

Consolidated Disability Findings from the 2012 U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices

Near East and North Africa

Algeria

Constitution and Laws

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on birth, race, gender, language, and social status and the government effectively enforced it, although women continued to face legal and social discrimination.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, or the provision of other state services, although in practice the government did not effectively enforce these provisions, and there was widespread social discrimination against persons with disabilities. Few government buildings were accessible to persons with disabilities. Public enterprises that downsized generally ignored a requirement that they reserve 1 percent of jobs for persons with disabilities. Social security provided payments for orthopedic equipment. The Ministry of National Solidarity (MNS) provided some financial support to health-care-oriented NGOs, but for many NGOs such financial support represented approximately 2 percent of their budgets.

The MNS maintained that there were two million individuals with disabilities in the country, of whom the largest percentages were classified as “chronically ill” or “other” (38 and 30 percent, respectively). However, according to the Algerian Federation of Wheelchair Associations, there were three million persons with disabilities living in the country. The government estimated that approximately 44 percent of citizens with disabilities had some form of motor disability, 32 percent had communication difficulties, and 24 percent suffered from a visual disability. The government classified approximately 193,000 individuals as “fully disabled” and claimed during the year to have appropriated DZD 9.54 billion (approximately \$123 million) for their welfare.

Other Relevant References

On June 2, a mentally disabled man, Nouradine Nadri, died in police custody in Saida province, according to the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights' (LADDH) Saida province office. Police arrested Nadri following an altercation with the driver of a vehicle that accidentally struck him. According to LADDH, police brought Nadri to the province's security headquarters instead of transporting him to the hospital as stipulated by article 51 of the code of criminal procedures, which requires a medical examination before placing a suspect in custody. Nadri's family reported to LADDH that their son died following abuse by police.

The government provides free education for children through high school. Education is compulsory until the age of 16 years. The government provided free medical care for all citizens, including children with disabilities, albeit in generally rudimentary facilities, and to both sexes equally.

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The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Algeria signed the Convention and Optional Protocol on 30/3/2007. Algeria ratified the Convention on 12/4/2009.

Bahrain

Constitution and Laws

The constitution provides for equality, equal opportunity, and the right to medical care, welfare, education, property, capital, and work for all citizens. These rights were protected unevenly, depending on an individual's social status, sect, or gender. The law does not specifically prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation and gender identity, religion, sect, or social status. The law deprives foreign workers, who make up approximately half the population, of many fundamental legal, social, and economic rights.

Persons with Disabilities

Law 74 of the 2006 Disabilities Law stipulates that persons with disabilities are to be treated equally with regard to employment and violations of the law are punishable with fines. The law does not address discrimination in education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, or the provision of other state services. It was unclear whether the government enforced these laws. According to the government, a committee, originally formed in 2011 to care for persons with disabilities, was reestablished during the year and included representatives from all relevant ministries, NGOs, and the private sector. The committee is responsible for monitoring violations against persons with disabilities; it was unclear whether the committee acted on any incidents during the year.

A variety of governmental, quasigovernmental, and religious institutions are mandated to support and protect persons with disabilities. New public buildings in the Central Municipality must include facilities for persons with disabilities. The law does not outline specific criteria for what is required for facilities to be accessible for the persons with disabilities. The law does not mandate access to other nonresidential buildings for persons with disabilities.

There were no official reports of discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, or access to health care. According to anecdotal evidence, however, such persons routinely lacked access to education and employment. The one government school for children with hearing disabilities did not operate past the 10th grade. Some public schools had specialized education programs for children with learning disabilities, physical handicaps, speech impediments, and Down syndrome, but the government did not fund private programs for children who could not find appropriate programs in public schools.

The law requires the government to provide vocational training for persons with disabilities who wish to work. The law also requires employers of more than 100 persons to hire at least 2 percent of its

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employees from the government's list of workers with disabilities. The government did not monitor compliance. The government placed persons with disabilities in some public sector jobs.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Bahrain signed the Convention on 25/6/2007 and ratified the Convention on 22/9/2011.

Egypt

Constitution and Laws

The provisional constitution prohibited discrimination against citizens on the basis of race, origin, language, religion, creed, disability, or social status. It did not prohibit discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The December 25 constitution does not explicitly define the prohibitions on discrimination, but states that "all citizens are equal before the law." Many aspects of the law discriminate against women and religious minorities, and the government did not effectively enforce prohibitions against such discrimination. In October 2011 the SCAF issued a decree making it a crime under the penal code to discriminate on the basis of gender, origin, religion, language, religion, or creed, but it was unclear whether the government handled cases of discrimination differently following the decree.

Persons with Disabilities

The law provides that all businesses designate 5 percent of their positions for persons with physical or mental disabilities, but local media and activist groups reported that this provision was not enforced. There are no laws prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities in education, access to health care, or the provision of other state services, nor are there laws mandating access to buildings or transportation. Widespread discrimination continued against persons with disabilities, particularly mental disabilities, resulting in a lack of acceptance into mainstream society. Government-operated treatment centers for persons with disabilities, especially children, were of poor quality.

