

Consolidated Disability Findings from the 2016 United States Department of State Reports on Human Rights and Practices

Near East

Introduction to the Department of State Report on Disability Human Rights

The U.S. Department of State Report on Human Rights in 2015 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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Other human rights concerns were the excessive use of force by police, including allegations of torture; limitations on the ability of citizens to choose their government; widespread corruption accompanied by reports of limited government transparency; and societal discrimination against persons with disabilities, persons with HIV/AIDS, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons. Women faced violence and discrimination, and there was some reported child abuse. Additionally, the government maintained restrictions on worker rights.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

c. Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

In September, LADDH called for an investigation into reports that male police officers in Ain Benian, west of Algiers, forced a detained 29-year-old woman with developmental disabilities to undress in front of them in the local police station. The woman's family reportedly filed a complaint with the local tribunal, but additional information was unavailable as of September.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

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. Few businesses abided by the law that they reserve 1 percent of jobs for persons with disabilities. Business that did not meet the 1 percent quota received a DZD 140,000 (\$1,282) fine. NGOs reported that the government did not enforce payment of fines. 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 a small fraction of their budgets. The ministry also provided disability benefits to persons with disabilities who registered with the government. Social security provided payments for orthopedic equipment.

The Ministry of Solidarity reported that it ran 222 centers throughout the country that provided support for persons with intellectual, auditory, vision, and physical disabilities. The ministry stated that it worked in concert with the Ministry of Education to integrate children with disabilities into public schools to promote inclusion. The majority of the ministry's programs for children with disabilities remained in social centers for children with disabilities rather than in formal educational institutions. Advocacy groups reported that children with disabilities rarely attended school past the secondary level. Many schools lacked teachers trained to work with

children with disabilities, threatening the viability of efforts to mainstream children with disabilities into public schools. Numerous private schools existed but, according to advocacy organizations, staff often acted more as caretakers than teachers due to a lack of training. Many persons with disabilities faced challenges in voting due to voting centers that lacked accessible features.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

The law prohibits discrimination with respect to employment, salary, and work environment based on age, gender, social and marital status, family links, political conviction, disability, national origin and affiliation with a union. The law does not prohibit discrimination with respect to employment based on sexual orientation, HIV-positive status, or religion. The government did not adequately enforce the law, since discrimination reportedly existed, specifically against migrant workers in the informal economy who lacked a legal means to address unfair working conditions.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Algeria signed the CRPD on March 30 2007. The government ratified the CRPD on 4 Dec 2009.

Bahrain

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

There were no accommodations for persons with disabilities in prisons and detention centers. Human rights groups reported prisoners who became physically or mentally disabled while in custody relied on fellow prisoners for their care.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

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. 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 authorities 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 or on 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 disabilities, 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 problems to those with mobility disabilities; however, the general polling stations are in public spaces such as malls, which allow for assistance devices. One candidate with disabilities in the 2014 parliamentary election complained that access restrictions separated him from the other candidates at a function, as there was no ramp for him to access the stage as a wheelchair user. There were also complaints there were no provisions made for those who were restricted to their house or a hospital 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 2013 the 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 in cooperation with the UN Development Program. At year's end the Ministry of Labor and Social Development continued to work with the UN agency on support activities connected to the strategy.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect for Employment and Occupation

The constitution provides for equality between men and women in political, social, cultural, and economic spheres without breaching the provisions of Islamic canon 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 lacked

any specific implementing regulations or processes to identify proactively cases of discrimination or to address and seek remedy for any cases of which they might become aware. The government took steps to promote women's participation in the workforce, although women continued to face discrimination there, especially in fields traditionally dominated by men, including leadership positions. Women reported having to work harder than men to be recognized at work; they often faced hiring discrimination because of a perception they would become pregnant or their family lives would interfere with their work.

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

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Bahrain signed the CRPD on 25 June 2007. The government ratified the CRPD on 22 Sep 2011.

Egypt

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Other human rights problems included disappearances; harsh prison conditions; arbitrary arrests; a judiciary that in some cases appeared to arrive at outcomes not supported by publicly available evidence or that appeared to reflect political motivations; reports of political prisoners and detainees; restrictions on academic freedom; impunity for security forces; harassment of some civil society organizations; limits on religious freedom; official corruption; limits on civil society organizations; violence, harassment, and societal discrimination against women and girls, including female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C); child abuse; discrimination against persons with disabilities; trafficking in persons; societal discrimination against religious minorities; discrimination and arrests based on sexual orientation; discrimination against HIV-positive persons; and worker abuse, including child labor.

Section 3. Freedom to Participate in the Political Process

The constitution provides citizens the ability to choose their government through the right to vote in free and fair periodic elections held by secret ballot and based on universal suffrage.

Constraints on freedom of expression, association, and assembly, however, limited citizens' ability to do so.

Participation of Women and Minorities: No laws limit the participation of women and members of minorities in the political process, and women and minorities participated. Social and cultural barriers, however, continued to limit women's political participation and leadership in most

political parties and some government institutions. Voters elected a record number of 75 women, 36 Christians, and nine persons with disabilities to parliament during the 2015 elections, a substantial increase compared with the 2012 parliament, which included 11 women, 13 Christians, and no persons with disabilities. The House of Representatives law outlines the criteria for the electoral lists, which provides that the House of Representatives must include at least 56 women, 24 Christians, and nine persons with disabilities. In December 2015 the president appointed 28 additional members of parliament, including 14 women and two Christians. The House of Representatives law grants the president the authority to appoint House of Representatives members, not to surpass 5 percent of the total number of elected members. If the president opts to use this authority, half of his appointments must be women, according to the law. Parliament included 89 women and 38 Christians.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

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 it does not explicitly “prohibit” discrimination.

