

**Working paper**

# **Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Position of UPR**



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## Introduction

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has had its human rights record reviewed through four cycles of Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism since its adoption. UPR is a mechanism affiliated with Human Rights Council and was established by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 251/60.<sup>1</sup> Throughout the four reviews, Saudi Arabia received a total of 890 recommendations. While Saudi Arabia has clarified its position on recommendations presented in the first three reviews, it will provide clarification on the 354 recommendations received during the fourth cycle of review no later than the 56th session of the Human Rights Council.

While Saudi Arabia accepted a significant number of recommendations within the framework of the UPR mechanism, it has consistently rejected specific recommendations related to joining four out of the nine fundamental human rights conventions. These conventions include International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and the Convention for the Protection of Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Additionally, Saudi Arabia continues to reject recommendations related to abolition of Death Penalty, asserting that the moratorium on its application is a reflection of each country's right to choose its own criminal justice system. Saudi Arabia also cites conflicts with Islamic Sharia and the Basic Law of Governance in the Kingdom as reasons for rejecting certain recommendations.

Since UPR mechanism inception in 2008, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has undergone four reviews. The first review took place on February 6, 2009, followed by the second on October 21, 2013, the third on November 5, 2018, and the most recent one on January 22, 2024. In this report, Maat aims to clarify Kingdom of Saudi Arabia position regarding the recommendations it has received. The report also analyzes whether these recommendations were partially or fully accepted, as well as the extent to which they have been implemented. It delves into the recommendations that Saudi Arabia rejected and provides insights into the reasons behind these rejections. The objective is to assess the level of Saudi Arabia cooperation with the UPR mechanism. The final part of this report focuses on categorizing the recommendations presented to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the fourth cycle of periodic review.

### First: Saudi Arabia Position on Recommendations Received in UPR

During the first review held on February 6, 2009, Saudi Arabia received a total of 53 recommendations, of which 50 were fully or partially accepted, while three were rejected.<sup>2</sup> In the second review on October 21, 2013, member states participating in the session submitted a total of 225 recommendations to Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom

<sup>1</sup> Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, [https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/a.res.60.251\\_en.pdf](https://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/a.res.60.251_en.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> الآراء بشأن الاستنتاجات والتوصيات والالتزامات الطوعية والردود المقدمة من الدولة موضع الاستعراض، تقرير الفريق العامل المعني بالاستعراض الدوري الشامل، المملكة العربية السعودية، 9 يونيو 2009، الرابط: <https://tinyt.io/ACdK>

accepted 188 recommendations either wholly or partially, while rejecting 37 others.<sup>3</sup> In the third review held on November 5, 2018, Saudi Arabia accepted 215 recommendations in whole or in part out of a total of 258 recommendations, and rejected 43 others.<sup>4</sup> Please refer to the figure and table below for more details.

Figure 1: Saudi Arabia Position on Recommendations from 3 Reviews

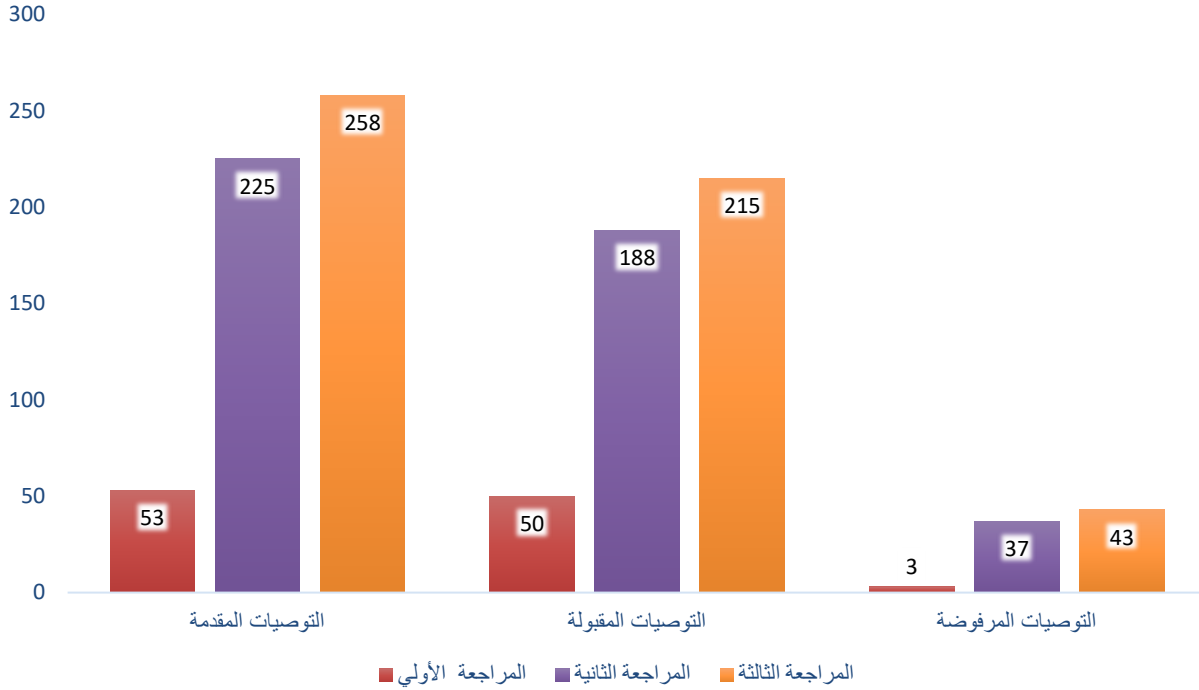


Table 1: Saudi Arabia position on recommendations presented in the 3 review cycles

Cycle	Review Date	Submitted	Accepted	Rejected
First Cycle	Feb. 6, 2009	53	50	3
Second Cycle	Oct. 21, 2013	225	188	37
Third Cycle	Nov. 5, 2018	258	215	43
Fourth Cycle	Jan. 22, 2024	354	Clarification at 56th HRC session	

Throughout these reviews, Saudi Arabia received a total of approximately 536 recommendations. Out of these, the Kingdom accepted 453 recommendations either wholly or partially, which accounts for 84.5 percent of the total recommendations received. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia rejected around 83 recommendations,

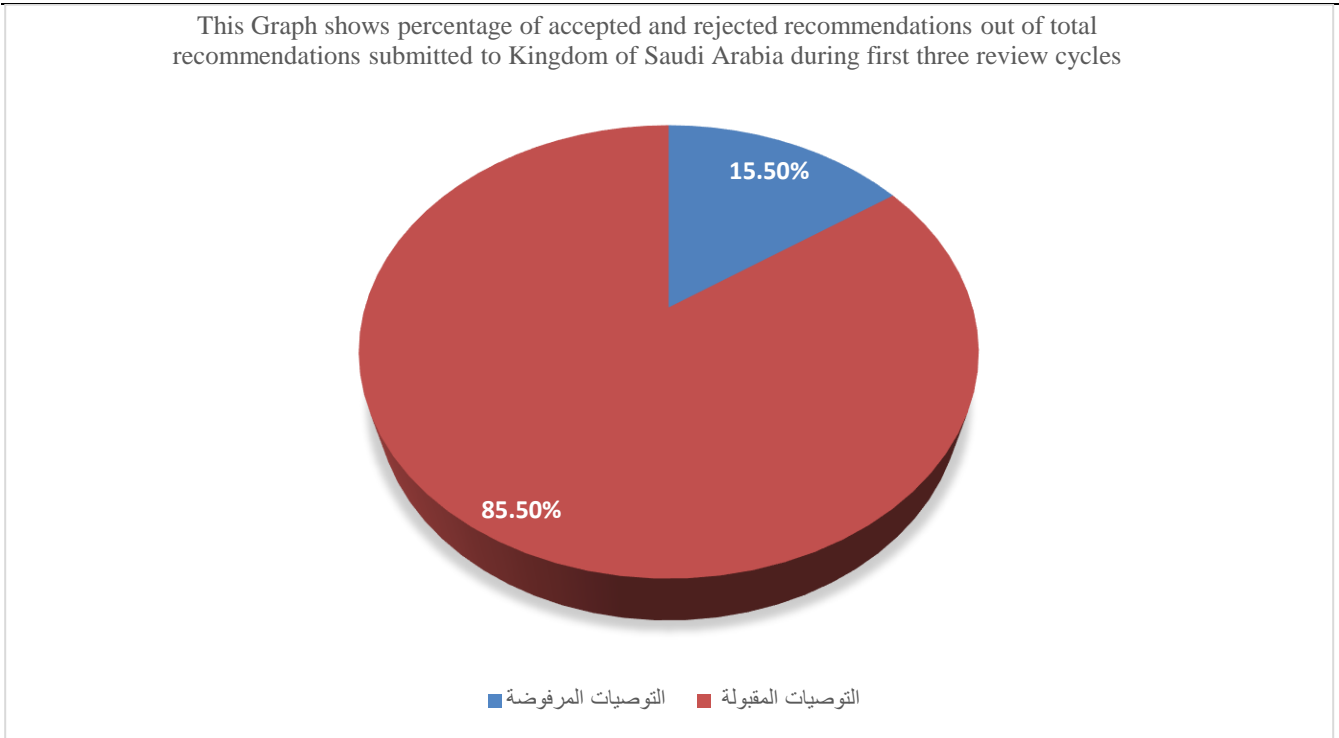
<sup>3</sup> كلمة رئيس وفد المملكة العربية السعودية خلال اعتماد نتائج الاستعراض ضمن الجولة الثانية للاستعراض الدوري الشامل، الدورة الخامسة والعشرون لمجلس حقوق الإنسان، مارس 2014، الرابط: <https://tinyt.io/ACdM>