The World Health Organization estimated that there were 13 million disabled persons in the country. The Ministries of Education and Social Affairs shared responsibility for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The National Council for the Disabled began to advocate more frequently for the rights of persons with disabilities during the year. Persons with disabilities rode government-owned mass transit buses free of charge and received special subsidies to purchase household products, wheelchairs, and prosthetic devices. Persons with disabilities also received expeditious approval for the installation of new telephone lines and received reductions on customs duties for specially equipped private vehicles. The government also worked closely with UN agencies and other international aid donors to design job-training programs for persons with disabilities.

Other Relevant References

In November 2009 the Alexandria Criminal Court convicted police officer Akram Soliman of assaulting a mentally disabled man, Ragai Sultan, and sentenced Soliman to five years in prison. On July 4, an appeals court upheld the verdict. According to NGO sources, Soliman remained in prison at year's end.

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The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Egypt signed the Convention on 4/4/2007. Egypt ratified the Convention on 14/4/2008.

Iran

Constitution and Laws

The constitution bars discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, and social status “in conformity with Islamic criteria,” but the government did not effectively enforce these prohibitions. The constitution does not bar discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Persons with Disabilities

The law generally prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities by government actors. No information was available regarding authorities’ effectiveness in enforcing the law. However, the laws did not apply to private actors, and electoral laws prohibit blind and deaf persons from running for seats in the Islamic Consultative Assembly. While the law provides for state-funded vocational education for persons with disabilities, according to domestic news reports, vocational centers were confined to urban areas and unable to meet the needs of the entire population.

There are laws ensuring public accessibility to government-funded buildings, and new structures appeared to comply with the standards in these provisions. There also were efforts to increase disabled persons’ access to historical sites. However, government buildings that predated current accessibility standards remained largely inaccessible, and general building accessibility for persons with disabilities remained a widespread problem. There was limited access to information, education, and community activities by persons with disabilities in the country.

The Welfare Organization of Iran is the principal governmental agency charged with protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Iran ratified the Convention on 23/10/2009.

Iraq

Constitution and Laws

The constitution provides that all citizens are equal before the law without regard to gender, sect, opinion, belief, nationality, religion, or origin. The law prohibits discrimination based on race, disability, or social status. The government was ineffective in enforcing these provisions in practice.

Persons with Disabilities

The constitution states that the government, through laws and regulations, should care for and rehabilitate persons with disabilities and special needs in order to reintegrate them into society. No laws prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, or mental disabilities in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, or the provision of

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other state services. There were reports of continuing discrimination due to social stigma against persons with disabilities in these areas. Although the COM issued a decree ordering access for persons with disabilities to buildings or in educational and work settings, incomplete implementation at year's end limited access. Local NGOs reported that many children with disabilities were forced to drop out of public schools due to lack of physical access and appropriate learning materials, and a shortage of teachers qualified to work with children with developmental or intellectual disabilities.

On February 23, the COR approved the establishment of a National Commission for People with Disabilities in order to conform to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and to oversee government programs to help persons with disabilities. The KRG has a similar law in place, and in July the KRG formed an interministerial council, which includes representatives from civil society, to oversee implementation of the law. Government officials reported that they had few resources to accommodate individuals with disabilities in prisons, detention centers, and temporary holding facilities. Mental health support for prisoners with mental health disabilities did not exist.

The Ministry of Health (MOH) provided medical care, benefits, and rehabilitation, when available, and persons with disabilities could receive benefits from other agencies, including the Prime Minister's Office. The MOLSA operated several institutions for children and young adults with disabilities. The MOH's most recent estimate of the number of persons with physical and mental disabilities was two to three million, approximately 10 percent of the population.

In November disability organizations sponsored a hunger strike in front of IKP offices in Erbil and Sulaymaniyah to protest inadequate government benefits for persons with disabilities. Among other demands the organizations requested an increase from 150,000 Iraqi dinars (\$129) to 600,000 Iraqi dinars (\$515) per month for persons with disabilities in the IKR and the disputed territories administered by the KRG who did not receive government stipends during the year. On December 19, KRG officials met with the group in Erbil and agreed to consider their demands over a one-month period in order to end the hunger strike.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Iraq ratified the Convention on 20/3/2013.

Israel and the occupied territories

Constitution and Laws

The law prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, or social status, and the government was generally effective in enforcing these prohibitions.

Persons with Disabilities

The law provides a framework to prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in access to employment, education, health care, and selected other state services. Legislation mandates access to buildings, transportation, and physical accommodations and services in the workplace. According to

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NGOs government progress in enforcing these laws was limited, especially for minority populations and persons with intellectual disabilities.

