



REFERENCE: CERD/101st session/FU/MJA/ks

24 September 2020

Excellency,

I wish to inform you that the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, during its 101st session, considered the follow-up report submitted by the Government of Saudi Arabia, pursuant to article 9 (1) of the Convention and rule 65 (1) of the Rules of Procedure of the Committee.

The Committee welcomes the submission of the report, in response to its request to receive information within one year on the implementation of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 20 (a) and (b) and 24 of the Concluding Observations (CERD/C/SAU/CO/4-9), adopted following the consideration of the State party's combined 4th to 9th periodic reports, at its 95th session, held in April-May 2018.

The Committee appreciates the opportunity provided to continue its dialogue with the State party and would like to draw the State party's attention to the observations mentioned below. The Committee requests that comments and responses on actions taken by the State party on these issues be included in its combined 10th and 11th periodic reports, to be submitted in a single document by 22 October 2020.

Paragraph 20 (a) of the Concluding Observations

The Committee notes the regulations pertaining to domestic workers and persons of like status, which govern the relationship between employers and domestic workers and entail a number of safeguards to protect domestic workers from abuse and exploitation. It also notes that other legislative, institutional and policy measures are in place to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and to address all forms of abuse and misconduct in the workplace to which various groups, including domestic workers, may be subjected to. It further notes the various measures taken to raise awareness of the rights of domestic workers, identify the underlying causes of abuse and exploitation of domestic workers, and monitor their working conditions.

His Excellency Mr. Abdulaziz M.O. Alwasil
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Moreover, it notes the launch of the Musaned programme for domestic workers, which aims at bringing together all relevant procedures from the recruitment of domestic workers in their country of origin until the conclusion of their contract, and at protecting their rights by establishing a salary card and by setting an obligation for employers to adhere to the salary protection programme, the monitoring of payments and the registration of contracts and salaries. The Committee regrets, however, the absence of information on any specific measures to ensure that the employment of foreign domestic workers, as all migrant workers, are regulated by labour laws. The Committee considers the response to this recommendation partially satisfactory and encourages the State party to strengthen its efforts to ensure that all existing provisions to protect foreign domestic workers from abuse and exploitation are enforced effectively. It also requests the State party to provide, in its next periodic report, detailed information on the implementation and impact of the Musaned programme, as well as on concrete measures taken to ensure that foreign domestic workers enjoy the same labour protections as other migrant workers.

Paragraph 20 (b) of the Concluding Observations

The Committee notes the establishment of a hotline to receive complaints in eight languages, as well as the issuance of brochures and other printed materials to inform domestic workers of the remedies available to them in case of violation of their rights, including access to complaints mechanisms and to legal aid and translation services. It also notes that seven labour tribunals were opened in provinces and cities across the territory of the State party, as well as twenty-seven labour departments in cities and governorates and nine labour departments for appeals in a number of regions. It further notes that the Standing Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons, along with Government agencies and civil society organizations, are mandated to monitor trafficking offences and to provide shelter, psychosocial support, legal assistance, health care and educational and training services to victims. However, the Committee is concerned that the steps taken by the State party remain insufficient to ensure that all victims of abusive and exploitative labour practices have access to complaint mechanisms, judicial recourse and shelters. The Committee considers the response of the State party partially satisfactory and encourages the State party to intensify its efforts to fully implement this recommendation. It also requests the State party to include, in its next periodic report, information and data on complaints filed and their outcomes.

Paragraph 24 of the Concluding Observations

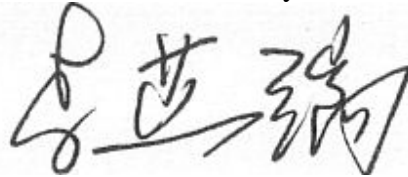
The Committee notes that the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is guaranteed for non-Muslim residents by Saudi domestic laws. It also notes the awareness-raising and training activities conducted by the Human Rights Commission and other governmental bodies and non-governmental organizations to remove any obstacles that stand in the way of the exercise of this right. It further notes that domestic legislation uphold the equal right to work of all citizens and that the principle of equality and non-discrimination on racial or other grounds is enshrined in school curricula and textbooks, which are periodically reviewed and updated by the Ministry of Education. However, the Committee regrets that the State party did not indicate what specific measures have been taken to ensure, in practice, the right of ethno-religious minorities to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including the right to construct religious places of worship or conduct public worship, without any discrimination on grounds of race, colour, descent or

national or ethnic origin. Furthermore, it is concerned about the lack of information on any concrete measures to eliminate all barriers faced by ethno-religious minorities in education, including by removing from textbooks derogatory comments on other religions, as well as in employment and in the legal system. The Committee considers the response of the State party unsatisfactory and requests the State party to provide, in its next periodic report, detailed information and data on the measures taken to implement these recommendations, as well as on their impact.

Rest assured, Excellency, that the Committee looks forward to continuing its constructive dialogue with the Government of Saudi Arabia, with a view to providing it with assistance in its efforts to ensure the effective implementation of the Convention.

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

Yours sincerely,



Yanduan Li
Chair

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination