

Americans for Democracy



& Human Rights in Bahrain

Presentation on Saudi Arabia's 4th Cycle UPR

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Introduction - Migrants' Rights and Digital Freedom

- Despite commitments, Saudi Arabia has failed to implement meaningful reform regarding Migrants rights and Digital freedom
- Migrant workers endure exploitation and abuse, despite assurances of reforms to improve their conditions.
- Digital freedom of expression faces continual suppression, stifling dissenting voices in online spaces.

Migrant Rights Concerns


- Saudi Arabia accepted 15 recommendations in which promised to **support** and **promote** and **strengthen** migrants rights.
- Saudi Arabia maintains a restrictive kafala system despite pledges for improvement.
- Migrant workers face ongoing exploitation, unpaid wages, and severe violations.
- Arbitrary detention and deportation of Ethiopian migrants persist.

Digital Freedom of Expression

Recommendation 138.53: Bring its domestic legislation in line with the rights to **freedom of expression**, association and assembly, and to enact and implement a law of association enabling all NGOs to operate legally, without harassment and undue government interference

- Saudi Arabia's unmet commitments
- **Mohammed Al Ghamdi**, a teacher, arrested and prosecuted for expressing opinions on social media.
- Prominent journalist **Jamal Khashoggi** murdered in October 2018 within the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Human Rights Violation


- Extensive state-sponsored spying, illegal data access, and spyware usage to track and censor dissenters within and outside Saudi Arabia.
 - Activists persecuted under Anti-Cybercrime and Counter-Terrorism Laws for criticizing the government.
 - Many forced to adopt anonymous online identities due to crackdowns, offering limited protection against state persecution.
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- Ongoing exploitation and abuse persist despite proposed reforms within Saudi Arabia's stringent kafala system.
 - Migrant workers continue to face challenges such as unpaid wages, severe violations of their rights, and arbitrary detentions.
 - Saudi border guards have been implicated in tragic incidents resulting in deaths and abuses among Ethiopian migrants endeavouring to cross the Yemen-Saudi border.

UPR Recommendations and Failures

The **failure of Saudi Arabia** to implement pledged UPR recommendations pertaining to migrant rights and freedom of expression demands immediate attention and robust action.

ADHRB underscores the pressing need for **tangible changes** in policies and practices

Calls for Action

- Abolish the kafala system, granting workers independence from employer constraints.
 - Eliminate exit visa procedures to ensure the unrestricted right to exit the country.
 - Urgently cease all surveillance operations and persecution of individuals.
 - Respect the right to privacy for all citizens and residents.
 - Implement previously committed recommendations (e.g., 138.116, 138.31, 138.53, 138.199) regarding migrants' rights.
 - Demand the release of individuals arrested for peaceful online expression.
 - Abrogate content-based offenses outlined in Articles 3 and 6 of the Anti-Cybercrime Law.
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Conclusion & Thank You

*Saudi Arabia must be held **accountable**, and the time to act is now.*

ADHRB emphasizes the urgent need for unwavering determination to pressure Saudi Arabia for fundamental human rights. Our key recommendations stand firm:

- Dismantle the restrictive kafala system, liberating workers from employer ties.*
- Cease arbitrary detentions and violations against migrant workers, particularly Ethiopian migrants.*
- Implement previously committed UPR recommendations, including those regarding migrant rights.*
- Halt all surveillance operations and respect the right to privacy for citizens and residents.*
- Release individuals arrested for peaceful online expression, while abolishing content-based offenses in the Anti-Cybercrime Law.*

*Together, let's demand accountability and uphold the fundamental human rights of all individuals in Saudi Arabia. **Thank you** for your unwavering commitment.*