<sup>4</sup> الآراء بشأن الاستنتاجات والتوصيات والالتزامات الطوعية والردود المقدمة من الدولة موضع الاستعراض، تقرير الفريق العامل المعني بالاستعراض الدوري الشامل، المملكة العربية السعودية، 26 فبراير 2019، الرابط: <https://tinyt.io/ACdS>

equivalent to 15.5 percent of the total recommendations received during the three reviews.

In the fourth review, which took place on January 22, 2024, Saudi Arabia received 354 recommendations. The Kingdom will clarify its position on these recommendations during the 56th session of the Human Rights Council.

**Figure 2: Accepted and Rejected Recommendations by Saudi Arabia**



When examining the percentage of recommendations accepted and rejected by Saudi Arabia throughout the three reviews of Universal Periodic Review, it is evident that Kingdom has accepted a majority of the recommendations put forth by member states, accounting for 85.5 percent of the total recommendations. This may indicate Saudi Arabia willingness to cooperate with the Universal Periodic Review mechanism and its commitment to improving human rights conditions. However, it is important to note that Saudi Arabia has maintained its refusal to consider joining certain international agreements, including the two international covenants and their optional protocols. Additionally, Saudi Arabia does not accept the jurisdiction of any treaty bodies to handle complaints, which restricts the ability of Saudi citizens to engage with these bodies.

**Second: Saudi Arabia Commitments within UPR Framework**

Throughout the three reviews of Universal Periodic Review, Saudi Arabia accepted a total of 453 recommendations, either wholly or partially, amounting to 84.5 percent of the total recommendations received. Once accepted, these recommendations became pledges that Saudi Arabia committed to implementing.

The majority of the accepted recommendations focused on various aspects, including ratifying international treaties that Saudi Arabia is not a party to, improving the

overall state of human rights within the country, reviewing domestic legislation to align it with international agreements on human rights that the Kingdom has committed to, and taking necessary steps to empower women and promote their participation in society. Specifically, efforts were directed towards combating discrimination against women, enhancing their involvement in the labor market, amending discriminatory legislation, policies, and practices that impede their full participation in society, such as restrictions on mobility and driving, and enacting a comprehensive law that safeguards women rights.

Furthermore, Saudi Arabia pledged to address issues such as the criminalization of violence against women, establishing a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles, ensuring freedom of expression, press, and association, releasing detained human rights defenders, strengthening the independence of civil society organizations engaged in human rights work, enacting legislation that guarantees freedom of the press, opinion, and expression, and implementing effective measures to protect the rights of migrant workers, particularly women employed in domestic services, from employer violations.

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has made significant progress in implementing several pledges following the third periodic review, particularly in relation to combating discrimination against women, amending discriminatory legislation, measures, and policies, improving the overall human rights situation in the country, and enacting a special personal status law to promote women rights. Notably, the Kingdom lifted the ban on women driving cars and allowed women to travel abroad without the permission of a guardian. However, it's important to mention that this change did not apply to all women, as per reliable information.

In March 2022, Kingdom also approved a new personal status law that addresses matters such as alimony, marriage, and inheritance. This law includes several positive aspects that enhance women rights within the Kingdom. For instance, it grants the wife the right to unilaterally annul the marriage contract in specific cases and allows for divorce to be documented if the husband does not agree. The legal age for marriage was set at 18 years, and wives and children are entitled to obtain alimony from the date of filing the lawsuit.<sup>5</sup>

Moreover, Saudi authorities have actively worked towards reducing restrictions on women access to the labor market, resulting in an increased percentage of women representation in the labor market. By 2023, women participation rate in the Saudi labor market reached approximately 37 percent. Efforts have also been made to promote women participation in public life. Official statistics indicate that the representation of women in the current Shura Council has reached 20 percent, and over 44 percent of

<sup>5</sup> في دائرة الأزمات: حالة حقوق الإنسان في المنطقة العربية 2022، مؤسسة ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان، 26 مارس 2023، الرابط: <https://tinyt.io/AD5r>



faculty members in the education sector are women, including 1,300 women in leadership positions at Saudi universities.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, in March 2021, the Saudi authorities introduced reforms to the Saudi labor system for expatriates, allowing some workers covered by the labor law to change jobs without requiring the employer's approval.<sup>7</sup>

However, it is worth noting that two of the most significant pledges that Saudi Arabia has started to implement are:

- **Male Guardianship System:** The Kingdom has abolished certain restrictions imposed under the male guardianship system, granting women over the age of 21 the right to obtain a passport and travel without a guardian. Women over the age of 18 are now able to register their children's birth certificates. The Personal Status Law also includes provisions to protect women from forced marriage, such as requiring the consent of both spouses and prohibiting a woman's marriage without her consent. The law establishes the legal age for marriage as 18 years for minors. However, reports have indicated that the law lacks a clear definition of spousal consent and that proving such consent can be challenging.<sup>8</sup> It's also important to mention that the law does not cover migrant women residing in Saudi Arabia.
- **Gender Equality:** In its efforts to promote gender equality and women empowerment, Maat has observed significant progress in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, particularly in terms of women representation in government institutions and the administrative apparatus. Women have assumed leadership positions in various ministries and institutions, with the percentage of women in senior and middle management roles increasing from 28.6% in 2017 to 39% in 2021. Additionally, women economic participation in the Kingdom has risen from 17.4% in 2017 to 37% by the end of 2023. This increase in women participation has been reflected in international indicators such as the Women and Business Activities Index and World Bank law issued.<sup>9</sup>

Despite these advancements, women political participation in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia remains limited, as they are not represented in the Saudi Council of Ministers and make up only 19.8% of members in the Saudi Shura Council.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Saudi authorities have yet to take concrete measures to fulfill certain pledges accepted during previous review cycles. For instance, they have not expanded the scope of their international obligations, as they have not become party to several international human rights conventions, including International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Similarly, the

<sup>6</sup> المرجع السابق نفسه  
<sup>7</sup> الإصلاحات العمالية في السعودية: تركيز طموح على العمال الأجانب والبطالة، معهد دول الخليج العربية في واشنطن، 17 مارس 2021، الرابط: <https://tinyurl.com/AD9T>

<sup>8</sup> نظام الأحوال الشخصية، <https://tinyurl.com/sjuk5ed9>

<sup>9</sup> ملخص تنفيذي المرأة وانشطة الأعمال والقانون، ص 8، <https://tinyurl.com/2s3huarn>

<sup>10</sup> Saudi Arabia, Inter-Parliamentary Union, <https://www.ipu.org/parliament/SA>

implementation of pledges related to establishing a national human rights institution that fully complies with the Paris Principles has not been realized.