Societal discrimination and lack of accessibility persisted in employment, transportation, housing, and education. The workforce participation rate of persons with disabilities in 2009, the last year for which data was available, was 54.5 percent, compared to 76 percent of those without disabilities. Gross per capita income of persons with disabilities was 73 percent of that of persons without disabilities; however, net income was relatively higher at 80 percent. The average monthly income of people with severe disabilities was 36 percent lower than that of people without disabilities.

In May the government approved a mental health care reform, which, beginning in 2015, will entitle residents to mental health care as part of the services covered under the National Health Insurance Law.

Access to interurban buses and to independent living facilities for persons with disabilities remained limited. According to the government, 70 percent of municipal buses were accessible to people with visual, auditory, cognitive, and ambulatory disabilities, and 60 percent of bus stops, train stations, and airports were accessible to persons with limited mobility. NGOs continued to work with legislators to strengthen accessibility laws to require that accommodations be made in a range of public and private services (e.g., police investigations and court hearings) to make such services available and physically accessible to persons with all types of disabilities. In December the Knesset approved regulations to improve access by persons with disabilities to public services by such means as eliminating of waiting in line, providing adapted seating, and, for the deaf and hard-of-hearing, SMS public announcements. These were part of a series of regulations requiring Knesset approval for implementation of a 2005 amendment to the Equal Rights for People with Disabilities Law.

The Commission for Equal Rights of People with Disabilities within the Ministry of Justice is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and worked with government ministries to enact regulations. To ensure new buildings follow accessibility laws and regulations, the commission informed the planning and construction committees of their responsibilities under the law and conducted sample inspections, which found approximately 50 percent compliance. A Division for Integrating Persons with Disabilities in the Labor Market, located within the Ministry of Industry, examines and promotes employment of persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services provides out-of-home placement and sheltered employment for persons with cognitive, physical, and communication disabilities. It also handles criminal investigations involving persons with certain disabilities, whether they are victims or offenders, when police request assistance. The National Insurance Agency provides financial benefits and stipends, the Ministry of Health provides mental health and rehabilitation services, and the Ministry of Education provides special education services to persons with disabilities.

Constitution and Laws (Occupied Territories)

PA law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. PA authorities worked to enforce these laws; however, they often failed to do so in practice. Some laws are

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discriminatory. For example, it is illegal for a Palestinian to sell land to Israelis, an offense that is punishable by death.

Hamas, despite remaining under the authority of Palestinian laws prohibiting discrimination, continued to implement discriminatory policies based on race, political affiliation, gender, and sexual orientation.

Many NGOs reported Israeli actions in the West Bank and Gaza amounted to racial and cultural discrimination, and they cited legal differences between Palestinians in the West Bank and Jewish settlers in the West Bank as a clear policy of racial discrimination.

Persons with Disabilities (Occupied Territories)

There is no reference in PA law to disability. Access to buildings, information, or communications was not mandated. Palestinians with disabilities continued to receive uneven and poor quality services and care. The PA depended on UN agencies and NGOs to care for persons with physical disabilities and offered substandard care for persons with mental disabilities. There were reports Israeli authorities placed detainees deemed mentally ill or a threat to themselves or others in isolation without full medical evaluation. According to Physicians for Human Rights-Israel, isolation of prisoners with mental disabilities was common.

Familial and societal discrimination against persons with disabilities existed in both the West Bank and Gaza. Press reports indicated there were isolated incidents of parents in the West Bank performing hysterectomies on mentally ill girls to prevent them from becoming pregnant; most of these parents stated they intended to protect their daughters from rape.

Other Relevant References

Principal human rights problems were institutional, legal, and societal discrimination against Arab citizens, Palestinian residents of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (see annex), non-Orthodox Jews, and other religious groups; societal discrimination against persons with disabilities; and societal discrimination and domestic violence against women, particularly in Bedouin society.

According to the Ministry of Welfare, there were many cases of children with disabilities who were sexually assaulted that awaited investigation during the year.

There are reduced minimum wages for youths and persons with disabilities.

Domestic abuse of women, societal discrimination against women and persons with disabilities, and child labor remained serious problems.

According to Physicians for Human Rights-Israel (PHR-Israel), isolation of prisoners with mental illness was common.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Israel signed the Convention on 30/3/2007 and ratified the Convention on 28/9/2012.

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Jordan

Constitution and Laws

The constitution states that all citizens are equal under the law and prohibits discrimination based on race, language, and religion; however, discrimination on the basis of gender, disability, and social status is not specifically prohibited. The government did not effectively enforce these provisions, and the penal code does not address discrimination, thereby severely limiting judicial remedies. Women faced significant and widespread discrimination across society, especially in the economy and politics.

Persons with Disabilities

The law generally provides equal rights to persons with disabilities, but such legal protections were not upheld in practice. Activists noted that the law on the rights of persons with disabilities lacked implementing regulations. The Higher Council for the Affairs of People with Disabilities (HCAPD), a government body, works with ministries, the private sector, and NGOs to formulate and implement strategies to assist persons with disabilities. Citizens and NGOs universally reported that persons with disabilities faced problems in obtaining employment and accessing education, health care, transportation, and other services, particularly in rural areas.