Although the constitution states persons with disabilities are equal without discrimination before the law, at year’s end no laws prohibited discrimination against persons with disabilities in education, air travel and other transportation, the judicial system, access to health care, or the provision of other state services. Nor did laws mandate access to buildings or transportation. The law provides for persons with disabilities to gain access to vocational training and employment but does not outlaw discrimination altogether. Government policy for employing persons with disabilities is based on a quota (5 percent of workers with disabilities) for companies with more than 50 employees. According to most sources, authorities did not enforce this quota, and companies often had persons with disabilities on their payroll to meet the quota without actually employing them. 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.

The Ministries of Education and Social Solidarity share responsibility for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities rode government-owned mass transit buses without charge, but the buses were not wheelchair-accessible, and access required assistance from others. 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.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect for Employment and Occupation

The constitution states 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 specify age, citizenship, sexual orientation or gender identity, or HIV-positive status or other communicable diseases. The law provides for persons with disabilities to gain access to vocational training and employment but does not completely outlaw discrimination. 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 Apr 2007. The government ratified the CRPD on 14 Apr 2008.

Iran

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Children

The country established the National Body on the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2012 to promote the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Iran is signatory. The body, which reviews draft regulations and legislation relating to child rights, is not independent and is overseen by the Ministry of Justice. The country underwent a periodic panel review by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in January. The review noted many concerns, including discrimination against girls; children with disabilities; unregistered, refugee, and migrant children; and LGBTI children. The 2015 updates to the penal code called for the establishment of a separate juvenile court system, and male juvenile detainees were held in separate Rehabilitation Centers in most urban areas. Nevertheless, female juvenile detainees and male juvenile detainees in rural areas were held alongside adults in detention facilities, according to NGO reports presented to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Persons with Disabilities

The law generally prohibits discrimination by government actors against persons with disabilities but the law does not apply to private actors. No information was available regarding authorities’ effectiveness in enforcing the law. Electoral law prohibits those with visual, hearing, or speech disabilities from running for seats in parliament. While the law provides for government-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 State Welfare Organization of Iran, under the Ministry of Cooperation, Labor, and Social Welfare, is the principal governmental agency charged with protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. It was founded in 1980 to assist persons with disabilities and disadvantaged persons financially and through support to 16 government entities. In addition to supporting low-income groups, it is charged with trying to prevent physical disabilities and support rehabilitation.

The law provides for public accessibility to government-funded buildings, and new structures appeared to comply with the standards in these provisions. There were efforts to increase the access of persons with disabilities to historical sites. Government buildings that predated existing accessibility standards remained largely inaccessible, and general building accessibility for persons with disabilities remained a problem. Persons with disabilities had limited access to informational, educational, and community activities

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

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. According to the constitution, “everyone has the right to choose any occupation he wishes, if it is not contrary to Islam and the public interests, and does not infringe the rights of others.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The government accessioned the CRPD on 23 Oct 2009.

Iraq

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Conditions at some prison and detention facilities remained harsh and life threatening due to overcrowding, abuse, and torture. There were also cases of food shortages and inadequate access to sanitation facilities and medical care.

Both the government and the KRG operated secret detention facilities during the year, according to international observers and to the head of the KRG parliamentary Human Rights Committee. There was no information available to verify whether--or the extent to which--they remained in use. In May HRW reported that Da'esh had set-up at least three prisons where former prisoners reported regular floggings and torture.

The Ministry of Justice reported that there were no accommodations for disabled inmates and the previously announced initiative by the ministry to establish facilities for disabled detainees had not been implemented by year's end.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Persons with Disabilities

Although the constitution states 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, the judicial system, 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 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. NGOs also reported that authorities denied some children with physical disabilities access to schools.

The minister of labor and social affairs leads a commission for persons with disabilities, designed to remain independent of the government. The KRG deputy minister of labor and social affairs leads a similar commission, administered by a special director within the ministry. There is a 5 percent public-sector employment quota for persons with disabilities, but employment discrimination persisted, and observers projected that the quota was not likely met at year's end (see also section 7.d.). Government and KRG officials reported they had few resources to accommodate persons 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. The ministry maintained loans programs for persons with disabilities for vocational training.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

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, sex, religion, social origin, political opinion, language, or social status, and any forms of sexual harassment in the workplace. The government was ineffective in enforcing these provisions. The law does not prohibit discrimination based on disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity, HIV-positive status or other communicable diseases.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The government accessioned the CRPD on 20 Mar 2013.

Israel and The Occupied Territories

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Persons with Disabilities

The Basic Laws provide a legal framework for prohibiting discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities in employment (including hiring, work environment, and evaluation), education, air travel and other transportation, access to health care, the judicial system, or the provision of other government services. The 1998 Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law augments the Basic Laws and specifically prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities, including with regard to public facilities and services. This legislation mandates access to buildings, information, communication, transportation, and physical accommodations and services in the workplace, as well as access to mental health services as part of government-subsidized health insurance.

In March the Knesset passed an amendment to the Legal Capacity and Guardianship Law. The reform moves toward greater legal empowerment of persons with disabilities, including recognition of supported decision making and enduring powers of attorney, reduction of cases in which guardians will be appointed as well as the scope of their powers, and definition of the rights of persons under guardianship.

In 2014 the Minister of Economy signed an order requiring that 3 percent of the workforce of employers with more than 100 employees be persons with disabilities. In August the Knesset passed a law requiring persons with disabilities hold at least 5 percent of jobs in government-funded bodies with 100 employees or more. According to NGOs, government progress in enforcing these laws was limited. Government agencies for persons with disabilities worked to encourage leadership from within the community of persons with disabilities and offered a subsidy for employers for the first three years of employment of a person with a disability. Societal discrimination and lack of accessibility persisted in employment, housing, and education. According to the government's Commission for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the employment rate remained lower than that for persons without disabilities, and many persons with disabilities who were working had part-time, low-wage jobs. The government established a one-stop employment center for persons with disabilities during the year as a pilot project. The Ministry of Economy decreed that all sectors should increase their hiring so that persons with disabilities would constitute 3 percent of the workforce by the end of 2017, and the government continued to provide support and education for employers and workers with disabilities to close the gap. According to the commissioner for the rights of persons with

disabilities, 100 percent of municipal buses and 60 percent of intercity buses were accessible, as of November 2015.