Recommendations aimed at enhancing freedom of opinion, expression, and press, as well as ensuring the independence of civil society institutions working in the field of human rights, continue to face significant challenges and obstacles in implementation by the Saudi authorities. Human rights reports indicate that organizations working on human rights issues have encountered difficulties, including the denial of necessary government licenses to carry out their activities effectively. Additionally, there remains a limited number of organizations engaging with international human rights mechanisms, except for Saudi opposition organizations operating from abroad.

Furthermore, there has been a lack of concrete measures to enforce recommendations related to guaranteeing freedom of the press, opinion, and expression through appropriate legislation. Reports suggest that the Saudi authorities have imposed restrictions on the exercise of these freedoms, resulting in a scarcity of critical opinions regarding Saudi government policies in local governmental and private newspapers over the past years. Freedom of the press in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is severely constrained, and journalists or bloggers expressing dissenting views on social media often face harassment and imprisonment. Presently, around 24 journalists are detained in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the country ranks 170 out of 180 countries in the 2023 Journalism Index published by Reporters Without Borders.

Despite labor reforms introduced by Saudi authorities in March 2021, which allowed certain expatriate workers to change jobs without employer approval, there is a lack of necessary measures to protect migrant workers who are not covered by the labor law. This includes domestic workers and farmers. Human rights reports indicate that female migrant domestic workers often face conditions amounting to forced labor, such as long working hours, wage withholding, confiscation of passports, and denial of food and healthcare. Tragically, these practices have resulted in the deaths of numerous workers. According to official estimates from the Kenyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, between 2020 and 2021, 89 Kenyan citizens, many of whom were domestic workers, lost their lives in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.<sup>11</sup>

### **Third: Classification of Recommendations Received During UPR Fourth Cycle**

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received 354 recommendations, which were adopted on January 26, 2024. Kingdom will provide its position on these recommendations no later than the 56th session of the Human Rights Council. Maat has conducted an initial classification of these recommendations, and the final version will be available on the website of Universal Periodic Review Mechanism. The table below presents the classification of the recommendations submitted to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during fourth cycle of periodic review.

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<sup>11</sup> Urgent action needed to protect ‘dying’ Kenyan domestic workers in Gulf, say rights groups, the guardian, 27 Jun 2023, link: <https://tiny1.io/AD7j>



Table: Classification of recommendations submitted to Saudi Arabia during fourth cycle of UPR

Subject	# of Recommendations
Joining International Agreements and Treaties	49
Promoting Rights of Persons with Disabilities	24
Death Penalty Abolition	23
Strengthening Workers Rights, Buliding Labor Inspectors Capabilities, and Eradicating Child Labor	23
Cooperation with International Human Rights Mechanisms	20
Combating All Forms of Violence against Women	20
Eliminating Restrictions on Women Rights	19
Strengthening National Human Rights Framework and Establishing a National Institution	14
Empowering Women	14
Harmonizing National Legislation with International Human Rights Conventions	14
Spreading a Culture of Human Rights	13
Promoting Culture of Human Rights	13
Improving Migrant Workers Lives	11
Gender Equality	10
Prevention of Torture and Protection of Human Rights Defenders	9
Combating Human Trafficking and Forced Labour	9
Respecting Human Rights in Context of Countering Terrorism	9
Promoting Healthcare, Social Protection, the Right to Housing, and Reducing Poverty	9
Guaranteeing Women and Family Rights	8
Promoting Right to Education	8
Providing Greater Space for Civil Society (especially Human Rights Organizations)	6
Promoting Right to Development and Economic Rights	5
Supporting Rights of most Vulnerable Groups	4
Continuing to Provide Humanitarian Aid	4
Right to a Fair Trial and Administration of Justice	4
Guaranteeing Freedom of Expression	3
Anti-Corruption	2
Supporting Rights of LGBT Community	2

<b>Resolving Disputes Peacefully</b>	1
<b>Facilitating Hosting of Pilgrims</b>	1
<b>Dealing with De Facto Authority (Taliban)</b>	1
<b>Promoting Cultural Rights</b>	1
<b>Promoting Rights of Elderly</b>	1

From the table, it is evident that a significant number of recommendations, 49 in total, focus on Saudi Arabia joining international human rights conventions and treaties. These recommendations, accounting for 13.8% of the total, emphasize urging Saudi Arabia to become a party to the two international covenants on civil and political rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights. Some recommendations also call for ratification of International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. It is important to note that Saudi Arabia is already a state party to five out of nine international human rights treaties and conventions. However, the recommendations related to joining international conventions remain relevant in recent reviews of Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, there are 23 recommendations calling for the abolition of Death Penalty or a declaration of a moratorium. Given Saudi Arabia adherence to the principle of national sovereignty over criminal systems, as expressed in Note Verbale No. (A/73/1004), it is unlikely that these recommendations will be accepted. This document asserts that every country has the inherent right to choose its own criminal system without interference from other countries. The purposes and principles of United Nations Charter, particularly paragraph 7 of Article 2, clearly state that the Charter does not permit nations, including the United States, to interfere in the internal affairs of another country. Therefore, in accordance with this document and Saudi vision, each country has the right to determine whether to maintain or abolish Death Penalty<sup>12</sup> and to determine the types of crimes for which Death Penalty is applicable.

### 1. Joining International Agreements and Treaties

Table of Accession to International Agreement

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Second Optional Protocol, which aims to abolish death penalty
2.	Ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its Second Optional Protocol
3.	Ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

<sup>12</sup> Note verbale dated 13 September 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n19/286/32/pdf/n1928632.pdf?token=TewjLpEamwn9zqsZI2&fe=true>

4.	Joining International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
5.	Ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
6.	Consider Ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
7.	Consider joining International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
8.	Consider Ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
9.	Consider joining International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
10.	Ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Optional Protocol to Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
11.	Signing and ratifying International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
12.	Ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
13.	Joining International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights without reservations
14.	Ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and their protocols
15.	Joining International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
16.	Joining Optional Protocol aimed at abolishing Death Penalty
17.	Consider joining the Rome Statute of International Criminal Court
18.	Continue its consultations on accession to International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
19.	Further exploring possibilities for strengthening its efforts to protect human rights through ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
20.	Accelerate efforts to ratify International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
21.	Ratification of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
22.	Ratification of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
23.	Consider signing International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

24.	Consider joining International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
25.	Consider signing International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in preparation for its ratification
26.	Ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and international ratification of Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
27.	Ratification of Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
28.	Ratification of International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture
29.	Ratification of International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
30.	Consider Ratification of Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
31.	Ratification of United Nations Convention on Enforced Disappearance
32.	Consider possibility of joining more international human rights conventions
33.	Ratification of International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
34.	Ratification of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers, Members and Their Families
35.	Strengthen the human rights protection of migrant workers by intensifying monitoring of their working conditions and applying sanctions when any violations are discovered
36.	Ratification of ILO Convention No. 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers
37.	Accession to relevant human rights instruments
38.	Ratification of Optional Protocol on Abolition of Death Penalty
39.	Increase efforts to ratify international instruments to which Saudi Arabia has not yet become a party
40.	Consider Ratification of Rome Statute of International Criminal Court
41.	Ratification of Rome Statute of International Criminal Court

42.	Consider Ratification of Optional Protocol to Convention on Rights of the Child on a communications procedure
43.	Consider joining more international human rights conventions
44.	Ratification of basic human rights conventions
45.	Ratification of core human rights treaties to which it has not yet acceded
46.	Make efforts to ratify Optional Protocol to Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
47.	Consider Ratification of Convention on Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions
48.	Accelerate its studies to join core human rights treaties, including International Covenants
49.	Consider joining International Labor Organization conventions to which Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has not yet become a party, especially those compatible with its national legislation

Looking at the previous table, it is evident that a majority of the recommendations focus on Saudi Arabia joining the two international covenants: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Some recommendations are more general, urging Saudi Arabia to consider ratifying all agreements it has not yet ratified. Additionally, a significant number of recommendations pertain to joining optional protocols associated with international human rights conventions.

