



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

9 October 2024

Your Highness,

I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 45th session in January-February 2024. As the final outcome report on the review of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 56th session, I have taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/sa-index>) and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "UPR practical guidance" and the "UN good practices" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Your Highness, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'V. Türk', is positioned above the printed name.

Volker Türk

His Highness
Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

The adoption of several pieces of legislation, including the Evidence Act, the Personal Status Act, and the Civil Transactions Act, to enhance the integrity of the judicial system is positively noted. The promulgation of the Juveniles Act, which abolishes the death penalty for juveniles for certain crimes and replaces it with placement in a juvenile home for no longer than ten years, is an encouraging step, along with measures taken to suspend executions of individuals sentenced to death before the promulgation of the Juveniles Act. In this regard, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is encouraged to ratify the international human rights treaties to which it is not yet a State party.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's measures to ensure compulsory education for children aged 6 to 15 and providing free education at all levels are noteworthy, in particular the launch of initiatives such as the human capacity development programme, part of the Saudi Vision 2030, and the adoption of over 1,000 educational projects across the country.

Concerns have been raised during the UPR review about the compliance of the definition of terrorism with international standards, including that the current anti-cybercrime and counterterrorism legislation do not ensure the use of social media for peaceful expressions. Concerns have also been raised concerning the legal protection of migrant workers and the labour protection legislation, as well as the individual sponsorship system. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is urged to continue efforts in these regards.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is also encouraged to carry out thorough and transparent investigations into all allegations of killing and abuse of migrants crossing the Yemeni border at the hands of security forces, cease any abuses, ensure accountability for any abuses or violations, and issue a public investigation report. Furthermore, the Government is urged to reduce the number of crimes punishable by death and limit them to the most serious crimes under international law and promote the independence of the National Human Rights Commission in compliance with the Paris Principles.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is also encouraged to continue the practice of developing an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the parliament, the judiciary, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations from other international and regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG-related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).



The Government is encouraged to further strengthen the Standing Committee for Report Preparation, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).

Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report in about two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government may wish to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2026, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR
9 October 2024