The disability rights NGO Bizchut reported that Arab citizens with disabilities were employed at approximately half the rate of Jews with disabilities. Shortages of funding for Arab municipalities, including for education, adversely affected Arabs with disabilities.

Access to community-based independent living facilities for persons with disabilities remained limited. According to Bizchut, more than 8,000 persons with intellectual disabilities lived in institutions and large hostels while only 1,500 lived in community-based settings. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services moved 106 persons with intellectual disabilities from institutions into community-based housing facilities as part of a three-year pilot program that began in 2015.

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 hearing-impaired persons, the law provides for short-message public-announcement services.

The Commission for Equal Rights of Persons with Disabilities within the Ministry of Justice oversees the implementation of laws 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 had three support centers designed to assist employers who wish to hire persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services provides accommodation to persons with intellectual disabilities and/or autism who are either suspects or victims in criminal investigations.

Authorities hospitalized 24,000 persons in psychiatric hospitals each year, including 8,000 under involuntary hospitalization orders. According to a report published in March by Bizchut, psychiatric patients, including minors, faced excessive use of mechanical restraints of all four limbs. Patients were unable to move, even to scratch an itch or use the bathroom. Authorities restrained some patients for hours, others for days. The use of restraints was pervasive, with approximately 4,000 experiencing it at least once during their stay in 2014, often resulting in physical or psychological harm. The report found that the reason for restraint was often punishment or to control “nuisance” behaviors such as yelling or moving incessantly rather than any degree of danger. The Be’er Sheva Mental Health Center, which instituted an independent project to reduce the use of four-limb restraints, reduced the number of cases by 60 percent during the period 2014-15. During the year the Ministry of Health appointed a committee to investigate the use of restraints, which was scheduled to issue a report in January 2017.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

The Equal Employment Opportunities Law prohibits an employer from discriminating against employees, contractors, or persons seeking employment on grounds of gender, sexual orientation, personal status, age, race, religion, nationality, country of origin, opinion, political

affiliation, or medical suitability for military service. The Equal Pay Law provides for equal pay for equal work of male and female employees. The Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities (see section 6). The law does not explicitly prohibit discrimination on the basis of language, citizenship, HIV/AIDS status, or other communicable diseases. Regulations also prohibit discrimination with regard to working conditions, promotion, professional training, dismissal or severance payments, and retirement benefits or payments.

The law charges the Commission for Equal Employment Opportunities 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, Circassians, Haredim, immigrants, elderly persons, women, and army veterans. Additionally, the commission must have adequate representation of citizens of Ethiopian descent and persons with disabilities. The law enables penalties of up to 120,000 shekels (\$31,700) without the need to prove damages. The government provided no details regarding violations of the law or enforcement activities (see sections 7.b. and 7.e. for treatment of migrant workers).

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Israel signed the CRPD on 30 Mar 2007. The government of Israel ratified the CRPD on 28 Sep 2012. The government of the Occupied Territories/State of Palestine accessioned the CRPD on 2 Apr 2014.

Israel and The Occupied Territories - Israel and The Occupied Territories - The Occupied Territories

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Human rights problems in the parts of the West Bank under PA control included abuse and mistreatment of detainees, overcrowded detention facilities, prolonged detention, and infringements on privacy rights. Restrictions on freedom of speech, press, and assembly continued. There were limits on freedom of association and movement. Corruption--especially nepotism--violence against women, and societal discrimination were serious problems. At times the PA or PA-affiliated media and social media failed to condemn terror and embraced as "martyrs" individuals who died while carrying out attacks on Israeli civilians. Abuse of children and discrimination against persons with disabilities also were serious problems. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and HIV/AIDS status persisted. There were some limits on worker rights, and there was forced labor. Child labor, including forced labor, remained a serious problem.

Human rights abuses under Hamas included security forces killing, torturing, arbitrarily detaining, and harassing opponents, including Fatah members and other Palestinians with

impunity. Terrorist organizations and militant factions in the Gaza Strip launched rocket and mortar attacks against civilian targets in Israel, and they did so at or near civilian locations in Gaza. Human rights organizations reported authorities held prisoners in poor conditions in detention facilities in the Gaza Strip, and Hamas publicly unlawfully executed persons without trial or after proceedings that did not meet “fair trial” standards. Hamas also infringed on privacy rights. Hamas restricted the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, association, religion, and movement of Gaza Strip residents. Discrimination against women and domestic violence were serious problems. Abuse of children and discrimination against persons with disabilities were problems. Hamas frequently promoted anti-Semitism. Discrimination based on sexual orientation and HIV/AIDS status persisted. Restrictions on worker rights continued. Forced labor, including by children, occurred.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

NGOs reported PA, Israeli, and Gaza prison centers lacked adequate facilities and specialized medical care for disabled detainees and prisoners.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Persons with Disabilities

The PA ratified Palestinian Disability Law in 1999, but NGOs complained of very slow implementation. The law does not mandate access to buildings, information, or communications, although UNRWA’s policy is to provide accessibility in all new structures. The disability rights NGO Bizchut reported a lack of accessible transportation services in East Jerusalem, while the ICHR reported a lack of accessible transportation in Palestinian areas across the West Bank. The Disability Law prohibits discrimination due to a permanent or partial disability in physical, psychological, or mental capabilities.

Palestinians with disabilities continued to receive inconsistent and poor-quality services and care. The PA and de facto authorities in Gaza partially depended on UN agencies and NGOs to care for persons with physical disabilities and offered substandard care for persons with mental disabilities. Palestinians in Gaza reported little to no infrastructure accommodations for persons with mobility disabilities, and difficulty in importing wheelchairs and other mobility aids because of Israeli authorities’ control of goods transiting border crossings into Gaza. Fighting in the 2014 conflict destroyed a Gaza City Hamas-run center for the disabled.