Table: Saudi Arabia Membership in Protocols

Protocols to which Saudi Arabia is a party	Protocols that Saudi Arabia has not joined
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Optional Protocol to Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Optional Protocol to Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</li> <li>✓ Optional Protocol to Convention against Torture</li> <li>✓ Optional protocols to Convention on Rights of the Child</li> </ul>

From the table, it is clear that Saudi Arabia has not yet acceded to Optional Protocol attached to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, it has not joined Optional Protocols associated with conventions to which it has not yet become a party, such as Optional Protocol to International Covenant on Civil and Political

Rights aimed at abolishing Death Penalty, or Optional Protocol attached to the CEDAW. It has also not joined Optional Protocols attached to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution, and child pornography.

## 2. Promoting Rights of Persons with Disabilities

During Kingdom of Saudi Arabia fourth UPR cycle, there were numerous recommendations focused on promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. The majority of these recommendations emphasized the importance of integrating persons with disabilities into the labor market, ensuring their access to public services, providing accessible facilities, and combating discrimination against them. It is anticipated that Saudi Arabia will accept all recommendations related to persons with disabilities when it determines its position on the recommendations before the 56th session of the Human Rights Council.

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Move forward with efforts to enhance the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities
2.	Continue to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, especially with regard to establishing a unified register of persons with disabilities to enable them to provide the best services
3.	Adopt policies and laws aimed at promoting the rights of women with disabilities
4.	Repeal all discriminatory provisions contained in its legislation that affect women with disabilities, in particular those that require the presence of a male guardian to allow women to exercise their rights under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
5.	Increase rate of persons with disabilities in the labor market
6.	Strengthen measures to integrate persons with disabilities into the labor market (Burkina Faso);
7.	Adopt a comprehensive national strategy to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities
8.	Continue efforts to facilitate access to public services for persons with disabilities
9.	Continue its efforts to facilitate access to public services for persons with disabilities
10.	Continue to create a safe and supportive work environment for persons with disabilities



11.	Continue to create a safe and supportive work environment for persons with disabilities, including efforts made through the Mawamah program
12.	Continue efforts to create a safe and supportive work environment for persons with disabilities
13.	Involve elderly and people with disabilities in developing national legislation related to protecting their rights
14.	Continue to strengthen strategies to achieve greater access to education, especially for people with different abilities
15.	Continuing the work alignment program launched by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development to grant licenses to disability-friendly work establishments
16.	Consider adopting a legal framework to protect the rights of persons with disabilities (Malawi);
17.	Establish a legal framework to protect the rights of persons with disabilities in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
18.	Ensuring increased inclusion of persons with disabilities
19.	Continue to establish a unified register of persons with disabilities to become a comprehensive database containing all data related to persons with disabilities (China);
20.	Pay special attention to the needs of vulnerable persons, in particular by continuing efforts to create a unified register that constitutes a database for persons with disabilities
21.	Continue to promote the rights of persons with disabilities in all fields
22.	Continue developing policies to empower and protect the rights of persons with disabilities
23.	Continue efforts to unify the unified register to serve as a complete database for persons with disabilities
24.	Adopt and implement a strategy to combat stereotypes and discrimination against children with disabilities

### 3. Death Penalty Abolition

Saudi Arabia received 23 recommendations calling for either a moratorium or complete abolition of Death Penalty. It appears that Saudi Arabia may not accept these recommendations entirely, but there are indications that it may seek to reform its approach. This could involve legalizing crimes currently punishable by Death Penalty or discontinuing the application of Death Penalty to individuals convicted of crimes committed when they were minors. It is expected that Saudi Arabia will take note of or reject recommendations requesting the country to join the Second Optional Protocol to

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which pertains to the abolition of Death Penalty. It is important to note that Saudi Arabia views Death Penalty as a matter within the realm of each country's right to choose its own criminal justice system, and considers calls for its abolition as interference in its internal affairs.

**Table of Death Penalty Abolition**

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Declare a moratorium on Death Penalty in all cases, while taking the necessary steps to abolish Death Penalty (Canada); Imposing a moratorium on Death Penalty with a view to its abolition (Costa Rica) (Denmark) (Finland) (Mexico) (Spain); Announcing an official moratorium on Death Penalty with a view to its future abolition (Ghana) (Norway) (Paraguay) (Portugal); Imposing a moratorium on Death Penalty with a view to its abolition, in particular for minors (Liechtenstein)
2.	Declare a moratorium on Death Penalty with a view to its abolition and impose an explicit ban on sentencing minors to Death Penalty, as previously recommended (Argentina);
3.	Declare a moratorium on Death Penalty with a view to its abolition, in particular for minors (Liechtenstein) (Luxembourg);
4.	Consider imposing a moratorium on the use of Death Penalty with the aim of working towards its complete abolition
5.	Consider moratorium on the use of Death Penalty (Colombia);
6.	Adopt necessary measures aimed at imposing a moratorium on use of Death Penalty (Uruguay);
7.	Immediately halt use of Death Penalty with a view to eventually abolishing it and commuting existing death sentences
8.	Continue efforts to completely abolish Death Penalty (Cape Verde);
9.	Implement policy reforms aimed at abolishing Death Penalty (Ecuador);
10.	Put an absolute ban on death sentences, including immediately against persons under 18 years of age at the time of the crime (New Zealand);
11.	Consider imposing a moratorium on Death Penalty with a view to its abolition (Timor-Leste);
12.	Abolish Death Penalty and replace it with a just and proportionate punishment, in accordance with international human rights standards
13.	Abolition of Death Penalty and ratification of Second Optional Protocol to International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming to abolish Death Penalty (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Optional Protocol
14.	Consider ratifying the Second Optional Protocol, including International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aimed at abolishing Death Penalty

15.	Limit the number of crimes punishable by death, ensure that it does not apply to persons under the age of 18, and encourage public debate about its eventual abolition
16.	Reducing the number of crimes punishable by death to the most serious crimes under international law, including by formalizing a moratorium on the use of Death Penalty for drug-related crimes
17.	Abolish Death Penalty for drug-related crimes, in compliance with the obligation to ensure that it is limited to the most serious crimes as defined in international law
18.	Abolish Death Penalty, or at least limit it to the most serious crimes, while applying a narrow definition of terrorism and abolishing it for all juvenile criminals
19.	Abandoning use of Death Penalty, or at least restricting it to the most serious crimes, and completely prohibiting the execution of minors and adults who committed crimes as minors.
20.	Abolition of Death Penalty for minors
21.	Limit the use of the Specialized Criminal Court to cases appropriately defined as terrorism and allow journalists and diplomats to routinely monitor these trials
22.	Amend legislation to combat cybercrime and terrorism to define terrorism in line with international human rights standards, and ensure that the interpretation and application of the definition in counter-terrorism operations is consistent with human rights, in particular freedom of expression.
23.	Amend anti-cybercrime and anti-terrorism laws and using public prosecutorial discretion, to ensure that expression, including criticism of the government, is not criminalized.

#### **4. Strengthening Workers Rights, Buliding Labor Inspectors Capabilities, and Eradicating Child Labor**

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received approximately 21 recommendations regarding the reinforcement of migrant workers' rights and the eradication of child labor within the country. These recommendations emphasize the need to promote equal employment opportunities, enhance women participation in the workforce, empower labor inspectors, and incorporate domestic workers into labor laws. It is anticipated that Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will accept these recommendations.