Human rights activists reported that some persons with disabilities were subjected to cruel and inhuman treatment at institutions and rehabilitation centers. On June 4, the public prosecutor filed assault charges against a caretaker at the government-run Karak Rehabilitation Center for cutting both ears of a resident with a hearing impairment and intellectual disability. The case continued at year's end.

The electoral law directs the government to verify that voting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities and allows such persons to bring a personal assistant to the polling station; the Independent Electoral Commission has responsibility for implementing this law.

The HCAPD reported that educational accommodations were more readily available at the university level than in elementary and secondary schools. At all levels of education, children with certain types of disabilities were excluded from studying certain subjects and often could not access critical educational support services, such as sign language interpretation. General education teachers were not trained to work with students with various disabilities. Families of children with disabilities reported that teachers and principals often refused to include children with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. During registration for the 2012-13 school year, the Ministry of Education refused to register children with mild and moderate intellectual or developmental disabilities who had previously attended private schools with HCAPD funding, which was withdrawn during the year. The Ministry of Education provided accessible transportation to specialized centers for children with disabilities but not to mainstream schools. However, there remained insufficient capacity in specialized centers for all students who required accommodations. Students with significant intellectual disabilities fell under the authority of the Ministry of Social Development rather than the Ministry of Education.

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The Special Buildings Code Department is tasked with enforcing accessibility provisions and oversees retrofitting of existing buildings to comply with building codes. The vast majority of private and public office buildings continued to have limited or no access for persons with disabilities. Municipal infrastructure such as streets, sidewalks, and intersections were not accessible.

The law mandates that public and private sector establishments with between 25 and 50 workers employ at least one person with disabilities and that establishments with more than 50 workers must reserve 4 percent of their positions for persons with disabilities. However, the law lacked implementing regulations and was rarely enforced. In addition employers who state the nature of the work is not suitable for persons with disabilities are exempt from the quota. Employers, including the government's Civil Service Bureau, frequently required potential employees with disabilities to present a medical letter certifying the bearer was competent to perform the job in question. Human rights activists considered the letter a large barrier to participation in public life because some medical professionals were not aware of the full range of accommodations available and thus certified individuals as not able to perform certain tasks. During the year the HCAPD documented four cases in which persons with disabilities were denied or suspended from work they were qualified to perform solely because of their disabilities. Banks commonly refused to allow visually impaired persons to independently open a bank account and required blind applicants to bring two male witnesses to certify each transaction. Banks commonly refused to issue visually impaired customers automated teller machine cards.

The forced sterilization of women and girls with intellectual disabilities was a common practice during the year. Girls and women with disabilities were particularly at risk for gender-based violence.

Human rights activists and the media reported that children and adults with disabilities were vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse while in institutions, rehabilitation centers, or other care settings, including their family homes. Some of these institutions were government-operated, and some of the abusers were government employees.

Other Relevant References

Human rights activists stated that girls and women with disabilities were particularly at risk of gender-based violence.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Jordan signed the Convention and Optional Protocol on 30/3/2007. Jordan ratified the Convention on 31/3/2008.

Kuwait

Constitution and Laws

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, origin, disability, or language. The law did not prohibit discrimination based on social status, gender, or sexual orientation. In practice the government did not

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uniformly or consistently enforce laws against discrimination, and a number of laws and regulations discriminated against women, Bidoon, noncitizens, and domestic and foreign workers.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, and mental disabilities and imposes penalties on employers who refrain without reasonable cause from hiring persons with disabilities. The law also mandates access to buildings for persons with disabilities. The government generally enforced these provisions. There were no specific reports of discrimination against persons with disabilities; however, noncitizens with disabilities neither had access to government-operated facilities nor received stipends paid to citizens with disabilities that covered transportation, housing, job training, and social welfare costs.

The National Assembly has a Committee for Disabled Affairs. In 2010 the government approved a disability law; however, it had not been implemented at year's end, reportedly because of conflicts with existing law. Failure to implement the new law precluded larger disability grants, reduced working hours, and improved housing loans for citizens and Bidoon with mental or physical disabilities. Without the requirement that government employers with workforces of 50 persons or more to recruit at least 4 percent of their workforce from vocationally trained persons with special needs, employment of persons with disabilities suffered. While the law remains unimplemented, citizens with disabilities, or those with children with disabilities, did not receive larger than normal housing grants and earlier pensions. Without the new law, Bidoon with disabilities were not normally entitled to receive housing grants.

Representatives from ministries, other governmental bodies, Kuwait University, and several NGOs constitute the government's Higher Council for Handicapped Affairs, which makes policy recommendations, provides direct financial aid to persons with disabilities, and facilitates their integration into schools, jobs, and other social institutions. The government supervised and contributed to schools and job and training programs oriented to persons with special needs.

