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Saudi Arabia and minority youth

The population of Saudi Arabia, according to the General Organization for Statistics, exceeds as of mid-November 2017, thirty-one million and seven hundred thousand people. Nearly sixty-eight percent of them are Saudis, while thirty-one percent are distributed among other nationalities. 67 percent of the population in Saudi Arabia is under the age of 29 years, so the Saudi society is a young society and this also applies to minorities.

The report of the American International Committee on Religious Freedom, published annually by the US Department of State, indicates that there is a distribution of religious affiliation in Saudi Arabia. Muslims make up nearly 90 percent of the country's population, and Shia Muslims account for 10 to 15 percent of the total population. About 80 percent of Shiites are "Twelve" and are often present in the Eastern Province. The rest are Shi'a Ismailis. They live mainly in Najran. Zaidis live in Jizan and Najran provinces along the border with Yemen. There are about 1.2 million Christians in Saudi Arabia, 310,000 Hindus, 90,000 Buddhists, 70,000 followers of other religions, and 180,000 non-believers.

Along with religious minorities, Saudi Arabia has a population of about 250,000, stateless. They suffer from several types of discrimination, deprivation and difficulties in basic rights, such as education, medical care, dignity and work.

Discrimination in education

Minority youth in Saudi Arabia suffer discrimination at different levels of education. For example, there are specializations related to the religion of Islam taught in Saudi universities, a high level of abuse of the Shiites, thus there is no religious specialization in Saudi universities suitable for young Shiites, and accordingly there are no graduates from Saudi universities in the religious disciplines of the Shiites, In universities or schools corresponds to young Shiites. All Shi'a, Sufi, and other students learn from Sunni teachers through curricula that reflect the strict Wahhabi view of Islam under the auspices of the state. Nor are there any Shia citizens who serve as school principals outside Shi'ite areas. Shi'a students, in general, can not enter military or security academies or find jobs within the security forces, except in rare and limited cases.

So far there is no law in Saudi Arabia that can hold accountable those who carry out such actions in these two examples. This legal vacuum would encourage more similar actions. In addition, reports from citizens on more than one occasion via Internet and smart phone applications, Saudi Arabia said that citizens can use them to report hate or sectarian behavior, such as "evangelists" and "all of us security," not seen enough by the Ministry of the Interior or Any other executive bodies, did not contribute to stop such abuses. Conversely, when the communications submitted relate, for example, to criticism of the State or to the declaration of political views or positions to which the State disagrees, the response is consistently and remarkably rapid.

The official religious textbooks also contain texts that condemn the religious beliefs and practices of Shiites, Sufis and others, directly discriminate against them, and deal with Jews and Christians in a way that does not establish a normal relationship with them, but rather establishes a negative charged relationship with them.

In addition, the Bidoun youth are stateless, have difficulties in admitting to school, and perform some tests that require the availability of a national number such as the "achievement test" and "capacity test". Some of them do not have national numbers and some have special cards for stateless persons. The Bidun are denied employment in the public sector. There are many obstacles to working in the private sector. They are sometimes forced to accept work conditions similar to bondage and bondage, or drug promotion, in return for a small amount of money to be exploited by drug traffickers.

Participation in cultural and political life

The Saudi government is preventing active political participation. For example, elections are not a common practice in Saudi Arabia. They are held only in municipal councils, through which half of the members are elected, and the second half is appointed by the state. There is also no legal mechanism through which citizens can take part in making political decisions. The elected and non-elected Shura Council can not be considered an effective political participation because it is not elected and does not have independent powers.

Saudi Arabia historically excluded the Shiite minority from certain jobs in the government sector and important political positions. Sovereign diplomats or military officers were rarely appointed. In 2014, King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia appointed the first Shiite member of the government, an Ismaili named Mohammed Abu Saq, to ​​serve as Minister of Shura Council affairs. Saudi Arabia has previously appointed only one Shiite ambassador, Jamil al-Jishi, who served as Saudi ambassador to Iran between 1999 and 2002.

Since 2011, in the eastern region, which includes the largest number of Shiites, a popular movement has begun to march and protest called for the lifting of discrimination and the provision of basic rights. He participated in the youth movement on a large scale, but the government responded with violent arrests in their ranks, and then subjected them to unfair trials after being tortured during the interrogation period in order to force them to confess. The Saudi judiciary also sentenced to death a number of young people, where today more than 50 people face death sentences, including at least seven children were arrested or when charges, including a large number of young people.

As for the Bidun, young people have been deprived of participation in the only elections that take place in the country, the municipal elections because they do not have national identities because they are the basic condition for participation.

In addition to the right to political participation, the Saudi government prohibits minority youth from exercising their cultural rights and social practices aimed at social rapprochement between Shia and Sunni youth. In 2012, the eastern region of the region banned a mass breakfast organized by a number of young Shiites, which is held during the Muslim fasting month Ramadan, and aims to promote brotherhood and tolerance among the sects. It was under the slogan "No to sectarianism".

The government also imposes a ban on many religious, political and cultural books and forbids circulation. With the establishment of book fairs in Saudi Arabia, the official authorities organize a list of prohibited books from the show, most of which are books expressing religious and political ideas that do not correspond to official ideas. Religious minorities such as Shiites and Sufis find it difficult to obtain books that conform to their religious beliefs in local libraries, making books that are incompatible with official ideas forbidden or difficult to enter, and exist only in informal ways or at times too expensive. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia supports Wahhabism books that suffer from other Islamic doctrines and discredit religions. Some books are printed at the expense of official Saudi institutions.