Table of Promoting Workers Rights and Eradicating Child Labor

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Pursue national policies that combine guarantee of human rights, in particular the National Policy and Action Plan to Prevent Child Labour, as well as National Policy to Promote Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupations
2.	Continue to strengthen efforts to protect workers' rights, taking into account the more than one million supervisory visits to expatriate recruitment offices and companies
3.	Continue steps to enable workers and their families to access remedies
4.	Continue efforts to integrate domestic workers into the labor law and set a minimum wage for all migrant workers
5.	Continue to improve the labor market environment and increase employment rates
6.	Continue implementing policies aimed at increasing women's participation in the workforce
7.	Continue efforts to implement human rights principles and standards in areas of work
8.	Take necessary measures to ensure the effective implementation of the policy of eliminating and preventing child labor
9.	Strengthen national capacity to ensure the activation of national policy to further promote equal opportunities and equal treatment in employment and professions
10.	Strengthen measures to combat gender disparities, especially with regard to employment, the wage gap and access to education
11.	Make greater efforts to prohibit child labor as part of the National Action Plan to Prevent Child Labor
12.	Continue efforts to build the capabilities of labor inspectors
13.	Take concrete steps to improve labor market conditions and increase employment rates
14.	Continue to promote and implement national policies and action plans that prevent child labor and promote equal opportunities and treatment in employment and access to vocational skills
15.	Promote the rights of foreign workers and combat human trafficking and forced labor by eliminating exit visa requirements for foreign workers
16.	Strengthen efforts aimed at improving the labor market environment and increasing employment rates
17.	Effective implementation of newly approved regulations for domestic workers

18.	Continue implementing the national policy to encourage equal opportunities and equal treatment in employment and profession in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
19.	Strengthen efforts to create a safe work environment in private sector institutions, where everyone is respected, and adopting measures to protect against harassment in the workplace.
20.	Continue to work on labor reforms, including efforts to strengthen and guarantee the rights of domestic workers
21.	Continue reforming the labor law to include domestic workers
22.	Continue implementing the national policy to promote equal opportunities and equal treatment in employment and professions in the Kingdom
23.	Strengthen capacity of labor inspectors to monitor working conditions in workplaces and identify labor rights violations

### 5. Collaboration with International Human Rights Mechanisms

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has received 20 recommendations pertaining to cooperation with international mechanisms. These recommendations include extending a standing invitation to the United Nations Special Procedures and welcoming visit requests from Special Rapporteurs. It is worth noting that the last visit by a Special Rapporteur to Saudi Arabia occurred in 2017 when the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty visited the country from January 8 to 19, 2017, upon his request made on July 8, 2015.

Furthermore, some recommendations urge Saudi Arabia to withdraw its reservations to conventions it has ratified, such as the CEDAW, and to submit a midterm report during the fourth review of the universal periodic review. However, it is expected that Saudi Arabia may not accept most of the recommendations concerning cooperation with these mechanisms, as it is unlikely to issue a permanent invitation to Special Procedures or withdraw its reservations to the CEDAW or the Convention against Torture.

Table of Recommendations Related to Cooperation with Mechanisms

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Withdraw all reservations to CEDAW
2.	Continue implementing the recommendations of the treaty bodies that fall within the scope of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's obligations
3.	Continue to take the necessary measures to domesticate and implement the human rights treaties to which it is a party
4.	Strengthening cooperation with international organizations to achieve the goals contained in the memorandums of understanding concluded with them

5.	Continue cooperation with countries and international organizations on initiatives in the field of human rights, such as the initiative of His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman to protect children in the cyber world, and the Green Middle East and Green Saudi Arabia initiatives.
6.	Consider submitting a mid-term report on the measures taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to implement the recommendations of the fourth session of the universal periodic review
7.	Consider submitting all outstanding reports to the treaty bodies and respond to requests for visits from special procedures
8.	Consider extending a standing invitation to the special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council
9.	Consider extending a standing invitation to all special procedures of the Human Rights Council
10.	Sending a standing invitation to the special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council
11.	Strengthening cooperation with special mandate holders at the United Nations, including through the issuance of a standing invitation
12.	Accept visit requests from special procedures mandate holders and consider extending open and standing invitations to them
13.	Extend a standing invitation to all United Nations human rights special procedures, and accept outstanding requests from the special procedures
14.	Consider inviting special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council to visit the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
15.	Refrain from reprisals against human rights defenders for their interactions with UN human rights mechanisms
16.	Continue implementing the recommendations of the Treaty Bodies Oversight System, which fall within the scope of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's obligations
17.	Continue to work with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and implement all its recommendations on remaining issues, including abolishing the male guardianship system
18.	Grant unhindered access to UN special procedures
19.	Lifting reservations to Article 20 and Article 30, paragraph 1, of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
20.	Consider issuing a standing invitation to visit countries by United Nations special procedures mandate holders

## 6. Combating All Forms of Violence against Women



Saudi Arabia has received approximately 20 recommendations regarding the combat against all forms of violence against women. This is understandable considering local statistics and opinion polls that reveal that 37% of husbands in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia engage in abusive behavior towards their wives, resulting in severe injuries requiring medical intervention, despite the existence of a social service provided by the Ministry of Human Resources and Development for reporting domestic violence complaints. Reports indicate a rise in various forms of violence, including instances of women being subjected to house arrest and forcibly prevented from leaving their homes. The recommendations primarily focus on ensuring that victims of domestic or gender-based violence have access to effective remedies and advocating for the criminalization of violence against migrant women.

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Strengthen legal framework to eliminate gender-based and domestic violence against women and girls, in accordance with Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Montenegro)
2.	Intensify efforts to eliminate gender-based and domestic violence against women and girls
3.	Continue efforts to eliminate gender-based violence
4.	Implement current law, strengthen legislative and executive measures to protect women and children from violence, and improve the system for protecting victims of gender-based violence
5.	Implement necessary legislative reforms to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls in accordance with CEDAW Convention
6.	Ensure increased access to remedies for victims of domestic violence through awareness-raising (Viet Nam);
7.	6-287 Promote awareness of access to remedies for victims of domestic violence
8.	Promote awareness of victims of domestic violence about access to remedies
9.	Continue to promote and protect rights of victims of domestic violence, including, but not limited to, spreading awareness of access to remedies
10.	Increase awareness of remedies available to victims of domestic violence
11.	Continue efforts to protect women and children from violence and exploitation in all its forms
12.	Develop programs to combat all forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic workers
13.	Adoption of legislation criminalizing all forms of violence against women and children (Estonia);
14.	Enforce existing laws and adopt legislation criminalizing all forms of violence against women

15.	Take measures to enforce existing laws and adopt legislation criminalizing all forms of violence against women
16.	Take measures to protect women and girls from all forms of violence (Mongolia);
17.	Continue efforts to ensure that perpetrators of sexual violence against women and girls are punished
18.	Intensify efforts to prevent and punish all forms of gender-based violence, not limited to physical assault
19.	Double efforts to approve laws criminalizing all forms of violence against women, as well as strengthen mechanisms available to health, judicial and executive authorities to provide care to victims of gender-based violence, especially vulnerable women
20.	Criminalize all forms of gender-based violence and improve complaints and reporting mechanisms in this context, especially for female migrant workers

## 7. Eliminating Restrictions on Women Rights

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has received approximately 19 recommendations related to the abolition of restrictions imposed on women rights. Despite the progress made thus far in dismantling these restrictions, it is evident that further steps are necessary to achieve gender equality, particularly the complete elimination of male guardianship over women and the restrictions outlined in the Disobedience Law.

