

Consolidated Disability Findings from the 2014 United States Department of State Reports on Human Rights and Practices

Near East North Africa and Middle East

Introduction to the Department of State Report on Disability Human Rights

The U.S. Department of State Report on Human Rights in 2014 is based on research performed by the State Department, specifically the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. The reports focus on the role of government in establishing policies to protect the human rights of all citizens.

USICD has consolidated the references on disability from each country report into one comprehensive document. Each country summary within the document is organized into four possible subheadings:

1. **Constitution and Laws:** If and how a country's constitution or laws cover disability rights.
2. **Persons with Disabilities:** Material drawn from the report's section on "Persons with Disabilities."
3. **Other Relevant References:** Disability highlighted elsewhere in a country's report (e.g. within the section on children, women, or prison and detention center conditions, etc.).
4. **The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:** The status of a country's signature and ratification of the CRPD (Note: ratification dates are in a date/month/year format).

The following condensed reports are intended to be a resource only and do not necessarily reflect an endorsement of the quality of content or perspective contained within the reports. All content is pulled directly from the State Department reports with the exception of the CRPD status, which was added by USICD staff.

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Algeria

Constitution and Laws

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 the government did not effectively enforce these provisions. Persons with disabilities faced widespread social discrimination. 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, Family, and the Status of Women provided some financial support to health-care-oriented NGOs, but for many NGOs such financial support represented approximately 2 percent of their budgets.

Government statistics from 2013 stated there were two million individuals with disabilities in the country, the largest percentages of whom were classified as “chronically ill” or “other” (38 and 30 percent, respectively). These statistics accounted for those who registered with the government, including individuals who received a disability pension. The government distributed a monthly pension of DZD 3,000 to DZD 4,000 (\$38 to \$50) to registered persons with disabilities. Only those who earned less than DZD 20,000 (\$250) per month were eligible.

According to the Algerian Federation of Wheelchair Associations, however, there were three million persons with disabilities living in the country. The government estimated that 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.

In April the Ministry of National Solidarity, Family, and the Status of Women established the National Council of Handicapped Persons in response to a 2006 presidential decree. It serves as a consultative organ to study problems such as accessibility for handicapped persons, autism, and the education of children with disabilities.

Many persons with disabilities faced challenges in voting due to voting centers that lacked accessible features.

Other References

Employment: The law prohibits discrimination with respect to employment or occupation based on race, sex, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV- positive status, other communicable diseases, or social status. The government did not adequately enforce the law since discrimination reportedly existed.

Political Participation: Persons with disabilities reported impediments to voting due to voting centers’ lack of accessible features.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Algeria signed the CRPD and Optional Protocol on 30/03/2007. The government ratified the CRPD on 4/12/2009.

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. The government protected these rights 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 comprised approximately one-half of the population, of many fundamental legal, social, and economic rights.

Persons with Disabilities

The law stipulates equal treatment for persons with disabilities with regard to employment, and violations of the law are punishable with fines. It was unclear whether the government enforced these laws. The law does not address discrimination in education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, or the provision of other state services. According to the government, it re-established in 2012 a committee originally formed in 2011 to care for persons with disabilities 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.

Authorities mandated a variety of governmental, quasi-governmental, and religious institutions to support and protect persons with disabilities. New public buildings in the Central Municipality must include facilities for persons with disabilities. The law, however, does not outline specific criteria for what is required for facilities to be accessible for persons with disabilities. The law does not mandate access to other nonresidential buildings for persons with disabilities. There was no information available regarding a law providing access for persons with disabilities to information and communication.

There was no information available on the responsibilities of government agencies to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and actions taken by government agencies to improve respect for their rights. 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 disabilities, speech impediments, and Down syndrome, but the government did not fund private programs for children who could not find appropriate programs in public schools.

Eligible voters can vote either in their regular precincts or in a general polling station. The local precincts, which are mostly in schools, sometimes offered challenges to those with mobility issues; however, the general polling stations are in public spaces such as malls, which allow for assistance devices. One disabled candidate in the November parliamentary election complained that access restrictions separated him from the other candidates at a function, as there was no ramp for his wheel chair to get up on stage. There were also complaints there were no provisions made for those who were house- or hospital-bound to vote, as there was no absentee ballot system.

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 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.

In September 2013 Minister of Social Development and Chairperson for the High Committee for Persons with Disabilities Fatima Mohammed al-Balooshi announced the launch of a *National Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Al-Balooshi stated the government based the national strategy on human rights and focuses on the principles embedded in the UN Charter and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. She further noted the government formed the strategy in cooperation with the UN Development Program and based it on seven main themes: legislation; health and rehabilitation; education; economic and social empowerment; economic empowerment of women with disabilities; easy access to buildings, services, and information; and awareness.

Other References

Employment: The constitution guarantees equality between men and women in political, social, cultural, and economic spheres without breaching the provisions of Islamic cannon law. There are no specific protections regarding race, disability, language, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, HIV-positive status or having other communicable diseases, or social status.

The government was successful in ensuring a good environment for women to work, although women continued to face discrimination in the workplace; especially in fields traditionally dominated by men including leadership positions. In June women represented 85 percent of those registered as unemployed and represented about 23 percent of the work force. Women reported having to work twice as hard as men to get recognition at work and often faced hiring difficulty because of a perception they would become pregnant or their family lives would interfere with their work.