There were reports Israeli authorities placed in isolation without a full medical evaluation detainees deemed mentally disabled or a threat to themselves or others. 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.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

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 based on gender and disabilities; however, the government did not effectively enforce those laws and regulations.

Jordan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Other human rights problems included restrictions on freedom of association and assembly, poor prison conditions, arbitrary arrest and denial of due process through administrative detention, prolonged detention, and allegations of nepotism and the influence of special interests on the judiciary. The government continued to infringe on citizens' privacy rights. The government prevented some refugees from coming into the country, deported other asylum seekers, and stripped some Palestinian refugees from Syria of their Jordanian citizenship prior to returning them involuntarily to Syria. Violence against women was widespread, and abuse of children persisted. Legal and societal discrimination and harassment remained a problem for women, religious minorities, religious converts, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) persons. Trafficking in persons remained a problem. Discrimination against persons with disabilities was a problem. Legal and societal discrimination against persons of Palestinian origin remained widespread. The government restricted labor rights and local and international human rights organizations reported abuse of foreign domestic workers.

Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

PROTECTION OF REFUGEES

Refoulement: The government forcibly returned Syrian refugees and Palestinian refugees from Syria, including women, children, war-injured, and persons with disabilities to Syria.

International organizations reported that the government carried out a preliminary screening of refugees waiting at the northeastern border and prevented some Syrians seeking refuge from entering the country. International organizations also reported that the government forcibly returned to Syria some refugees residing in Azraq camp and Ruwaished transit center after authorities had admitted them for additional screening via the informal border crossings in the northeast.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Women

Rape and Domestic Violence: 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, but NGOs reported that judges rarely prosecuted cases under the Family Protection Law because judges considered its procedures unclear. Instead, they prosecuted domestic abuses cases under the penal code, as injury or sexual assault cases.

The government did not effectively enforce the law against rape, 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 reported 1,563 cases of domestic abuse as of September 30. Human rights activists stated that girls and women with disabilities were particularly at risk of gender-based violence.

Children

Education: Education is compulsory from ages six through 16 and free until age 18. No legislation exists to enforce the law or to punish guardians for violating it. Children without legal residency do not have the right to attend public school. The Ministry of Education allows Syrians to enroll at local public schools, with the exception of students who have been out of school for three or more years who authorities did not permit to register. In some cases, authorities did not permit refugee children to register in school due to lack of documentation. The UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) helped cover the cost and provided a supplement to Jordanian teachers who worked in Za'atri and Azraq camps and in the host communities. The government doubled the number of double-shift schools to allow an additional 50,000 Syrian refugee students access to formal education in addition to the 145,000 enrolled in 2015. Additionally, the UNRWA operated 172 primary schools for approximately 120,000 Palestinian refugee children and opened enrollment to Palestinian refugee children from Syria as well as a limited number of Syrian refugees residing in the Palestinian camps. Some children of female citizens and noncitizen fathers must apply for residency permits every year, and authorities did not assure permission (see section 2.d., Stateless Persons). Children with disabilities experienced extreme difficulty in accessing constitutionally protected early and primary education.

Institutionalized Children: NGOs reported physical and sexual abuses occurred in government institutions. According to the NCHR, some juveniles in detention alleged mistreatment. Authorities automatically referred cases involving violence against persons with disabilities or institutionalized persons to the Family Protection Department. The community monitoring 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. NGOs noted that the Ministry of Social Development was responsive and followed up on reports from the community monitoring committee. 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.

Persons with Disabilities

The law generally provides equal rights to persons with disabilities, but authorities did not uphold such legal protections. Disabilities covered under the law include physical, sensory, psychological, and mental disabilities. Activists noted the law on the rights of persons with disabilities lacked implementing regulations. The Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities, 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. The government's emergency call center has video-teleconference capability with sign-language interpretation available for persons with hearing disabilities. The PSD received 650 calls from persons with hearing disabilities through the beginning of September.

Human rights activists reported that institutions and rehabilitation centers subjected some persons with disabilities to negligence and cruel and inhuman treatment. On May 15, the Ministry of Social Development reported that it had withdrawn the operating license for one center for persons with disabilities for abuse, and since the beginning of the year had warned 15 other centers for violating rules and regulations.

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. Many polling stations visited by international observers during the September 20 parliamentary elections were not accessible to persons with disabilities as they were located up steps or on the higher floors of buildings. Polling center staff made efforts to assist voters. The Independent Electoral Commission allocated one polling center in each governorate to be accessible for the deaf and hearing-impaired. For the first time, the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities was part of election monitoring teams. The council trained 118 observers specifically to monitor for accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Banks frequently refused to allow persons with vision disabilities to open a bank account independently and required blind applicants to bring two male witnesses to certify each transaction. Banks commonly refused to issue customers with vision disabilities automated teller machine cards.

According to the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities and 2015 data, only 3 percent of children with disabilities enrolled in schools. The 2013 NCHR report noted that school classrooms were not fully accessible, and there were no qualified teachers for children with disabilities; these problems remained throughout the year. The council reported that educational accommodations were more readily available at the university level than in elementary and secondary schools. At all levels of education, authorities excluded children with certain types of disabilities 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 Ministry of Education 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 law tasks the Special Buildings Code Department 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. A 2014 report by the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities, the Department of Statistics, and the Washington Group found that 76 percent of persons with disabilities over the age of 15 years 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, authorities exempted employers who state the nature of the work is not suitable for persons with disabilities 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. The government operated some of these institutions, and some of the abusers were government employees. Media reported some instances of abuse of persons with disabilities by family members during the year; the government launched investigations into many of these cases and referred the victims for assistance.

The government provides tariff exemptions for the vehicles of persons with disabilities and reduces 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 in 2015.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Labor laws do not prohibit discrimination with respect to employment and occupation on the basis of race, sex, gender, disability, language, political opinion, national origin or citizenship, age, 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 gender, disability, national origin, and sexual orientation (see section 6).