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continue to enhance role of women in society, expand girls education, and increase integration of women into workforce
2.	Maximizing gains achieved in the field of women rights
3.	Take further measures to ensure women rights and participation in society, including women with disabilities
4.	Take necessary steps to achieve gender equality and monitor women participation in development areas
5.	Conduct a review of domestic legislation in terms of compliance with CEDAW obligations
6.	Continue to monitor women participation in development through National Observatory for Women Participation, and take necessary measures to achieve gender equality in this regard
7.	Continue to develop measures that protect rights of women, adolescent girls and girls, in particular by abolishing Male Guardianship Law and sedition law
8.	Abolishing the remaining privileges of male guardianship that continue to hinder women progress, empowerment, and achieving equality in Saudi society

9.	Strengthening role of civil society institutions in eliminating violence against women and girls
10.	Take necessary measures to promote gender equality and eliminate violence against women and girls, ensuring their right to participate in public affairs, the right to health, including sexual and reproductive health, and the right to education, among other rights.
11.	Continue to strengthen efforts to improve status of women and treat them equally
12.	Abolish Male Guardianship Law and all laws that discriminate against women
13.	Continue reforms aimed at eliminating all forms of discrimination against women, in particular by abolishing the Male Guardianship Law
14.	Abolishing Guardianship Law in order to enhance women rights
15.	Intensify efforts to expand women participation in public life, especially in the judiciary, law enforcement and security sectors
16.	Continue working to improve women rights, especially amending nationality laws so that they apply to men and women equally
17.	Strengthen legal framework in accordance with CEDAW Convention to eliminate gender-based and domestic violence against women and girls
18.	Monitor women participation in development, through National Observatory for Women, and take steps to achieve gender equality in this regard
19.	Address remaining legal restrictions imposed on women and girls in order to guarantee their human rights and continue society-wide efforts to encourage a change in attitude towards the status of women

## 8. Strengthening National Human Rights Framework and Establishing a National Institution

Saudi Arabia received approximately 16 recommendations concerning the strengthening of the national human rights framework and the establishment of a national institution that aligns with the Paris Principles on the status of national human rights institutions. Currently, Saudi Arabia lacks a national human rights institution that fully complies with these principles, despite the existence of the Human Rights Commission headed by Mrs. Hala Al-Tuwaijri, who led the Kingdom delegation during the fourth review. The Human Rights Commission, established by Council of Ministers Resolution No. 2007 of 2005, underwent amendments through Council of Ministers Resolution No. 237 of 2016, which increased its independence by transferring its subordination from the executive authority to the King.<sup>13</sup> However, it still does not fully meet the requirements set forth in the Paris Principles. Recommendations in this area also emphasized the adoption of a

<sup>13</sup> أمر ملكي بتشكيل مجلس هيئة حقوق الإنسان في دورته الرابعة لمدة أربع سنوات، <https://sabq.org/saudia/tqwzc8>

national action plan for human rights and collaboration with the High Commissioner for Human Rights in developing human rights indicators. It is anticipated that Saudi Arabia will accept these recommendations, particularly those related to adopting a national strategy for human rights, given that several other Gulf States Council countries are in the process of developing similar plans. Bahrain, for instance, has already completed its plan. It is expected that Saudi Arabia will accept all recommendations related to strengthening the national framework and establishing a national institution for human rights, as similar recommendations were accepted in previous reviews.

Table of Recommendations for Strengthening National Human Rights Framework and Establishing a National Institution

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continue implementing national plans and policies aimed at promoting and protecting human rights in the country
2.	Adopting national plans that contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights in all sectors
3.	Speedy completion of adoption of National Human Rights Strategy
4.	Take necessary steps to ensure that National Human Rights Commission fully complies with Paris Principles (Chile); Take steps towards establishing a national human rights institution that complies with Paris Principles
5.	Continue efforts to ensure the independence and effectiveness of National Human Rights Institution in line with Paris Principles
6.	Consider establishing a national human rights institution that complies with Paris Principles and adopting a national human rights action plan
7.	Continuing the efforts of National Human Rights Committee to build national indicators that enable measuring the progress achieved in promoting and protecting human rights
8.	Continue efforts to strengthen the Human Rights Commission and improve its performance
9.	Continue to work on developing the national database related to human rights, to build national indicators that reflect the progress achieved in the field of human rights.
10.	Continue working on establishing a national human rights database in order to develop indicators that reflect progress achieved in the field of human rights
11.	Continue to develop a national database of human rights indicators that reflect progress made in the field of human rights
12.	Work, in cooperation with High Commissioner for Human Rights, to build an integrated database of national human rights indicators

13.	Building on the progress made in linking UPR recommendations to the Sustainable Development Goals, and taking this into account when presenting national voluntary reports
14.	Strengthen the Standing Reporting Committee as a national mechanism for implementation, reporting and follow-up, and consider the possibility of obtaining cooperation for this purpose

## 9. Empowering Women

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received around 14 recommendations pertaining to the empowerment of women. Most of these recommendations revolve around the continued efforts to empower women, particularly in the areas of employment, leadership positions, economic participation, and representation in decision-making processes. It is likely that Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will agree to all recommendations concerning women empowerment.

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continuing efforts in the field of women empowerment, especially in education, work, culture and sports
2.	Continue efforts to empower women and promote gender equality
3.	Continue efforts to increase the proportion of women in senior management positions and in the workforce
4.	Continuing efforts aimed at empowering women and their economic participation in the labor market
5.	Continue to strengthen programs aimed at enhancing women empowerment and economic participation in the labor market
6.	Continue to enhance women participation in economic life, the labor market, and political life, and their representation in decision-making positions
7.	Continue to increase women participation in public life and their representation in decision-making entities, while removing obstacles that prevent them from accessing those entities
8.	Continue measures to empower women and increase their participation in education, work, culture and sports
9.	Continue to take further steps to promote women rights by ensuring greater participation of women in the labor market (Lao PDR);
10.	Continuing efforts to empower women as partners in national development
11.	Continue efforts to empower women and promote gender equality (Malawi);
12.	Strengthening national mechanisms to protect women rights, especially their effective participation in decision-making

13.	Harmonizing nationality laws with what is stipulated in this regard by CEDAW Convention
14.	Continue working to strengthen the national framework to ensure gender equality and protect women rights

### 10. Harmonizing National Legislation with International Human Rights Conventions

Saudi Arabia received 15 recommendations regarding the harmonization of national legislation with international human rights conventions. These recommendations primarily focus on adopting legislation that safeguards freedom of opinion and expression by reforming the Penal Code and other relevant laws, as well as amending the 2017 Anti-Terrorism Law. It is expected that Saudi Arabia may not accept all the recommendations presented in this context.

Table of Harmonizing Legislation with International Agreements

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	1 Take steps to enact penal code reform and other legislative measures in order to strengthen the rights of defendants
2.	Adopt legislation to guarantee the right to freedom of expression, both online and offline, in line with international human rights law
3.	Adopt legislation to guarantee the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association, including the protection of journalists, human rights defenders and civil society, in accordance with international human rights law and relevant international human rights standards (Ireland); Amend the current legal framework to guarantee the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association in line with international standards
4.	Adopt necessary measures to guarantee rights to freedom of expression, opinion, belief and association in accordance with international human rights law (Ukraine); Adopt legislation to guarantee the right to freedom of opinion and expression, both online and offline, in accordance with international human rights law (Montenegro); Adopt legislation to guarantee freedom of expression, whether online or offline
5.	Amend Basic Law, Anti-Terrorism Law of 2017, and Anti-Cybercrime Law to make them compatible with international standards related to right to freedom of expression
6.	Harmonize domestic legislation with international standards to protect freedoms of assembly, association, and expression without exception
7.	Eliminate restrictions on rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly and freedom of expression, and bring relevant legislation into line with international standards



8.	Increase efforts to adopt and implement national legislation guaranteeing the rights of all migrant workers consistent with international standards
9.	Review cybercrime and anti-terrorism laws, to improve transparency in their application to non-violent crimes, such as in cases related to freedom of expression on the Internet, in accordance with international standards.
10.	Consider amending the Child Protection Law to remove exceptions to the marriage ban for persons under the age of 18, consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
11.	Prohibit child and forced marriage under any circumstances, and setting the minimum age for marriage at 18 years for both sexes.
12.	Take measures to combat discrimination against women in family matters, including in decisions relating to children, and eliminate violence against women through, among other initiatives, the adoption of legislation criminalizing all forms of violence, especially domestic violence.
13.	Conduct a legislative review to ensure compliance with CEDAW Convention
14.	Continue strengthening the national legal framework, in line with CEDAW Convention, to eliminate domestic violence

### 11. Promoting Culture of Human Rights

Saudi Arabia received 15 recommendations related to the promotion of a culture of human rights. These recommendations emphasize the integration of human rights education into curricula and providing training to law enforcement personnel and other stakeholders, including public employees. It is expected that Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will accept these recommendations.