Other Relevant References

The government restricted the operations of domestic and international human rights groups and limits cooperation with them. The law permits the existence of NGOs; however, the government continued to deny licenses to some NGOs. NGOs may not engage in political activity and are prohibited from encouraging sectarianism. They must also demonstrate that their existence is in the public interest. The only local independent NGOs dedicated specifically to human rights were the Kuwait Human Rights Society (KHRS) and the Kuwaiti Society for Fundamental Human Rights. Local licensed NGOs devoted to specific groups, such as women, children, foreign workers, prisoners, and persons with disabilities, were permitted to operate without government interference.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Kuwait has not signed the Convention.

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Lebanon

Constitution and Laws

The law provides for equality among all citizens and prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The government generally respected these provisions; however, they were not enforced, especially in economic matters, and aspects of the law and traditional beliefs discriminated against women.

Persons with Disabilities

Although prohibited by law, discrimination against persons with disabilities continued. The law defines a “disability” as a physical, sight, hearing, or mental impairment. The law stipulates that at least 3 percent of all government and private sector positions be filled by persons with disabilities, provided such persons fulfill the qualifications for the position; however, there was no evidence the law was enforced. The law mandates access to buildings by persons with disabilities, but the government failed to amend building codes. Many persons with mental disabilities were cared for in private institutions, several of which the government subsidized.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and the National Council of Disabled are responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. According to the president of the Arab Organization of Disabled People, little progress has been made since the law on disabilities was passed in 2000. Approximately 100 relatively active but poorly funded private organizations made most of the efforts to assist persons with disabilities.

In 2009 the Ministry of Interior issued a decree to provide accessibility to polling stations for persons with special needs during the parliamentary elections; however, a Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union study showed that only six of the 1,741 polling stations satisfied all six criteria for accessibility.

Some NGOs (often managed by religious entities) offered services (education/health) for children with disabilities. The Ministry of Social Affairs contributed to the cost per child, although payments to the organizations were often delayed. According to the Ministry of Social Affairs, it supported school attendance, vocational training, and rehabilitation for approximately 7,300 persons.

Depending on the type and/or severity of the disability, children may attend regular school. Often, due to lack of awareness or knowledge, school staff did not identify a specific disability in children and were unable to adequately advise the parents. In such cases children often ended up repeating classes or dropping out of school.

The public school sector was ill-equipped to accommodate students with physical disabilities. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education’s decree 9091 for new school buildings stipulates that “schools should include all necessary facilities in order to receive the physically challenged.”

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A 2011 report of the Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union cited six key challenges affecting the integration of disabled children in public schools: poor regulatory framework; poor infrastructure that was not disability-friendly; curricula that did not include material to assist children with disabilities; laboratories and workshops that did not have the equipment required by curricula targeting children with disabilities, and laboratories that lacked space and access for persons with disabilities, especially those using wheelchairs; teaching media and tools that relied increasingly on computers and audiovisual material without alternatives for the blind, deaf or physically challenged; and lack of specialized transportation to and from schools.

Other Relevant References

A number of domestic and international human rights groups generally operated without overt government restriction and investigated and published their findings on human rights cases. Domestic human rights groups included: [...] the National Association for the Rights of the Disabled.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Lebanon signed the Convention and Optional Protocol on 14/6/2007.

Libya

Constitution and Laws

The Constitutional Declaration contains clear references to equal rights, stating that all citizens are equal before the law in enjoying civil and political rights, equal opportunities, and the duties of citizenship without discrimination based on religion, sect, language, wealth, sex, descent, political views, social status, or regional, family, or tribal affiliations. However, the interim governments did not enforce these prohibitions effectively, particularly with regard to women and minorities.

Persons with Disabilities

The Constitutional Declaration addresses the rights of persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities and requires the state to provide monetary and other types of social assistance. In addition, a number of organizations provided services to persons with disabilities. Few public facilities had adequate access for persons with physical disabilities, resulting in restricted access to employment, education, and health care. New sidewalks did not have curb cuts for persons in wheelchairs, and new construction often did not have accessible entrances. There was limited access to information or communications. Nevertheless, the Department of Education undertook efforts to mainstream children with disabilities into the school system, and the National Election Commission took some steps to attempt to make the July election accessible to persons with disabilities.

The revolution caused injuries and disabilities among fighters and civilians, including children maimed by mortar or gunfire or injured due to remaining unexploded ordnance. The interim governments made efforts to set up mechanisms to address problems among the war-wounded, including the evacuation of large numbers of injured to hospitals in other countries for extended treatment. In addition, the war-

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wounded were provided monetary payments and given preferential hiring for some government positions.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Libya signed the Convention on 1/5/2008.