As in 2013 the Ministry of Social Development continued to fund the Disabled Services Center, which helped train and find work for disabled Bahrainis. It remained rare, however, for persons with disabilities to find employment in positions of responsibility. Many work places remained difficult to access for those needing assistance due to a lack of ramps, narrow doorways, and unpaved parking lots.

Prison and Detention Centers: There were no accommodations for persons with disabilities in prisons and detention centers. Prisoners with chronic medical conditions including sickle cell anemia, diabetes, and gout had difficulty accessing regular medical care. There were few accommodations for prisoners whose medical conditions required a special diet. Human rights groups reported prisoners who became physically or mentally disabled while in custody relied on fellow prisoners for their care.

Civil and Judicial Procedures: Local human rights activists reported the government provided compensation only for deaths that occurred in 2011. In addition to deaths, there were 421 applications for compensation for injuries; 193 cases were selected for the first phase, and the Civil Settlement Office assessed the settlement value of each claim based on the percentage of permanent disability determined by a medical examiner.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Bahrain signed the CRPD on 25/06/2007. The government ratified the CRPD on 22/09/2011.

Egypt

Constitution and Laws

The constitution states that all citizens “are equal in rights, freedoms, and general duties without discrimination based on religion, belief, gender, origin, race, color, language, disability, social class, political or geographic affiliation, or any other reason.” It does not specifically mention sexual orientation or gender identity. Many aspects of the law discriminate against women and religious minorities, and the government did not effectively enforce prohibitions against such discrimination.

Persons with Disabilities

The constitution states all citizens “are equal in rights, freedoms, and general duties without discrimination based on...disability” among other attributes, but does not explicitly “prohibit” discrimination.

The law provides for persons with disabilities to gain access to vocational training and employment but does not outlaw discrimination altogether (see section 7.d.). Government policy for employing persons with disabilities is based on a quota system (5 percent workers with disabilities) for companies with more than 50 employees. According to most sources, however, this quota was not enforced, and companies often had persons with disabilities on their payroll to meet the quota without actually employing them. Although the constitution states persons with disabilities are equal without discrimination before the law, at year’s end, there were no laws prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities in education, access to health care, or the provision of other state services, nor were there laws mandating access to buildings or transportation. Widespread discrimination continued against persons

with disabilities, particularly persons with 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.

In 2011 the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and local civil society organizations estimated the percentage of persons with disabilities to be 11 percent, or approximately 8.5 million persons. The Ministries of Education and Social Solidarity shared responsibility for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities rode government-owned mass transit buses free of charge, but the buses were not wheelchair-accessible and access assistance from friends and relatives was needed. Persons with disabilities 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.

Other References

Employment: The law and regulations prohibit discrimination regarding race, gender, disability, language, and social status. The law provides for persons with disabilities to gain access to vocational training and employment but does not outlaw discrimination altogether. The government did not effectively enforce prohibitions against such discrimination. Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to women and persons with disabilities (see section 6). Discrimination against migrant workers occurred (see section 2.d.).

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Egypt signed the CRPD on 4/04/2007. The government ratified the CRPD on 14/04/2008.

Iran

Constitution and Laws

The constitution prohibits 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 prohibit discrimination based on sex, 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. The law does not apply to private actors, and electoral law prohibits 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 located in urban areas and unable to meet the needs of the entire population.

The law provides for public accessibility to government-funded buildings, and new structures

appeared to comply with the standards in these provisions. There also were efforts to increase the access of persons with disabilities to historical sites. Nevertheless, government buildings that predated existing accessibility standards remained largely inaccessible, and general building accessibility for persons with disabilities remained a widespread problem. Persons with disabilities had limited access to information, education, and community activities.

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

Other References

Employment: 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 sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

There were systematic efforts by the government to limit women’s access to the workplace. In July male managers in the Tehran city government were barred from employing female secretaries or office managers. In August a policy prohibiting women’s employment in coffee shops, coffee houses, and traditional restaurants was announced. In September the local press reported that bands with female musicians would not be granted performance licenses. The performance ban would extend to the entire country a prohibition that had been in place in a few cities.

Discrimination occurred based on the above categories with respect to employment and occupation (see also section 6).

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Iran ratified the CRPD 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, or origin. The law prohibits discrimination based on race, disability, or social status. The government was ineffective in enforcing these provisions.

Persons with Disabilities

Although the constitution states that the government, through law and regulations, should care for and rehabilitate persons with disabilities in order to reintegrate them into society, there are no laws prohibiting 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 other state services. There were reports that persons with disabilities continued to experience discrimination due to social stigma. Although the Council of Ministers

issued a decree ordering access for persons with disabilities to buildings and to educational and work settings, incomplete implementation limited access. Local NGOs reported that many children with disabilities dropped out of public school due to insufficient physical access to school buildings, a lack of appropriate learning materials in schools, and a shortage of teachers qualified to work with children with developmental or intellectual disabilities. The Union for the Rights of the Disabled, a local NGO, reported that land mines and explosive remnants had a disproportionate impact on children--approximately 25 percent of all victims were children under age 14.