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continue efforts to spread and advance culture of human rights by integrating it into school curricula
2.	Continue efforts to spread the culture of human rights by integrating it into school curricula
3.	Continue efforts to spread the culture of human rights through awareness and integration into school curricula
4.	Continue efforts to integrate human rights education into its national curricula
5.	Continue efforts to integrate human rights education into school curricula and continuing work to ensure education for all within the framework of Saudi Vision 2030
6.	Intensify efforts to develop human rights education programmes
7.	Enhance focus of educational curricula to include respect for human rights

8.	Follow up and strengthen educational initiatives aimed at integrating human rights, especially children's rights, into school curricula and teacher training programmes
9.	Continue its efforts to raise awareness, education and training in the field of human rights (Algeria);
10.	Provide more human rights education to relevant stakeholders, including youth, law enforcement officials and judges
11.	Adopting comprehensive educational practices that guarantee equal opportunities for students as well as people with disabilities
12.	Invest in international sporting events hosted by Kingdom to spread the culture of human rights
13.	Create a comprehensive national human rights database to track and present progress
14.	Continue efforts to develop human rights indicators in the country
15.	Continuing efforts to spread the culture of volunteer work at the national level

## 12. Promoting Children Rights

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received approximately 13 recommendations specifically related to children's rights. These recommendations focus on improving the juvenile justice system, implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child to ensure that the death penalty is not imposed on individuals who committed crimes as minors, and promoting initiatives for child protection on the internet. Additionally, there are recommendations aimed at preventing the recruitment of children. It is important to note that Saudi Arabia previously rejected a similar text in the report of the High Commission during the review session. The remaining recommendations call for efforts to implement the Child Protection Law and ensure its alignment with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Saudi Arabia has ratified.

Table of Recommendations for Promoting Children Rights

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Expand scope of Juvenile Act to cover all crimes and conducting thorough and transparent investigations into any concerns regarding individuals who may have been minors at the time of their alleged crimes
2.	Continue cooperation with member states to activate the initiative to protect children on the Internet
3.	Support provisions of Convention on Child Rights, including obligation not to impose death penalty for crimes committed by persons under 18 years of age
4.	Continue efforts to strengthen Child Protection Law to ensure that children are provided with adequate protection from situations of violence
5.	Continue efforts and initiatives to support orphans
6.	Take all necessary measures to prevent the recruitment and use of children in hostilities by armed forces and private security companies
7.	Ensure alignment of child protection law with the Convention on the Rights of the Child
8.	Take necessary measures to implement the Child Protection Law
9.	Continue to strengthen efforts to promote children's rights
10.	Take necessary measures to maximize children's participation in the non-profit sector
11.	Strengthen protection of vulnerable children, especially in rural areas
12.	Ensure increased availability of child protection data
13.	Strengthen data collection on issues related to child protection in order to develop measures to eliminate violence against children, especially on the basis of gender and religion

### 13.Improving Migrant Workers Lives and Investigating Allegations of Violence

Saudi Arabia received 11 recommendations related to improving the lives of migrant workers. These recommendations likely stem from allegations made by human rights organizations and various testimonies regarding the killing of Ethiopian immigrants by Saudi border guard forces along the Yemeni border. While Saudi Arabia has denied these allegations, it remains to be seen whether the country will accept these recommendations.

## Table of Recommendations for Improving Lives of Migrant Workers

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Conduct a comprehensive and transparent investigation into all allegations that Saudi security forces are killing and abusing migrants crossing the Yemeni border, stop any abuses, ensure accountability for any abuses or violations, and issue a public investigation report.
2.	Continue efforts to improve the quality of life of foreign workers, provide them with better opportunities in the labor market, and help integrate their communities into broader Saudi society.
3.	Continue efforts to advance the rights of migrant workers, including, but not limited to, by including other vulnerable groups of workers, such as domestic workers, in the labor reform initiative
4.	Ensure effective complaints mechanisms for migrant workers
5.	Strengthen legal protection for migrant workers, enforce equal employment protection legislation for commercial and domestic employees, and review the individual sponsorship system
6.	Promote the integration of migrant workers through measures to eliminate discrimination based on nationality
7.	Continue to improve access to redress mechanisms for migrant workers and their families
8.	Share developments and/or results of investigations into reported killings of Ethiopian migrants and asylum seekers on the Yemeni-Saudi border between March 2022 and June 2023, with the aim of ensuring accountability
9.	Provide progressively greater protection for migrant workers
10.	Continue to strengthen social protection coverage for migrant workers
11.	Strengthen legal protection to reduce the vulnerability of migrant workers

### 14. Gender Equality

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received around 10 recommendations concerning gender equality. These recommendations highlight the importance of continuing to prohibit gender-based discrimination in work of equal value and establishing an observatory to monitor progress in this area. They also call for ongoing efforts to address any existing gaps that hinder gender equality. It is expected that Saudi Arabia will accept all the received recommendations, as it has previously accepted similar recommendations in the previous review sessions.

Table of Recommendations for Gender Equality

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continue good practice of prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex with regard to equal pay for work of equal value
2.	Establish an observatory to continuously evaluate extent of compliance with implementation of measures taken in favor of equal pay between men and women
3.	Continue efforts to ensure gender equality in law and practice, taking into account and appreciating the amendment to the travel documents system that ensures women have equal rights to obtain travel documents
4.	Continue to ensure effective steps are taken to make gender equality a reality in all operations and services, including cultural, sporting and recreational activities
5.	Continue national policy to promote equal opportunities and treatment in employment and occupation
6.	Continue to strengthen efforts to ensure equal pay between men and women for work of equal value
7.	Continue developing good practices in the Kingdom regarding gender wage equality
8.	Review legislation and policies with the aim of eliminating discrimination against women and gender-based violence
9.	Intensify efforts to raise awareness of gender equality and strengthen national capacities to implement the recently amended law on protection from ill-treatment
10.	Continue to promote gender equality

### 15. Prevention of Torture and Protection of Human Rights Defenders

Saudi Arabia received approximately nine recommendations related to the prevention of torture and the protection of human rights defenders. These recommendations emphasize the need for independent investigations into allegations of torture, the inclusion of the crime of torture in national legislation, the release of detained human rights defenders, ensuring a favorable environment for their work, and preventing any acts of intimidation or reprisals against them. Maat believes that Saudi Arabia may not accept these recommendations within this framework.

## Table of Recommendations for Preventing Torture and Protecting Human Rights Defenders

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Strengthening enforcement mechanisms in cases of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
2.	Inclusion of the crime of torture, as defined in Article 1 of Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, in the country's criminal provisions
3.	Incorporating definition of torture into national legislation in accordance with Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
4.	Independently and effectively investigate allegations of torture and ill-treatment, and ensure implementation of the Mandela Rules
5.	Release all protesters, human rights defenders and journalists detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression
6.	Revoke travel ban imposed on human rights defenders who have completed their prison term
7.	Ensure a safe and enabling environment for all human rights defenders and journalists, especially women human rights defenders
8.	Take targeted steps to ensure that human rights defenders, civil society activists, journalists and media workers are able to freely and fully exercise their rights to freedom of expression and opinion, both offline and online, without fear of harassment, intimidation and retaliation.
9.	Take necessary measures to ensure that journalists and human rights defenders are able to exercise their right to freedom of opinion and expression

### **16. Respecting Human Rights in Context of Countering Terrorism**

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received 13 recommendations regarding the respect for human rights in the context of counterterrorism efforts. These recommendations call for ensuring the consistency of Saudi Arabia laws related to counterterrorism with international human rights standards, amending the definition of terrorism in domestic legislation, exchanging best practices with other countries, and continuing support for the Global Center for Combating Extremism. It is expected that Saudi Arabia may accept some of the recommendations within this framework, although it may refuse to fully harmonize its counterterrorism legislation with international standards.