Union officials reported that sectors employing predominantly women, such as secretarial work, offered wages below the official minimum wage of 190 JD (\$266) per month. On August 24, news outlets published a report that the Social Security Corporation had identified 1,500 women

doing secretarial work earning under the minimum wage. Many women said traditional social pressures discouraged them from pursuing professional careers, especially after marriage. According to the Jordanian National Commission for Women, one-half of the country's university graduates were women, but women comprised only 13 percent of the labor force. Persons with disabilities faced discrimination in employment and access to the workplace. Migrant workers, faced discrimination in wages, housing, and working conditions (see section 7.e.)

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Jordan signed the CRPD on 30 Mar 2007. The government ratified the CRPD on 31 Mar 2008.

Kuwait

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

A nursery complex was provided for female inmates with children under two years of age. Officials stated the prison was not designed to facilitate prisoners with disabilities as, by law, any convict with a significant disability cannot be held in the central prison.

Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

Locally licensed NGOs devoted to the rights or welfare of specific groups--such as women, children, prisoners, and persons with disabilities--operated with little government interference, as did a few dozen local, unregistered human rights groups. The government and various National Assembly committees met occasionally with local NGOs and generally responded to their inquiries.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

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 government 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. 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 government still has not fully implemented social and workplace aides for people with physical, and in particular, vision disabilities. There is a disability law, and a parliamentary Committee for Disabled Affairs. Under that law the monthly allowance given to the mother of a disabled child or the wife of a person with disabilities is 600 dinars (\$1,980), and families of citizens with disabilities are eligible to receive grants worth up to 20,000 dinars (\$66,000).

During the year the government reserved a small number of admissions to Kuwait University for citizens with disabilities, and there was regular media coverage of students with disabilities attending university classes. Nonetheless, authorities did not provide noncitizens with disabilities the same educational opportunities, and noncitizen students with disabilities experienced a lack of accessible materials and lack of reasonable accommodations in schools. Children with disabilities attended public school, but information on whether there were patterns of abuse in educational settings was unavailable. Representatives from ministries, other governmental bodies, Kuwait University, 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 disabilities.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect for Employment and Occupation

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, non-HIV communicable diseases, or social status, but there were no reported cases of discrimination in these areas.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The government ratified the CRPD on 22 Aug 2013.

Lebanon

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Other human rights abuses included lengthy pretrial detention; a judiciary subject to political pressure and long delays in trials; violation of citizens' privacy rights; some restrictions on freedoms of speech and press, including intimidation of journalists; some restrictions on freedom of assembly; harassment of Syrian political activists and other refugees; restrictions on citizens' ability to choose their government; official corruption and lack of transparency;

widespread violence against women; societal, legal, and economic discrimination against women; societal and legal discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals; trafficking in persons; discrimination against persons with disabilities; systematic discrimination against Palestinian and other refugees and minority groups; killings related to societal violence; restricted labor rights for and abuse of migrant domestic workers; and child labor.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Prison and detention center conditions were harsh, and prisoners 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.

Section 2. Respect for Civil Liberties, Including:

PROTECTION OF REFUGEES

In January 2015 new government regulations banned the entry of all Syrian refugees unless they qualified for undefined “humanitarian exceptions.” During the year the government accepted Syrians seeking asylum only if they qualified under the “humanitarian exceptions” that the Ministry of Social Affairs reviewed on a case-by-case basis. These exceptions included unaccompanied and separated children, persons with disabilities, medical cases, and resettlement cases under extreme humanitarian criteria.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

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 disability. The law stipulates that persons with disabilities fill at least 3 percent of all government and private-sector positions, provided such persons fulfill the qualifications for the position; however, no evidence indicated the government enforced the law. 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. The Ministry of Social Affairs and the National Council of Disabled is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. According to the president of the Arab Organization of Disabled People, little progress had 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 mainstream 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 Ministry of Education and Higher Education stipulates for new school building construction: "Schools should include all necessary facilities in order to receive the physically challenged." Nonetheless, 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 students who were blind, deaf, and those with physical disabilities; and a lack of accessible transportation to and from schools.

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, although the ministry often delayed payments to the organizations. According to the ministry, it supported school attendance, vocational training, and rehabilitation for approximately eight thousand persons in 2014.

In the May municipal elections, access for persons with disabilities and older persons was a significant issue. Most polling centers had multiple floors with no elevators. ISF officers helped, and at times carried, some voters with disabilities into the polling stations. Some voting booths were on elevated levels, and some voters required assistance to reach the elevated polling booths.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

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 in some areas, 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 LGBTI and HIV-positive persons (see section 6).

The law provides for equal pay for equal work for men and women, but in the private sector there was discrimination regarding the provision of benefits. Only 26 percent of women,

compared with 76 percent of men, were in the formal labor force, and these women earned on average 61 percent of what men earned for comparable work (see section 6, Women). Although prohibited by law, discrimination against persons with disabilities continued. Employment law defines a “disability” as a physical, sight, hearing, or mental disability. The law stipulates that persons with disabilities fill at least 3 percent of all government and private-sector positions, provided such persons fulfill the qualifications for the position; however, no evidence indicated that the government enforced the law.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The government signed the CRPD on 14 Jun 2007.

Libya

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Persons with Disabilities

The Constitutional Declaration addresses the rights of persons with disabilities by providing for monetary and other types of social assistance for the “protection” of persons with “special needs” with respect to employment, education, access to health care, and the provision of other government services, 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 provide 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 wheelchair users, and new construction often did not have accessible entrances. There was limited access to information or communications.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

The Constitutional Declaration provides for a right of work to every citizen and prohibits any form of discrimination on religion, race, political opinion, language, wealth, kinship, social status, and tribal, regional, or familial loyalty. The law does not prohibit discrimination on age, gender, disability, sexual orientation and/or gender identity, social status, HIV-positive status, or having other communicable diseases. The law does not specifically prohibit discrimination concerning employment or occupation.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Libya signed the CRPD on 1 May 2008.