The Council of Representatives passed a law in 2013 establishing a commission for persons with disabilities and special needs to be led by the minister of labor and social affairs but to remain independent of the government. At year's end the government had not established the commission; instead, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs created a department within the ministry to carry out such functions. The Kurdistan regional government has a similar law.

In 2013 the Council of Ministers approved a 3-percent public sector employment quota for persons with disabilities, but employment discrimination persisted, and observers projected that the quota was not likely to be met by year's end (see also section 7.d.). Central government and Kurdistan regional government officials reported they had few resources to accommodate individuals with disabilities in prisons, detention centers, and temporary holding facilities. Mental health support for prisoners with mental disabilities did not exist.

The Ministry of Health provided medical care, benefits, and rehabilitation, when available, for persons with disabilities, who could also receive benefits from other agencies, including the Prime Minister's Office. The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs operated several institutions for children and young adults with disabilities.

Other References

Work Conditions: In December 2013 the government launched a Social Safety Net program to assist the unemployed and persons with disabilities in gaining access to financial aid and benefits from the government; at its inception the program covered more than one million persons.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Iraq ratified the CRPD on 20/03/2013.

Israel and Palestinian Territories

Constitution and Laws

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

PA law prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. PA authorities worked to enforce these laws but often failed to do so. Some laws are discriminatory. For example, it is illegal for a Palestinian to sell land to Israelis, an offense 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 alleged Israeli actions in the West Bank and Gaza amounted to racial and cultural discrimination, citing legal differences between the treatment of Palestinians and Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

Persons with Disabilities

The Palestinian Disability Law was ratified in 1999, but NGOs complained of very slow implementation. It does not mandate access to buildings, information, or communications, although UNRWA's policy was to provide accessibility in all new structures. Disability rights NGO Bizchut reported a lack of accessible transportation services in East Jerusalem.

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 in isolation detainees deemed mentally disabled or a threat to themselves or others without a 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 the Gaza Strip.

The Basic Laws provide a legal framework for prohibiting discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, and the provision of other state services. Legislation mandates access to buildings, transportation, and physical accommodations and services in the workplace, and access to mental health services as part of government-subsidized health insurance. On July 6, the minister of economy signed an Encouragement of Employment of Persons with Disabilities order requiring that 3 percent of the workforce of employers with more than 100 employees be persons with disabilities. According to NGOs, government progress in enforcing these laws was limited.

Societal discrimination and lack of accessibility persisted in employment, transportation, housing, and education. According to the Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Labor, the employment rate of persons with disabilities rose from 40 percent in 2007 to 51 percent in 2012. The rate remained lower than the 74 percent employment rate for persons without disabilities.

According to 2012 statistics, gross per capita income of persons with disabilities was 73 percent of that of persons without disabilities, but net income was relatively higher at 80 percent. The average monthly income of persons with severe disabilities was 36 percent lower than that of persons without disabilities.

The rate of persons with disabilities in the Arab community was 29 percent, compared with 17 percent in the Jewish population. Employment of Arab citizens with disabilities was 21 percent, compared with 49 percent for Jews with disabilities. Shortages of funding for Arab municipalities, including for education, adversely affected Arabs with disabilities.

The government reported improved access to interurban buses with 91 percent of municipal buses, 43 percent of inter-urban buses, and 73 percent of bus stops being accessible to persons with disabilities. Authorities projected 92 percent of central bus stops would be accessible to persons with disabilities by year's end. Ninety-five percent of train stations were accessible to persons with disabilities, with the remaining 5 percent scheduled to become accessible in 2015, according to the government.

Access to community-based independent living facilities for persons with disabilities, however, remained limited. According to the disability rights NGO Bizchut, more than 8,000 persons with intellectual disabilities lived in institutions and large hostels while only 1,500 lived in community-based settings. Following the government's decision to close private psychiatric hospitals, the government issued, but then rescinded, tenders for new small community-based housing units for persons with disabilities leaving these facilities. Reportedly, the government preferred to place them in existing institutions. Bizchut claimed there were prior complaints against several of these institutions. During the year the Ministry of Social Affairs announced a new program to move 900 persons with intellectual disabilities from institutions into community-based housing facilities within the next three years.

A family court restored legal capacity to a woman with a disability and removed her legal guardian in favor of a supported decision-making arrangement. Other laws passed during the year widen the scope of the Law Preventing Sexual Harassment to employees in sheltered vocational workshops, provide paternity leave to husbands whose wives cannot fully care for an infant due to a disability, and allow parents of children with disabilities to be absent from work for medical appointments as part of sick leave.

The law prioritizes access by persons with disabilities to public services, such as eliminating waiting in line as well as providing adapted seating and accessible facilities in public places other than buildings, such as public beaches, municipal parks, swimming pools, and cemeteries. For deaf and hard-of-hearing persons, the law provides for short message public announcement services.

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. The Unit for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities in the Labor Market, located within the Ministry of Economy, examined and promoted the employment of persons with disabilities. The unit has three support centers designed to assist employers who wish to hire persons with disabilities. During 2013, 474 employers applied to these centers for assistance, and 261 persons with disabilities found employment through their assistance. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services provided out- of-home placement and sheltered employment for persons with cognitive, physical, and communication disabilities. As of November there were 3,750 persons with mental disabilities employed in sheltered employment, 1,350 employed in the open labor market in supported employment, and 1,700 in nonemployment day care. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services also handled criminal investigations involving persons with certain disabilities, whether they were victims or offenders, when police requested assistance. The National Insurance Agency provided financial benefits and stipends, the Ministry of Health provided mental health and rehabilitation services, and the Ministry of Education provided special education services to persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Economy allocated NIS 15 million (\$3.8 million) for workplace modifications to accommodate persons with disabilities between 2007 and the end of the year.