Morocco

Constitution and Laws

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, social status, faith, culture, regional origin, or any other personal circumstance; however, there was discrimination based on each of these factors. New constitutional provisions provide for gender equality and parity, although parliament has yet to pass implementing legislation.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, and access to health care; however, the government generally did not effectively enforce these provisions. The law also provides for regulations and building codes that assure access for persons with disabilities, although the government did not effectively implement these laws and regulations. While building codes enacted in 2003 require accessibility for all persons, the codes exempt most pre-2003 structures and were rarely enforced for new construction. Government policy provides that persons with disabilities should have equal access to information and communications, but special communication devices for the blind and deaf were not widely available.

The Ministry of Social Development, Family, and Solidarity has responsibility for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and attempted to integrate persons with disabilities into society by implementing a quota of 7 percent for persons with disabilities in vocational training in the public sector and 5 percent in the private sector. Both sectors were far from achieving such quotas. Since 2008 the government has opened some 400 integrated classes for children with learning disabilities, but integration was largely left to private charities. Families typically supported persons with disabilities, although some survived by begging.

Other Relevant References

The penal code stipulates two types of domestic violence. High-level misdemeanors occur when the victim suffers injuries that result in 20 days of disability from work. Low-level misdemeanors occur for victims who suffer disability for less than 20 days. However, NGOs reported that the courts rarely prosecuted perpetrators of low-level misdemeanors. A local NGO, the Global Women's Institute, reported that often laws are not implemented due to societal concerns regarding breaking up a family and due to the conservative mentality of some police and court officials.

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Other Relevant References

Prison facilities do not provide adequate access to health care and did not accommodate the needs of prisoners with disabilities.

There were reports that Women's shelters for domestic violence were not accessible to persons with disabilities.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Morocco signed the Convention on 30/3/2007. Morocco ratified the Convention and the Optional Protocol on 8/4/2009.

Oman

Constitution and Laws

The law prohibits discrimination against citizens on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, race, language, religion, place of residence, and social class. The government selectively enforced prohibitions on most bases of discrimination, but did not do so for discrimination against women.

Persons with Disabilities

The law provides persons with disabilities, including physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities, the same rights as other citizens in employment, education, access to health care, and the provision of other state services. However, persons with disabilities continued to face discrimination. The law mandates access to buildings for persons with disabilities, but many older buildings, including government buildings and schools, do not conform to the law. The law also requires private enterprises employing more than 50 persons to reserve at least 2 percent of positions for persons with disabilities. In practice this regulation was not widely enforced.

There is no protective legislation to provide for equal educational opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The Ministry of Social Development is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The government provided alternative education opportunities for more than 500 children with disabilities, including overseas schooling when appropriate; this was largely due to lack of capacity within the country. Additionally, the Ministry of Education partnered with the International Council for Educational Reform and Development to create a curriculum for students with mental disabilities within the standard school system, which was in place throughout the year. Persons with disabilities are not restricted from voting or participating in civic affairs.

Other Relevant References

No registered domestic human rights NGOs or fully autonomous domestic human rights groups existed in the country. There were civil society groups, however, that advocated for persons protected under human rights conventions, particularly women and the disabled. In the absence of specific human rights

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groups, during the year the government took an increasing role in human rights protection and establishing reporting mechanisms.

The law provides for freedom of association "for legitimate objectives and in a proper manner." The Council of Ministers approved the establishment of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)--officially recognized as associations--to work on issues relating to women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, the environment, and other topics approved by the council.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Oman signed the Convention on 17/3/2008. Oman ratified the Convention on 6/1/2009.

Qatar

Constitution and Laws

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on gender, race, language, religion, but not disability, sexual orientation, or social status. In practice custom outweighed government enforcement of nondiscrimination laws, and legal, cultural, and institutional discrimination existed against women, noncitizens, and foreign workers.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against--and requires the allocation of resources for--persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, and other state services or other areas. There was no underlying pattern of abuse at education facilities, mental health facilities, or prisons. The government is charged with acting on complaints from individuals and the NHRC and enforcing compliance. The law requires that 2 percent of jobs in government agencies and public institutions be reserved for persons with disabilities, and most government entities appeared to carry out this law in practice. Private sector businesses employing a minimum of 25 persons are also required to hire persons with disabilities as 2 percent of their staff. Employers who violate these employment provisions are subject to fines of up to 20,000 riyals (\$5,500). There were no reports of violations during the year.

Private and independent schools generally provided most of the required services for students with disabilities, but government schools did not. Few public buildings met the required standards of accessibility for persons with disabilities, and new buildings generally did not comply with standards. The SCFA is charged with ensuring compliance with the rights and provisions mandated under the law, but compliance was not effectively enforced.

The right of persons with disabilities to vote and participate in civic affairs was not restricted, and there were designated schools for students with disabilities.