Morocco

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Local NGOs asserted that prison facilities did not provide adequate access to health care and did not accommodate the needs of prisoners with disabilities, although government sources stated that each prisoner received an average of six consultations with a medical professional per year and that all care was provided free of charge. According to DGAPR 2015 statistics, there was one doctor for every 675 inmates and one nurse for every 135 inmates. The government reported that 129 inmates died during the year, 19 in the prisons and 110 in a hospital. Of these deaths, 124 were from natural causes or medical conditions, four were from suicide, and one from accidental electrocution. Local human rights NGOs could not confirm these numbers.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

The law does not specifically prohibit domestic violence against women, but the general prohibitions of the criminal code address such violence. Legally, high-level misdemeanors occur when a victim's injuries result in 20 days of disability leave from work. Low-level misdemeanors occur when a victim's disability lasts for less than 20 days. According to NGOs the courts rarely prosecuted perpetrators of low-level misdemeanors. Police generally treated domestic violence as a social rather than a criminal matter. Statistics provided by the government indicated that it provided direct support to 45 counseling centers for female victims of violence, and indirect support to 97 others, as part of a broader effort to support projects benefitting women in society. The government funded a number of women's shelters under the Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family, and Social Development. 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.

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 provide for 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 persons with visual or audio disabilities 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 private charities and civil society organizations were primarily responsible for integration. Families typically supported persons with disabilities, although some survived by begging.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

The labor code prohibits discrimination with respect to employment and occupation on the basis of race, color, gender, disability, marital status, religion, political opinion, trade union affiliation, national ancestry, or social origin, resulting in a violation or alteration of the principle of equal opportunity or treatment on equal footing regarding employment or the practice of a profession. This was true in particular with regard to recruitment, conduct and labor distribution, vocational training, wages, advances, the granting of social benefits, disciplinary measures, and dismissal. The law does not address sexual orientation, gender identity, age, language, HIV-positive status, or other communicable diseases in this context. The law provides for equal pay for equal work. The law prohibits the employment of women and youths (between the ages of 15 and 17 years old) in certain occupations that authorities considered hazardous, such as mining.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Morocco signed the CRPD on 30 Mar 2007. The government ratified the CRPD and the Optional Protocol on 8 Apr 2009; additionally, the government accepted the individual communications procedure and inquiry procedure on this date.

Oman

Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

No autonomous, officially sanctioned, domestic human rights organizations existed. There were civil society groups that advocated for persons protected under human rights conventions, particularly women and persons with disabilities. These groups were required to register with the Ministry of Social Development.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

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 systematically enforce this regulation.

No protective legislation provides 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 persons with disabilities.

The Ministry of Social Development is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The Directorate General of Disabled Affairs within the Ministry of Social Development creates programs for persons with disabilities, and implements these programs in coordination with relevant authorities. The directorate was authorized further to supervise all of the ministry's rehabilitation and treatment centers for persons with disabilities.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Labor laws and regulations do not address discrimination based on race, sex, gender, nationality, political views, disability, language, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity, HIV-positive status or other communicable diseases, or social status. Discrimination occurred based

on sex, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. For further discussion of discrimination, see section 6.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Oman signed the CRPD on 17 Mar 2008. The government ratified the CRPD on 6 Jan 2009.

Qatar

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

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, the judicial system, and other government services or other areas. Information on patterns of abuse at education facilities, mental health facilities, or prisons was not available. The government is charged with acting on complaints from individuals, and the NHRC and enforcing compliance.

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.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

The constitution prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, language, and religion, but not political opinion, national origin, social origin, disability, sexual orientation, age, or HIV-positive 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 prohibited lower paid male workers from residing in specific "family" residential zones throughout the country. The government discriminated against noncitizens in employment, education, housing, and health services (see section 6).

The law requires reserving 2 percent of jobs in government agencies and public institutions for persons with disabilities, and most government entities appeared to conform to 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 QAR 20,000 (\$5,500). There were no reports of violations of the hiring quota requirement during the year.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Qatar signed the CRPD on 9 Jul 2007. The government ratified the CRPD on 13 May 2008.

Saudi Arabia

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Authorities held pretrial detainees together with convicted prisoners. They separated persons suspected or convicted of terrorism offenses from the general population but held them in similar facilities. Activists alleged that authorities sometimes detained individuals in the same cells as individuals with mental disabilities as a form of punishment and indicated that authorities mistreated persons with disabilities.

Section 5. Governmental Attitude Regarding International and Nongovernmental Investigation of Alleged Violations of Human Rights

During the year the HRC and NSHR were more outspoken in areas deemed less politically sensitive, including child abuse, child marriage, prison conditions, and cases of individuals detained beyond their prescribed prison sentences. They avoided topics, such as protests or cases of political activists or reformists, that would require directly confronting government authorities. The HRC board's 18 full-time members included four women and at least three Shia; they received and responded to complaints submitted by their constituencies, including problems related to persons with disabilities, religious freedom, and women's rights. The Consultative Council's Human Rights Committee also actively followed cases and included women and Shia among its members; a woman served as chairperson of the committee.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Discrimination: Women continued to face significant discrimination under law and custom, and many remained uninformed about their rights. To increase awareness, on July 4, a female lawyer launched an Arabic mobile phone application, "Know Your Rights." The application contained resources for legal aid as well as answers to frequently asked questions on issues such as divorce, child custody, guardianship, disability, and domestic violence.

Nationality law discriminates against women, who cannot directly transmit citizenship to their children, particularly if the children's father is a noncitizen (see section 2.d. and section 6, Children). The country's interpretation of sharia prohibits women from marrying non-Muslims, but men may marry Christians and Jews. Women require government permission to marry

noncitizens; men must be older than 25 to marry a foreigner and must obtain government permission if they intend to marry citizens from countries other than Gulf Cooperation Council member states (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates). Regulations prohibit men from marrying women from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Chad, and Burma. The government additionally 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 disabled, has a chronic disease, or is sterile.

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, the judicial system, 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.

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 generally participate in civic affairs, and there were no legal restrictions that prevented persons with disabilities from voting in municipal council elections, although lack of accessibility of buildings, information, and communications likely limited some persons with disabilities from participating fully. In 2013 the HRC appointed four 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 King 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 Labor and Social Development was responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation projects and social care programs increasingly brought persons with disabilities into the mainstream. Persons with disabilities were elected and appointed as members of municipal councils in December 2015, and two individuals with disabilities also served on the consultative Shura Council, which was reconstituted on December 2.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Labor laws and regulations do not prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national origin or citizenship, social origin, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, age, language, or HIV-positive status. Discrimination with respect to employment and occupation occurred with respect to all these categories.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The government accessioned the CRPD on 24 Jun 2008; additionally, the government accepted the individual communications procedure and inquiry procedure on the same date.

Syria

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Inside prisons and detention centers, the prevalence of death from disease remained high due to unsanitary conditions and withholding medical care and medication. Local NGOs and medical professionals reported that authorities denied medical care to prisoners with pre-existing health needs, such as diabetes, asthma, and breast cancer, and denied pregnant women any medical care. Authorities retaliated against prisoners who requested attention for the sick. Released prisoners commonly reported sickness and injury resulting from such conditions. Information on conditions and care for prisoners with disabilities was unavailable.

Other Conflict-related Abuses

Observers and international aid organizations reported that the government specifically targeted health-care workers, medical facilities, ambulances, and patients and restricted access to medical facilities and services to civilians and prisoners, particularly in Aleppo City. The COI also reported that government sniper fire and military assaults on medical facilities intentionally targeted sick and injured persons as well as pregnant women and persons with disabilities. According to credible NGO and COI reports, the government deliberately obstructed the efforts of sick and injured persons to obtain help, and many such individuals elected not to seek medical assistance in hospitals due to fear of arrest, detention, torture, or death. Government forces also reportedly targeted medical professionals for arrest. Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) released a report in July stating that 269 medical facilities sustained 382 attacks between 2011 and June. PHR reported that the government and its allies committed 90 percent of these attacks. PHR reported that 757 medical personnel were killed between 2011 and June, the majority by the government and its allies.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

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. Private businesses are eligible for tax exemptions after hiring persons with disabilities. The law does not address specific disabilities. Syria ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CPRD) and the CPRD's optional protocol that include language regarding prohibition of discrimination against persons with physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental disabilities. They also include language on protecting persons with disabilities from discrimination in air travel and other transportation, as well as in the judicial system. There is no indication that the laws were amended to reflect protections contained in the CPRD and the optional protocol.

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 government and extremist checkpoints. In other instances, government 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 work to provide access for persons with disabilities to buildings, communication, or information. Along with their peers, the conflict increasingly hampered the ability of children with disabilities to attend 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.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

The constitution prohibits discrimination against persons on the basis of race, color, marital status, belief, political opinion, trade union membership, nationality, descent, or disability. The constitution prohibits discrimination based on gender, although personal status and penal laws continued to discriminate. The constitution does not address discrimination based on sexual orientation, age, or HIV-positive status. Since the government legally prohibits homosexuality (see section 6, Acts of Violence, Discrimination, and Other Abuses Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity), many persons faced discrimination due to their sexual orientation. There were no reports of government activities to encourage participation or prevent discrimination against persons with disabilities. Discrimination in employment and occupation occurred with respect to certain ethnic groups (see section 6, National/Racial/Ethnic Minorities).

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Syria signed the CRPD on 30 Mar 2007. The government ratified the CRPD and the Optional Protocol on 10 Jul 2009, and additionally accepted the individual communications procedure on the same date.

Tunisia

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Discrimination: The law and constitution explicitly prohibit discrimination based on race, gender, disability, language, or social status, and the government generally enforced these prohibitions. Women faced societal rather than statutory barriers to their economic and political participation. Codified civil law is based on the Napoleonic code, although on occasion judges drew upon interpretations of sharia (Islamic law) as a basis for customary law in family and inheritance disputes.

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.

Since 1991, the 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, and most older buildings have still not been made accessible. The government did not ensure access to information and communications.

The Ministry of Social Affairs is charged with protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. 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. There were approximately 300 government-administered schools for children with disabilities, five schools for blind students, 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.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

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 on 30 Mar 2007. The government ratified the CRPD on 2 Apr 2008; additionally, it accepted the individual communications and inquiry procedures on the same date.

United Arab Emirates

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Other reported human rights problems included a lack of government transparency; police and prison guard brutality; government interference with privacy rights, including arrests and detentions for internet postings or commentary; and a lack of judicial independence. The law directly prohibits blasphemy and proselytizing by non-Muslims, and indirectly prohibits conversion from Islam by referring to Sharia law on matters of religious doctrine. Domestic abuse and violence against women remained problems. Noncitizens faced legal and societal discrimination. Legal and societal discrimination against persons with HIV/AIDS and based on sexual orientation and gender identity remained problems. Trafficking in persons, mistreatment including physical and sexual abuse of foreign domestic servants and other migrant workers, and discrimination against persons with disabilities remained problems. The government restricted worker rights. Lack of transparency and access made it difficult to assess the extent of many reported human rights problems, such as conditions surrounding detentions in state security cases, social and legal discrimination, and societal abuses of women and children.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Prisons attempted to accommodate persons with disabilities based on their specific needs, such as by placing a wheelchair user on a lower floor. Some reports alleged inconsistencies in providing support for prisoners with mental disabilities. In Dubai and to some extent Abu Dhabi, prison officials worked with mental health professionals to provide support and administer needed medication. Training and capabilities to accommodate prisoners with mental health disabilities were allegedly less well developed in the other emirates. Reportedly it was common for authorities to grant a humanitarian pardon in cases where a person with a disability had been convicted of a minor offense.