Other References

Employment: The law and regulations do not prohibit discrimination regarding race, language, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, HIV-positive status or other communicable diseases, or social status. Laws prohibit discrimination on the bases of gender and disabilities; however, the government did not effectively enforce those laws and regulations.

There was discrimination based on the above categories with respect to employment and occupation. For further discussion of discrimination on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, HIV status, and disability, see section 6.

The Commission for Equal Employment Opportunities is charged with the implementation and civil enforcement of the Equal Employment Opportunities Law. The 26-member commission includes one member each from organizations that promote employment rights for Arab Muslims, Arab Christians, Druze and Circassians, Haredim, immigrants, elderly persons, women, and army veterans.

Additionally, the commission must have adequate representation of citizens of Ethiopian descent and of persons with disabilities. No details were provided by the government regarding violations of the law or enforcement activities.

Freedom of Movement: The government reported that as of December 16, 2,444 persons who entered Israel illegally through the Egyptian border in recent years were either placed in Holot or detained in Saharonim. According to NGOs, some detainees were documented trafficking victims, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, single mothers, unaccompanied minors, and those suffering from poor physical or mental health that were unable to work and who were dependent on the capacities of their communities and NGOs to support their basic needs.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Israel signed the CRPD on 30/03/2007. The government ratified the CRPD on 28/09/2012.

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 and remained a problem in practice. 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.

Persons with Disabilities

The law generally provides equal rights to persons with disabilities, but such legal protections were not upheld. Activists noted 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, worked 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 institutions and rehabilitation centers subjected some persons with disabilities to cruel and inhuman treatment. In April the Ministry of Social Development launched an investigation into allegations that staff at the government-run Karak Rehabilitation Center physically and sexually assaulted a resident. After news sources published photographs of the abuse, the Ministry of Social Development suspended six employees, who faced charges of negligence and failure to report a crime. The ministry said the resident's injuries resulted from a fight with another resident rather than from abuse by center staff.

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. Following the January 2013 parliamentary elections, the NCHR noted that accessibility for persons with disabilities needed improvement. Following the August 2013 municipal elections, the NCHR reported that most of the polling centers were not accessible to persons with disabilities.

Banks commonly refused to allow visually impaired persons to open a bank account independently 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 2013 NCHR report noted that school classrooms were not fully accessible and that there were no qualified teachers for children with disabilities, problems that remained an issue throughout the year. 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. Authorities did not train general education teachers 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. The education ministry provided accessible transportation to specialized centers for children with disabilities, but not to mainstream schools.

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.

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 public transport, streets, sidewalks, and intersections was not accessible. In 2012 the NCHR also reported that 82 percent of individuals with disabilities were economically inactive.

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. The law lacked implementing regulations, and authorities rarely enforced it. Additionally, 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 significant 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.

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.

The government endorsed instructions giving tariff exemptions for the vehicles of persons with disabilities and reduced the costs of hiring domestic help for persons with disabilities. Approximately 10,000 persons with disabilities (some 17 percent of the total estimated population with disabilities) benefited from these measures.

Other References

Women: The forced sterilization of women and girls with intellectual disabilities was until recently a common practice. The Sisterhood Is Global Institute estimated that 65 such hysterectomies were performed annually as recently as 2013. In April the General Fatwa Department issued a fatwa banning the practice, and Sisterhood Is Global Institute and the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities said they heard no reports of hysterectomies performed on intellectually disabled women during the year.

The law stipulates a sentence of at least 10 years of imprisonment with hard labor for the rape of a girl or woman 15 years of age or older. Spousal rape is not illegal. The Family Protection Law prescribes penalties of up to six months in prison for domestic abuse; however, NGOs reported that judges rarely prosecuted cases under the Family Protection Law because they considered its procedures were unclear. Instead, they prosecuted domestic abuses cases under the penal code, as injury or sexual assault cases. The government did not enforce the law against rape effectively, and violence and abuse against women was widespread. Women's rights activists speculated that many incidents went unreported because violence against women remained a taboo subject due to societal and familial pressures. The PSD's Family Protection Department (FPD) reported 1,556 cases of domestic abuse. Human rights activists stated that girls and women with disabilities were particularly at risk of gender-based violence.

Political Participation: In August parliament passed a constitutional amendment to broaden the mandate of the IEC to oversee municipal elections. The NCHR reported that during the municipal elections, some polling stations were not fully accessible to disabled persons.

Children: A 2013 government report found no physical or sexual abuse in state institutions; however, NGOs reported such abuses occurred. Cases involving violence against persons with disabilities or institutionalized persons are automatically referred to the FDP. During the year the Ministry of Social Development closed two day-care centers for violations related to the building code, inadequate space, or lack of supervisors. The committee highlighted the pervasive use of physical discipline, physical and verbal abuse, unacceptable living conditions, and a lack of educational, rehabilitative, or psychosocial services for wards and inmates. Activists for orphans' rights alleged that adult orphans and former wards of the state were especially vulnerable to forced and early marriage, labor trafficking, and sexual exploitation.