Other Relevant References

In cases of divorce, young children usually remain with the mother, regardless of her religion, unless she is found to be unfit. Sons remain in the custody of the mother until the age of 13 and daughters until the

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age of 15. In certain conditions, the court may extend the age of maternal custody to 15 years for sons and to the time of marriage for daughters. In exceptional cases, the mother retains custody of children with disabilities with no age limit stipulated. Women who are granted guardianship over their children by law receive their financial rights and associated right of residence.

The Department of Public Safety oversaw safety training and conditions, and the state-run petroleum company had its own safety standards and procedures. The regulations listed partial and permanent disabilities for which compensation may be awarded, some connected with handling chemicals and petroleum products or construction injuries. The law specifically set rates of payment and compensation. The government provided free medical treatment to workers who suffered work-related sickness or injuries.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Qatar signed the Convention and Optional Protocol on 9/7/2007. Qatar ratified the Convention on 13/5/2008.

Saudi Arabia

Constitution and Laws

The law prohibits discrimination based on race but not gender, disability, language, sexual orientation and gender identity, or social status. The law and tradition discriminated based on gender. The law and the guardianship system restrict women to the status of a legal dependent vis-a-vis their male guardians. This status is unchanged even after women reach adulthood. Women and some men faced widespread and state-enforced segregation based on societal, cultural, and religious traditions.

The government generally reinforced Sharia-based traditional prohibitions on discrimination based on disability, language, social status, or race.

Persons with Disabilities

The law does not prohibit discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, or the provision of other state services or other areas. There is no legislation mandating public accessibility to buildings, information, and communications. Newer commercial buildings often included such access, as did some newer government buildings. Children with disabilities could attend government-supported schools. Persons with disabilities had equal access to information and communications.

Information about patterns of abuse of persons with disabilities in prisons and educational and mental health institutions was not available. The Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation projects and social care programs increasingly brought persons with disabilities into the mainstream.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Saudi Arabia ratified the Convention and the Optional Protocol on 24/6/2008.

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Syria

Constitution and Laws

The constitution provides for equal rights and equal opportunity for all citizens and prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The constitution provides for equal rights and equal opportunity for all citizens and prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The government did not enforce the law effectively or make any serious attempt to do so. Women faced widespread violence, discrimination, and significant restrictions on their rights.

Persons with Disabilities

The numbers of persons with disabilities because of the conflict was not fully documented. In addition to physical effects, many groups and activists noted high levels of trauma and psychological suffering.

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities and seeks to integrate them into the public sector workforce, but the government did not effectively enforce these provisions. The law protects persons with disabilities from discrimination in education, access to health, or provision of other state services, and it reserves 4 percent of government jobs and 2 percent of private jobs for persons with disabilities. The law did not specifically restrict the rights of persons with disabilities regarding access to air travel and other transportation. Private businesses are eligible for tax exemptions after hiring persons with disabilities.

The government did not effectively implement access for persons with disabilities to buildings, communication, or information. Children with disabilities attended primary and secondary school in addition to seeking higher education.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor is responsible for assisting persons with disabilities and worked through dedicated charities and organizations to provide assistance, often to promote self-sufficiency through vocational training.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Syria signed the Convention on 30/3/2007 and ratified the Convention and Optional Protocol on 10/7/2009.

Tunisia

Constitution and Laws

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government generally respected this provision; however, women faced significant barriers to their economic and political participation, and certain laws adversely affected women. Despite these challenges, the government broke with past taboos and sought to change social norms on topics such as domestic abuse and violence against women and children.

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Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical or mental disabilities and mandates that at least 1 percent of public and private sector jobs be reserved for disabled persons; however, NGOs reported this law was not widely enforced, and many employers remained unaware of its existence. There were no statistics on patterns of abuse in educational and mental health facilities, including degrading treatment, arbitrary commitment, abusive use of physical restraints, unhygienic conditions, inadequate or dangerous medical care, and sexual or other violence. Some children with disabilities attended school.

There was some discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, and the provision of other state services.

A 1991 law, which remained in effect after the revolution, requires all new public buildings to be accessible to persons with physical disabilities, and the government generally enforced the law. Persons with disabilities did not have access to most buildings built before 1991. The government issues cards to persons with disabilities for benefits such as unrestricted parking, priority medical services, preferential seating on public transportation, and consumer discounts. The government provided tax incentives to companies to encourage the hiring of persons with physical disabilities. The Ministry of Social Affairs is charged with protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. There were approximately 300 government-administered schools for special needs children, five schools for the blind, one higher education school, and one vocational training institution.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Tunisia signed the Convention and Optional Protocol on 30/3/2007. Tunisia ratified the Convention and the Optional Protocol on 2/4/2008.

United Arab Emirates

Constitution and Laws

The constitution provides for equality for citizens without regard to race or social status, and the law prohibits discrimination based on disability; however, legal and cultural discrimination existed and went unpunished. The constitution does not prohibit discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Recognizing Arabic as the country's official language, the constitution does not prohibit language-related discrimination. Nor does it provide for equality of noncitizens.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons who have physical and mental disabilities; however, the government was slow to implement and enforce the law.