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Persons with Disabilities

The law prohibits discrimination against persons who have 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; however, some discrimination occurred. Public and private facilities provided education, health services, sports, and vocational rehabilitation for persons with disabilities; however, capacity was insufficient. Many of the facilities were reserved for citizens. There were reports that in some cases authorities detained individuals for behavior linked to a mental disability, rather than send them to a medical facility. These individuals were later acquitted because of their disabilities.

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. In accordance with the law, most public buildings provided some form of access for persons with disabilities.

Government entities, including the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Services for Educational Development Foundation for Inclusion, and the Sports Organizations for Persons with Disabilities, sponsored conferences and workshops emphasizing the inclusion and integration of persons with disabilities into schools and workplaces. The Ministry of Social Affairs, which ran a number of rehabilitation centers, stated that the increased emphasis in recent years on integrating children with disabilities into regular schools opened up space in their rehabilitation centers to better accommodate persons with more significant disabilities.

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 employment, housing, and 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 priority for 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 challenge due to a lack of training and opportunities, and societal discrimination.

The government sponsored several initiatives to host international conferences for persons with disabilities emphasizing rights, opportunities, and the importance of social inclusion. The government also worked to improve the accessibility of public facilities. For example in June, Dubai launched a \$2.7 million study to identify specific targets and methodologies to improve accessibility for schools, hospitals, parks, and transportation facilities.

The General Authority of Sports and Youth Welfare and the Disabled Sports Federation provided programs to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in sporting activities.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

No specific law prohibits or regulates discrimination regarding sex, political opinion, national origin or citizenship, social origin, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity, age, language, or communicable disease status in employment or occupation; however, the country is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women and of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. It also ratified the International Labor Organization's discrimination convention and thus submits regular reports to it on its implementation of that convention. Women who worked in the private sector, however, regularly did not receive equal benefits and reportedly faced discrimination in promotions and equality of wages. In free zones, individualized laws govern employment requirements. For example, in the Dubai International Financial Center, employers may 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.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The United Arab Emirates signed the CRPD on 8 Feb 2008. The government ratified the CRPD on 19 Mar 2010.

Western Sahara

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Moroccan law and practice apply. For more information, see the Department of State's 2016 Country Reports on Human Rights for Morocco.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Western Sahara has not signed or ratified the CRPD or Optional Protocol.

Yemen

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Other human rights abuses included killings, disappearances, kidnappings, and reports of the use of excessive force and torture by security forces and various militant groups; cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; poor prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention; lengthy pretrial detentions; infringements on citizens' privacy rights; limits on freedom

of expression, press, assembly, association, and movement; limits on freedom of religion, particularly for members of the Bahai community; lack of government transparency; corruption; violence and discrimination against women, children, persons with disabilities, and minorities; use of child soldiers; restrictions on worker rights; and trafficking in persons, including forced labor.

Section 1. Respect for the Integrity of the Person, Including Freedom from:

Prison and Detention Center Conditions

Prison conditions were harsh and life threatening and did not meet international standards. Prisoners lacked many basic needs. The Hadi-led government exercised very limited control over prison facilities. In past years government officials and NGOs identified overcrowding, lack of professional training for corrections officials, poor sanitation, inadequate access to justice, intermingling of pretrial and convicted inmates, lack of effective case management, lack of funding, and deteriorating infrastructure as problems within the 18 central prisons and 25 reserve prisons (also known as pretrial detention centers). According to the OHCHR, in August former detainees reported that they faced squalid sanitation conditions and were deprived of adequate food and medical care and not allowed outside visitors. Authorities held prisoners with physical or mental disabilities with the general population without special accommodations

Section 6. Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons

Persons with Disabilities

Several laws mandate the rights and care of persons with disabilities, but the government was unable to enforce them. The law permits persons with disabilities to exercise the same rights as persons without disabilities, but this did not happen in practice. Prior to the outbreak of conflict, social stigma and official indifference were obstacles to implementation.

The law reserves 5 percent of government jobs for persons with disabilities and 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 to which any authority 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 schools, due to concern about potential harassment. The conflict likely further reduced access to schools.

Although the law mandates that 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.

Prior to the outbreak of conflict, authorities imprisoned persons with mental disabilities with criminals without providing adequate medical care and in some instances without legal charge. At that time, the Ministry of Interior reported that family members sometimes brought relatives with mental disabilities to ministry-run prisons and asked officers to imprison them. 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.

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor is responsible for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities. The government-in-exile could not continue collaboration with the World Bank to administer a social development fund; the ministry was also unable to oversee the Fund for the Care and Rehabilitation of the Disabled, which provided limited basic services and supported more than 60 NGOs assisting persons with disabilities.

Section 7. Worker Rights

d. Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation

Labor laws and regulations prohibit discrimination with regard to race, sex, color, beliefs, language, or disability and specifically provide that “women shall be equal with men in relation to conditions of employment and employment rights.” The law does not address sexual orientation, political opinion, national origin, social origin, 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.

Prior to the conflict, women's rights activists and NGOs reported discrimination was a common practice in the public and private sectors. Women experienced discrimination in areas such as employment, credit, pay, owning or managing businesses, education, and housing. Prior to the conflict, women and girls who were 15 or older represented only 25 percent of the formal workforce, largely due to barriers to education and social traditions that precluded women from seeking and gaining employment. Cultural barriers also restricted the exercise of women's property rights. In most rural areas, social norms largely prevented women from owning land. Racial and employment discrimination against the Muhamasheen was a problem. Persons with disabilities faced discrimination in hiring and access to workplace.

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Yemen signed the CRPD on 30 Mar 2007. The government-in-exile ratified the CRPD on 26 Mar 2009; and additionally accepted the individual communications procedure and inquiry procedure on the same date.