Some children of female citizens and noncitizen fathers must apply for residency permits every year, and permission was not assured. Children with disabilities experienced extreme difficulty in accessing constitutionally protected early and primary education.

Refugees: UNHCR reported that the government also prevented some Syrians seeking refuge from entering the country, and forcibly returned Syrian refugees, including women, children, war-wounded, and disabled persons to Syria.

Employment: Labor laws do not prohibit discrimination regarding race, sex, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, HIV-positive status or other communicable diseases, or social status.

Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to sex, gender, disability, and sexual orientation (see section 6). Discrimination against migrant workers occurred (see section 7.e.).

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Jordan signed the CRPD and Optional Protocol on 30/03/2007. The government ratified the CRPD on 31/03/2008.

Kuwait

Constitution and Laws

The law prohibits discrimination based on race, origin, disability, or language. The law does not prohibit discrimination based on social status, gender, or sexual orientation. The government did not 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 permanent 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. It 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, but 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.

In 2010 the government approved a disability law, and the National Assembly formed a Committee for Disabled Affairs for the past two years. In 2013 the committee drafted amendments to the 2010 law, including increasing the monthly allowance given to the mother of a disabled child or the wife of a disabled man, from 300 to 600 dinars (from \$1,065 to \$2,130). In November the Kuwait Credit Bank, in coordination with the Public Authority for the Disabled, approved the issuance of grants worth up to 20,000 dinars (\$71,000) to the families of citizens with disabilities.

Advocates for disabled rights criticized the government's slow reaction in providing individuals with disabilities the enhanced rights provided by law. For example, the law requires that government employers with workforces of 50 persons or more recruit at least 4 percent of their workforce from vocationally trained persons with special needs, but the government did not

attempt to enforce this and some other provisions of the law. Separate from the law, the government reserved a small number of admissions in the year's KU class for citizens with disabilities.

Children with disabilities attended public school, and there were no reported incidents of abuse of children with disabilities. The law does not restrict the right of persons with disabilities to vote and participate in civic affairs. Representatives from ministries, other governmental bodies, KU, and several NGOs constituted the government's Higher Council for Handicapped Affairs, which makes policy recommendations, provides direct financial aid to citizens with disabilities, and facilitates their integration into schools, jobs, and other social institutions. The government supervised and contributed to schools and job training programs oriented to persons with special needs.

Other References

Government and Nongovernmental Relationships: Locally licensed NGOs devoted to the rights or welfare of specific groups--such as women, children, foreign workers, prisoners, and persons with disabilities-- operated without government interference, as did a few dozen local, unlicensed human rights groups. The government and various National Assembly committees met occasionally with local NGOs and generally responded to their inquiries.

Employment: The law prohibits discrimination in employment based on race, sex, gender, and disability. The government immediately deports HIV-positive foreign workers, and there is no protection for workers based on sexual orientation. No laws prohibit labor discrimination based on language, communicable diseases (non- HIV), or social status, but no cases of discrimination in these areas were reported.

Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to women (see section 6) for both citizens and noncitizens. Domestic workers were at particular risk of discrimination or abuse due to the lack of a labor law specifying their rights.

Prison and Detention Center Conditions: There were no special accommodations made for persons with disabilities in the prisons or detention centers.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Kuwait ratified the CRPD on 22/08/2013.

Lebanon

Constitution and Laws

The law provides for equality among all citizens and prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. Although the government generally respected these provisions, they were not enforced, especially with regard to economic matters, and

aspects of the law and traditional beliefs discriminated against women. The law does not protect against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Persons with Disabilities

Although prohibited by law, discrimination against persons with disabilities continued. Employment 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, but there was no evidence it was enforced. Employers are legally exempt from penalties if they provide evidence no otherwise qualified person with disabilities applied for employment within three months of advertisement. The law mandates access to buildings by persons with disabilities, but the government failed to amend building codes. Many persons with mental disabilities received care in private institutions, several of which the government subsidized (see section 7.d.).

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 occurred since parliament passed the law on disabilities in 2000. Approximately 100 relatively active but poorly funded private organizations provided most of the assistance received by persons with disabilities.

Depending on the type and nature of the disability, children with a disability may attend regular school. Due to a lack of awareness or knowledge, school staff often did not identify a specific disability in children and could not adequately advise parents. In such cases children often repeated classes or dropped out of school.

The public school system was ill equipped to accommodate students with disabilities. Problems included a poor regulatory framework; poor infrastructure that was not accessible to persons with disabilities; curricula that did not include material to assist children with disabilities; laboratories and workshops that lacked the equipment required for children with disabilities; 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 that were not accessible to students with disabilities, including the blind, the deaf, and those with other physical disabilities; and lack of accessible transportation to and from schools. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education’s 2002 decree for new school building construction stipulated: “Schools should include all necessary facilities in order to receive the physically challenged.”

Some NGOs (often managed by religious entities) offered education and health services for children with disabilities. The Ministry of Social Affairs contributed to the cost per child, although the ministry often delayed payments to the organizations. According to the Ministry of Social Affairs, it supported school attendance, vocational training, and rehabilitation for approximately 7,300 persons in 2012.

In the 2009 election, a Lebanese Physically Handicapped Union study showed, only six of the country's 1,741 polling stations satisfied all criteria for accessibility.

Other References

Employment: The law provides for equality among all citizens and prohibits discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status. The law does not specifically provide for protection against discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV status, or other communicable diseases.

Although the government generally respected these provisions, they were not enforced, especially in economic matters, and aspects of the law and traditional beliefs discriminated against women. Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to women, persons with disabilities, foreign domestic workers, and LGBT and HIV-positive persons (see section 6).

Prison and Detention Centers: Prison and detention center conditions were harsh and often lacked access to basic sanitation. In some prisons, such as the central prison in Roumieh, conditions were life threatening. Facilities were not adequately equipped for persons with disabilities.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Lebanon signed the CRPD and Optional Protocol on 14/06/2007.

Libya

Constitution and Laws

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, but it does not explicitly prohibit discrimination. The government did not effectively enforce these provisions.

The government did not enact or effectively implement laws and programs to ensure access to buildings, information, and communications, but 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.

Other References

Employment: The Constitutional Declaration prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender, although it does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, disability, sexual orientation, social status, HIV-positive status, or having other communicable diseases. Rules against gender

discrimination were not adequately enforced. Discrimination in all the above categories occurred.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Libya signed the CRPD on 1/05/2008.

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. Discrimination occurred based on each of these factors. The 2011 constitution mandates the creation of a body to promote gender equality and resolve parity issues--the Authority for Equality and the Fight against All Forms of Discrimination -- but implementing legislation for the body had not been not adopted by year's end.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment, education, and access to health care. The law also provides for regulations and building codes that ensure access for persons with disabilities. The government did not effectively enforce or implement these laws and regulations. While building codes enacted in 2003 require accessibility for all persons, the codes exempt most pre-2003 structures, and authorities rarely enforced them for new construction. Most public transportation was inaccessible to persons with disabilities, although the national rail system offered wheelchair ramps, handicap-accessible bathrooms, and special seating areas. Government policy provides that persons with disabilities should have equal access to information and communications. 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 the quotas. The government maintained more than 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 References

Prison and Detention Centers: According to the CNDH, prison facilities did not provide adequate access to health care and did not accommodate the needs of prisoners with disabilities, although government sources claimed each prisoner received an average of 3.4 consultations with a medical professional during the first seven months of the year.

Women: A few NGOs made efforts to provide shelter for victims of domestic abuse. There were reports, however, that these shelters were not accessible to persons with disabilities. Courts had “victims of abuse cells” that brought together prosecutors, lawyers, judges, women’s NGO representatives, and hospital personnel to review domestic and child abuse cases to provide for the best interests of women or children according to proper procedure.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Morocco signed the CRPD on 30/03/2007. The government ratified the CRPD and Optional Protocol on 8/04/2009.

Oman

Constitution and Laws

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. Persons with disabilities, however, continued to face discrimination. The law mandates access to buildings for persons with disabilities, but many older buildings, including government buildings and schools, did 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. Authorities did not widely enforce this regulation.

There is no protective legislation to provide for equal educational opportunities for 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 collaborated 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. There were a number of civil society groups raising awareness of the experiences and needs of those with disabilities.

The Ministry of Social Development is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. In March a royal decree established the Directorate General of Disabled Affairs within the Ministry of Social Development. The directorate was tasked with preparing national plans and programs for disabled persons, and implementation of these programs in coordination with relevant authorities. The directorate was further authorized to supervise all of the ministry’s rehabilitation and treatment centers for the disabled.

Other References

Employment: Labor laws and regulations do not address discrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity, HIV positive status

or other communicable diseases, or social status. Discrimination occurred on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. For further discussion of discrimination, see section 6.

Government and Nongovernment Relationships: No registered or fully autonomous domestic human rights organizations existed. There were civil society groups that advocated for persons protected under human rights conventions, particularly women and the disabled. These groups were required to register with the Ministry of Social Development.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Oman signed the CRPD on 17/03/2008. The government ratified the CRPD on 6/01/2009.

Qatar

Constitution and Laws

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on gender, race, language, and religion, but not disability, sexual orientation, or social status. Local custom, however, outweighed government enforcement of nondiscrimination laws. Legal, cultural, and institutional discrimination existed against women, noncitizens, and foreign workers. The UN special rapporteur on the human rights of migrants reported salaries were sometimes calculated on the basis of nationality rather than experience or qualification levels.

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 reserving 2 percent of jobs in government agencies and public institutions for persons with disabilities, and most government entities appeared to carry out this law. 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 responsible for verifying compliance with the rights and provisions mandated under the law, but compliance was not effectively enforced.

Other References

Employment: The constitution prohibits discrimination based on gender, race, language, and

religion, but not disability, sexual orientation, or social status. Local custom, however, outweighed government enforcement of nondiscrimination laws, and legal, cultural, and institutional discrimination existed against women, noncitizens, and foreign workers. The government discriminated against noncitizens in employment, education, housing, and health services (see section 6).

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Qatar signed the CRPD and Optional Protocol on 9/07/2007. The government ratified the CRPD on 13/05/2008.

