"grant Emirati women the same rights as Emirati men to acquire, change, retain and transmit their nationality to their children and foreign spouses. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the State party revise its legislation, withdraw its reservation to article 9 of the Convention and ratify the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The Committee also recommends that the State party regularise the situation of stateless women and girls and guarantee their right to a nationality, repeal provisions that make the provision of birth certificates conditional on the presentation of a valid marriage certificate, and collect data disaggregated by sex and age on the number of stateless persons in the State party"**:

The Committee takes note of the State party's reference to Federal Decree-Law No. 16 of 2017, which amended Federal Law No. 17 of 1972, and the information that 12,722 children of female citizens have acquired nationality over the last five years. The Committee notes that the State party has not addressed the discriminatory provisions that deny Emirati women equal rights to transmit nationality to their children and foreign spouses on equal grounds to Emirati men. The Committee regrets that no measures have been taken to grant women equal nationality rights. It further regrets that the reservation to article 9 of the Convention has not been withdrawn and the absence of information on steps taken to ratify the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons, and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. The Committee also regrets the lack of specific information on measures to regularise the situation of

stateless women and girls, repeal provisions conditioning birth certificates on marriage certificates, and the absence of disaggregated data by sex and age on the number of stateless persons in the State party.

The Committee considers that the State party has not taken steps to implement the recommendation. It therefore considers that the recommendation has **not been implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party does not strictly relate to the recommendation. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **unsatisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 41** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

Grant Emirati women the same rights as Emirati men to acquire, change and retain their nationality and to confer it on their children and foreign spouses. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the State party revise its legislation, withdraw its reservation to article 9 of the Convention, and ratify the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees of 1951 and the Protocol of 1967 thereto, the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons of 1954 and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness of 1961. The Committee also recommends that the State party regularize the situation of stateless women and girls and ensure their right to a nationality, repeal provisions that make the provision of birth certificates contingent on the production of a valid marriage certificate, and collect sex- and age-disaggregated data on the number of stateless persons in the State party.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 47 (a)** of the concluding observations that the State party: **“abolish the *kafalah* system and eliminate such practices, and ensure that policies and measures protecting foreign workers are fully implemented, guaranteeing that those who suffer abuse or exploitation are able to fully access appropriate remedies”:**

The Committee takes note of the State party's reference to Federal Law No. 29 of 2021 on the Entry and Residence of Foreigners, Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021, and Federal Decree-Law No. 9 of 2022 on Auxiliary Service Workers, which allow some workers to change employers without requiring employer approval and establish complaint mechanisms. The Committee is concerned that despite these reforms, the sponsorship system has not been explicitly abolished, as recommended, and that worker-employer relationships remain characterized by economic and legal dependency, particularly for domestic workers. The Committee is further concerned that domestic workers continue to face restrictions, including the requirement to obtain employer approval for job transfers, which perpetuates cycles of dependency and vulnerability to abuse and exploitation.

The Committee considers that the State party has taken some initial steps toward implementing the recommendation but has failed to address its core elements of abolishing the sponsorship system and strengthen protection of foreign workers from abuse or exploitation and access to remedies. It therefore considers that the recommendation has **not been implemented**.

The Committee considers that the information provided by the State party is clear and extensive but does not respond to the core aspects of the recommendation and refers to measures that were already in



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place during the State party's review. It thus considers that the quality of the information provided is **unsatisfactory**.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to **paragraph 47 (a)** of the concluding observations, the State party provide, in its next periodic report, information on further actions taken to:

Abolish the sponsorship system and eliminate such practices, ensure the full implementation of policies and measures that protect foreign workers, and ensure that those who suffer abuse or exploitation have full access to appropriate remedies.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jelena Pia-Comella'.

Jelena Pia-Comella
Rapporteur on follow-up
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women