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The Ministry of Social Affairs is the central body dealing with the rights of persons with disabilities and raising awareness at the federal and local level.

Most public buildings provided some form of access for persons with disabilities in accordance with the law.

Health care provided in the Ministry of Social Affairs' five federal rehabilitation centers, as well as in private centers, reportedly was inadequate; the rehabilitation centers lacked a sufficient number of qualified individuals who specialized in physical and other medical therapies. Rehabilitation centers focused almost exclusively on medical rehabilitation for persons with disabilities and failed to address adequately the need for vocational rehabilitation. Rehabilitation centers considered persons with disabilities as subjects of medical care and medical "cures," which impeded social and economic integration and the recognition of the individuals' human rights and human dignity.

Various departments within the Ministries of Labor, Education, and Social Affairs were responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, and the government enforced these rights in areas related to employment, housing, and other entitlement programs. While enforcement was effective for jobs in the public sector, the government has not sufficiently encouraged hiring in the private sector. However, during the year, the Ministry of Social Affairs began developing public-private partnerships for the hiring of persons with mental disabilities, and for the hiring of deaf individuals, for example, with telecommunications companies. The emirate of Abu Dhabi reserved 2 percent of government jobs for citizens with disabilities, and other emirates and the federal government included statements in their human resources regulations emphasizing that priority should be given to hire citizens with disabilities in the public sector. Public sector employers provided reasonable accommodations, defined broadly, for employees with disabilities. The employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector remained a significant challenge due to a lack of training and opportunities, a lack of public awareness, and prevalent societal discrimination.

To combat societal discrimination, one of the primary objectives of General Authority of Sports and Youth Welfare was to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their sports programs. In April the country hosted the fourth Fazza International Wheelchair Basketball Championships. There was also a country-wide disabled sports federation.

The Community Development Authority of Dubai, among other government agencies, carried out public awareness campaigns during the year to improve understanding of sexual and psychological harassment faced by children with physical and mental disabilities.

Officials overseeing the September 2011 FNC election assisted voters with disabilities, and polling stations had wheelchair ramps at both the men's and women's entrances, as well as specific voting machines dedicated to persons with disabilities. Moreover, a blind candidate from Sharjah ran in the FNC election.

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The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

United Arab Emirates signed the Convention on 8/2/2008 and Optional Protocol on 12/2/2008. United Arab Emirates ratified the Convention on 19/3/2010.

Western Sahara

Information available on discrimination and other societal abuses in the territory is contained in the Human Rights Report on Morocco; the living conditions and social mores paralleled the situation in internationally recognized Morocco, and the laws are the same.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Western Sahara has not signed the Convention.

Yemen

Constitution and Laws

The law provides for equal rights and equal opportunity for all citizens; however, the government did not consistently enforce the law. Discrimination based on race, gender, and disability remained a serious problem. Some groups, such as the marginalized Akhdam community (an ethnic group largely descended from East Africans), faced societal discrimination based on social status. Despite strong female participation in the revolution, societal discrimination severely limited women's ability to exercise equal rights.

Persons with Disabilities

Several laws mandate the rights and care of persons with disabilities, but they are poorly enforced and there was discrimination against such persons. No law mandates accessibility of buildings, information, and communications for persons with disabilities. While there is extended-family support for persons with disabilities, formal implementation of legislated public support has been minimal.

Information about patterns of abuse of persons with disabilities in educational and mental health institutions was not available.

Authorities imprisoned persons with mental disabilities without providing adequate medical care. According to the Ministry of Human Rights, nurses and doctors watched the inmates. In some instances, authorities detained persons with mental disabilities without charge and placed them in prisons with criminals. The Ministry of Interior reported that at times family members brought relatives with mental disabilities to ministry-run prisons, asking officers to imprison the individuals. The Ministry of Interior-run prisons in Sana'a, Aden, and Ta'iz operated semiautonomous units for prisoners with mental disabilities in conjunction with the Red Crescent Society. Conditions in these units reportedly were deficient in cleanliness and professional care. At year's end, neither the Ministry of Interior nor the Ministry of Health had acted on a 2005 Ministry of Interior initiative to establish centers for persons with mental illness.

Consolidated Disability Findings from the 2012 U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices

The Ministry of Social and Labor Affairs is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The government's Social Fund for Development and the Fund for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled, administered by the ministry, provided limited basic services and supported more than 60 NGOs to assist persons with disabilities.

By law 5 percent of government jobs should be reserved for persons with disabilities, and the law mandates the acceptance of persons with disabilities in universities, exempts them from paying tuition, and requires that schools be made more accessible to persons with disabilities. It was unclear to what extent these laws were implemented.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Yemen signed the Convention on 30/3/2007 and Optional Protocol on 11/4/2007. Yemen ratified the Convention and the Optional Protocol on 26/3/2009.