Saudi Arabia

Constitution and Laws

The law prohibits discrimination based on race but not gender, sex, disability, language, sexual orientation and gender identity, or social status. The law and tradition discriminate based on gender. The law and the guardianship system restrict women to the status of legal dependents 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. Nevertheless, discrimination based on race, lineage, or social status were common.

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. The law does not require 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 widely available. Persons with disabilities could participate in civic affairs, and there are no restrictions on men with disabilities from voting in Municipal Council elections. In 2013 the HRC appointed four subject-matter experts to work as advocates for persons with disabilities in the kingdom and to respond to complaints of discrimination; their work expanded during the year to include participation in international conferences on discrimination against persons with disabilities. The Prince Salman Center for Disability Research, a nonprofit research foundation, continued to conduct laboratory and field research on a range of disability and quality of life issues. 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.

Other References

Employment: Labor laws and regulations did not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, disability, language, or sexual orientation. Discrimination with respect to employment and occupation occurred with respect to all these categories. Women faced many discriminatory regulations, limiting the work they were allowed to do. There is no regulation requiring equal pay for equal work (see section 6).

Discrimination with respect to religious beliefs occurred. Members of the Shia community complained they were discriminated against based on their religion and had difficulty securing or being promoted in government positions.

Discrimination against Asian and African migrant workers occurred (see section 6). Government policies designed to increase the number of citizens in the workforce intentionally raised the costs of hiring migrant workers, and made it more difficult for them to find work.

Informal discrimination in employment and occupation occurred on the basis of sex, gender, race, religion, and sexual orientation/gender identity.

Women: Additionally, the government required Saudi men wishing to marry a second wife, who is a foreigner, to submit documentation attesting to the fact that his first wife is either disabled, suffering from a chronic disease, or is sterile. Women do not directly transmit citizenship to their children.

Prison and Detention Centers: Activists alleged authorities sometimes detained individuals in the same cells as individuals with mental disabilities as a form of punishment and indicated authorities equally mistreated the persons with disabilities. This was the case for political reformist Abdulaziz al-Wuhaibi, who remained in a military hospital's psychological ward during the year (see section 3).

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Saudi Arabia ratified the CRPD and Optional Protocol on 24/06/2008.

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 does not address sexual orientation or gender identity. 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. ISIL imposed severe restrictions on

women's personal conduct, attire, and freedom of movement in the territory it controlled (see section 1.g.).

Persons with Disabilities

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 care, or provision of other state services, and it reserves 4 percent of government sector jobs and 2 percent of private sector 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 law does not address specific disabilities.

Authorities did not fully document the number of persons with disabilities, but the conflict negatively affected persons with disabilities and increased their numbers through injuries. The SNHR reported the deaths of hundreds of citizens with pre-existing health conditions who could not access medical facilities due to conflict-related travel restrictions, including both regime and extremist checkpoints. In other instances regime blockades prevented the movement of medical supplies and persons to opposition-held areas and prevented persons with medical needs from seeking appropriate treatment.

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.

Other References

Employment: The constitution prohibits discrimination based on gender, although personal status and penal laws continued to discriminate. Since homosexuality is a legally prohibited activity (see section 6), many persons faced discrimination on the basis of their sexual orientation. The constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. There were no reports of government activities to encourage participation or prevent discrimination on the basis of disability. Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to certain ethnic groups (see section 6).

Conflict Related Abuses: The COI also reported government sniper fire and military assaults on medical facilities intentionally targeted the sick and injured, as well as pregnant women and persons with disabilities.

Prison and Detention Centers: Information on conditions and care for prisoners with disabilities was unavailable.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The Syrian Arab Republic signed the CRPD on 30/03/2007. The government ratified the CRPD and Optional Protocol on 10/07/2009.

Tunisia

Constitution and Laws

The law and the newly promulgated constitution explicitly prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions, although discrimination against women occurred due to reliance on customary law and social norms. The law is silent regarding sexual preference and gender identity. Traditional social norms resulted in discrimination.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons with physical or mental disabilities in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, or the provision of other state services. It mandates that at least 1 percent of public and private sector jobs be reserved for persons with disabilities. NGOs reported authorities did not widely enforce this law, and many employers were not aware of it. There were no statistics on patterns of abuse in educational and mental health facilities, and individual cases of employment discrimination against persons with disabilities were rarely reported.

A 1991 law requires all new public buildings to be accessible to persons with physical disabilities, and the government generally enforced the law. Persons with physical disabilities did not have access to most buildings built before 1991. The government enacted and effectively implemented laws and programs to provide access to post-1991 buildings, but not to information and communications.

The government issued cards to persons with disabilities for benefits such as unrestricted parking, free and priority medical services, free and 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 children with disabilities, five schools for the blind, one higher-education school, and one vocational training institution. The Ministry of Social Affairs managed centers in Tunis, Kairouan, Nabeul, and Sfax that provided short- and long-term accommodation and medical services to persons with disabilities who lacked other means of support.

Other References

Employment: The law and regulations prohibit employment discrimination regarding race, sex, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation and gender identity, HIV-positive status or presence of other communicable diseases, or social status. The government did not always

effectively enforce those laws and regulations due to lack of resources and difficulty in identifying when employers' traditional attitudes toward gender identity or sexual orientation resulted in discriminatory employment practices (see also section 6).

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Tunisia signed the CRPD and Optional Protocol on 30/03/2007. The government ratified the CRPD and Optional Protocol on 2/04/2008.

United Arab Emirates

Constitution and Laws

The constitution provides for equality of 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 specifically prohibit discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity; however, the constitution states that all persons are equal before the law. The government took some steps to advance the rights of women and promote the role of Emirati women in all sectors of society. Recognizing Arabic as the country's official language, the constitution does not prohibit discrimination concerning language, nor does it provide for equality for noncitizens.

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons who have physical and mental disabilities in employment, education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, or the provision of other state services; however, the government was slow to implement and enforce the law.

In March the emirate of Dubai issued a law to protect the rights of persons with disabilities in Dubai. The law was intended to foster cooperation among authorities in Dubai to provide health care, therapeutic services, rehabilitation, and housing for persons with disabilities.

In 2013 education authorities enrolled more than 4,500 persons with disabilities in public and private facilities that provided education, health services, sports, and vocational rehabilitation. Capacity was insufficient, but the government made efforts to increase support for those with disabilities. Approximately 2,000 persons with disabilities and learning difficulties attended special education classes in public schools in 2013.

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.

The Ministry of Social Affairs' seven federal rehabilitation centers, as well as some private centers, reportedly provided inadequate services. The rehabilitation centers lacked a sufficient

number of qualified individuals who specialized in physical and other medical therapies, and they focused almost exclusively on medical rehabilitation for persons with disabilities. Some centers offered vocational workshops but 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 are 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 did not sufficiently encourage hiring in the private sector. 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 be given to hiring 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. The government sponsored several initiatives to host international conferences for persons with disabilities, enhance airport accessibility, allow duty-free importation of designated goods for persons with disabilities, and improve accessibility to parks and swimming pools.

The General Authority of Sports and Youth Welfare provided programs to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in sporting activities. There is a Disabled Sports Federation designed to support these initiatives.

Officials overseeing the 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.

Other References

Employment: No specific law prohibits or regulates discrimination regarding race, sex, gender, disability, language, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, HIV-positive status or other communicable diseases, or social status with respect to employment or occupation. In free zones individualized laws govern employment requirements. For example, in the Dubai International Financial Centre, employers must not discriminate against any person based on sex, marital status, race, national identity, religion, or disability. Nevertheless, job advertisements requesting applications only from certain nationalities were common and not regulated.

Women:

The law criminalizes rape, and it is punishable by death under the penal code. The penal code does not address spousal rape. The penal code allows men to use physical means, including

violence, at their discretion against female and minor family members. Authorities sometimes filed domestic abuse cases as assault without intent to kill, punishable by 10 years in prison if death results, seven years for permanent disability, and one year for temporary injury. According to local media, the Dubai Foundation for Women and Children dealt with 229 cases of domestic abuse at a shelter in Dubai during the first half of the year.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The United Arab Emirates signed the CRPD on 8/03/2008 and the Optional Protocol on 12/02/2008. The government ratified the CRPD on 19/03/2010.

Yemen

Constitution and Laws

The law provides for equal rights and equal opportunity regardless of race, gender, language, beliefs, or disability, but the government did not consistently enforce the law. Discrimination based on race, gender, social status, sexual orientation and gender identity, and disability remained a serious problem. Some groups, such as the marginalized Muhamasheen community (an ethnic group largely descended from East Africans) and the Muwaladeen (Yemenis born to foreign parents), faced social and institutional discrimination based on social status. Despite significant female participation in the revolution and in the NDC, 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 authorities enforced them poorly, due to social stigma and official indifference. The law permits persons with disabilities to exercise the same rights as the able-bodied, but it was unknown whether this applies in practice.

The law reserves 5 percent of government jobs 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. The extent the government implemented these laws was unclear.

Children with disabilities may attend public schools, although schools make no special accommodations for them. There were some private educational institutions for persons with disabilities in large cities. Many parents refused to send their children with disabilities to public school due to concern about potential harassment by other children.

Although the law mandates new buildings have access for persons with disabilities, compliance was poor. Most persons with disabilities relied on their extended family for support. Information about patterns of abuse of persons with disabilities in educational and mental health institutions was not publicly available.

Authorities imprisoned persons with mental disabilities with criminals without providing adequate medical care and in some instances without legal charge. The MOI reported that at times family members brought relatives with mental disabilities to ministry-run prisons, asking officers to imprison the individuals; ministry-run prisons in Sana'a, Aden, and Ta'iz operated semiautonomous units for prisoners with mental disabilities in cooperation with the Red Crescent Society. Conditions in these units reportedly were deficient in cleanliness and professional care. At year's end neither the MOI nor the Ministry of Health had acted on a 2005 MOI initiative to establish centers for the mentally ill.

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 assisting persons with disabilities.

Other References

Employment: Labor laws and regulations prohibit discrimination with regard to race, sex, color, beliefs, language, or disability, and specifically state, "Women shall be equal with men in relation to conditions of employment and employment rights." The law does not address sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV status, or other communicable diseases. Authorities did not consistently enforce the laws, and discrimination based on race, gender, and disability remained a serious problem in employment and occupation.

Convention the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Yemen signed the CRPD on 30/03/2007 and the Optional Protocol on 11/04/2007. The government ratified the CRPD and Optional Protocol on 26/03/2009.