## Table of Recommendations for Respecting Human Rights in Context of Countering Terrorism

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Harmonize its laws with international human rights standards by amending the definition of terrorism in counter-terrorism legislation, publishing the planned new penal code, and ratifying International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
2.	Amend definition of terrorism stipulated in Anti-Terrorism Law in line with international human rights standards, to ensure that the exercise of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association is not criminalized
3.	Review definition of terrorism in line with international standards, including by amending anti-cybercrime and counter-terrorism legislation to ensure that the use of social media for peaceful expression is not criminalized
4.	Ensure that counter-terrorism legislation complies with international human rights standards so that the peaceful exercise of freedom of expression, assembly and association is not criminalized
5.	Continue efforts to combat extremism and terrorism, and exchange best practices with other countries in this field (Bahrain);
6.	Continue efforts to support the work of Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (Etidal)
7.	Continue efforts aimed at combating terrorism, spreading tolerance and coexistence, and rejecting hatred and extremism
8.	Continue efforts to combat extremist and terrorist ideology through Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology (Etidal)
9.	Continue cooperation with relevant United Nations agencies, including United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, to protect its citizens from the serious threat posed by these transnational crimes, including world drug problem

### **17. Combating Human Trafficking and Forced Labour**

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received nine recommendations related to combating human trafficking and forced labor. These recommendations include enacting laws to protect the rights of migrant workers and combat trafficking, as well as effectively implementing the Saudi National Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and improving national referral mechanisms. It is expected that Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will accept all recommendations within this framework. This is in line with its acceptance of seven recommendations related to combating all forms of human trafficking during the third review session. These recommendations encompass all the recommendations presented to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on this topic.

Table of Recommendations to Combat Human Trafficking and Forced Labour

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Enact laws and strengthen national capacities to protect rights of migrant workers and combat human trafficking
2.	Continue to strengthen efforts to combat human trafficking
3.	Intensify efforts to combat trafficking in persons
4.	Strengthen efforts to combat human trafficking through the effective implementation of its national plan, improving the activation of national referral mechanisms, and enhancing assistance and protection for victims
5.	Continue national plan to combat trafficking in persons
6.	Continue work of National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the National Mechanism for Referral of Victims of Trafficking that were launched in August 2022
7.	Continue to address human trafficking by strengthening early detection and preventive measures related to irregular migration
8.	Continue efforts to combat human trafficking and protect against it, including activating the mechanism of the national referral system for victims of human trafficking
9.	Increase efforts to prosecute human trafficking crimes and seek appropriate penalties for convicted traffickers

### 18. Promoting Healthcare, Social Protection, the Right to Housing, and Reducing Poverty

Saudi Arabia received nine recommendations related to strengthening healthcare, social protection, the right to housing, and reducing poverty. These recommendations call for efforts to reduce the maternal and infant mortality rates, continue poverty eradication initiatives, particularly in rural areas, and make progress in developing indicators related to healthcare. It is expected that Saudi Arabia will accept all the recommendations presented in this context.

Table of Recommendations for Promoting Healthcare, Social Protection, Right to Housing, and Reducing Poverty

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Strengthening national social insurance protections, including developing a maternity social insurance system, with the aim of creating a more enabling environment for increased female participation in the labor market.
2.	Coordinate policies aimed at moving towards a comprehensive social protection system that follows a systemic approach that guarantees an adequate standard of living without discrimination

3.	Continue efforts to provide permanent housing for citizens and exchanging best practices in this field
4.	Continue efforts to eradicate poverty in rural areas
5.	Continue to make efforts to reduce the maternal and infant mortality rate and enhance health care services provided to them
6.	Continue efforts to enhance services provided to mothers and infants and monitor their health during pregnancy and after birth
7.	Continue efforts aimed at reducing maternal and child mortality and enhancing health services provided to them
8.	Continue progress in women health care indicators
9.	Continue progress in women health care indicators

### 19. Guaranteeing Women and Family Rights

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received eight recommendations related to guaranteeing women and family rights. The majority of these recommendations focus on enabling women to transmit nationality to their children, abolishing discriminatory provisions in the Personal Status Law, ending male guardianship, and criminalizing marital rape. While Saudi Arabia may accept these recommendations as a formality, implementing them fully may pose challenges.

Table of Recommendations for Ensuring Women and Family Rights

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Amend Nationality Law to enable Saudi women to transfer citizenship to their children and husbands, on an equal basis with men
2.	Repeal all provisions of Personal Status Law that discriminate against women and girls, including in marriage, divorce, and custody
3.	Criminalize marital rape
4.	Abolition of the Male Guardianship Law
5.	Continue implementing the family strategy to ensure the promotion of family rights and family cohesion
6.	Continue to provide comprehensive support to the Family Foundation
7.	Continue to ensure that the competent authorities respect family law in order to protect the rights of women, children and the family
8.	Ensure compliance by competent authorities with family law to preserve the rights of women, children and the family

### 20. Promoting Right to Education

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received eight recommendations related to strengthening the right to education. Most of these recommendations highlight the importance of

implementing capacity development programs to improve the quality of education. Additionally, there are recommendations to ensure free education for disadvantaged and low-income groups. Saudi Arabia will likely accept all recommendations related to the right to education. However, it may reject the recommendation to provide equal and free opportunities for all, considering the potential high cost for the Kingdom, even though it is obligated under the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education to guarantee this right without discrimination.

**Table of Recommendations for Promoting Right to Education**

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continue efforts aimed at activating human capacity development program to contribute to improving quality of education and its results in accordance with needs of labor market
2.	Continue efforts to activate human capacity development program, which will contribute to improving the quality of education and its outcomes in line with the needs of the labor market.
3.	Continue developing and implementing human capacity-building programmes, including developing an integrated educational path, improving equal educational opportunities and enhancing basic education outcomes
4.	Continue efforts to ensure everyone's access to quality education and free education
5.	Continue efforts to provide equal and free education opportunities for all
6.	Continue efforts to promote the right to education, especially for students from low-income and disadvantaged groups
7.	Continue efforts to reduce school dropout rates
8.	Continue initiatives aimed at improving quality of education, teacher training, and developing workforce skills

### **21. Providing Greater Space for Civil Society**

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received six recommendations related to the need for providing more space for civil society and creating an enabling environment for local and international non-governmental organizations involved in human rights issues. It is unlikely that Saudi Arabia will accept these recommendations at the present time.

Table of Recommendations for Creating Space for Civil Society

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continue its efforts to provide more space for civil society, leading to a significant increase in the number of civil society organizations
2.	Redouble efforts to enhance and protect the role of civil society
3.	Promote a safe environment for civil society, through legal and administrative measures
4.	Create an enabling environment for international and local human rights NGOs, allowing them to register and ensuring they can carry out their work in the country without fear of reprisal.
5.	Support civil society institutions and enabling them to carry out their vital role in promoting and protecting human rights
6.	Continue to support the role of civil society organizations in combating violence against women and girls

## 22. Promoting Right to Development and Economic Rights

Saudi Arabia received five recommendations related to promoting the right to development and enhancing the economic rights of its citizens. Saudi Arabia will likely accept all the recommendations presented within this framework. Please refer to the table below for the recommendations.

Table of Recommendations for Enhancing Right to Development and Economic Rights

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continue to promote and implement the right to development at the national and international levels
2.	Continue efforts to promote development at the regional and international levels
3.	Continue good practices in favor of economic reforms
4.	Continue its successful experience in linking universal periodic review recommendations to Sustainable Development Goals, and take this into account when presenting voluntary national reviews
5.	Continue best practices aimed at addressing the potential impact of economic reforms

## 23. Right to a Fair Trial and Administration of Justice

Saudi Arabia received four recommendations related to guaranteeing the right to a fair trial and ensuring the proper administration of justice. However, it is possible that these recommendations will be rejected during the period following the fourth review until

the fifth review of the universal periodic review mechanism. Please see the schedule below for more details.

**Table of Right to a Fair Trial and Administration of Justice**

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Reform of criminal courts to ensure fair trials for all accused, fair sentencing for crimes based on guidelines, publication of court records, and protection of accused from arbitrary detention and ill-treatment
2.	Implement ongoing legal reforms to improve judicial transparency and prevent indefinite detention
3.	Ensure due process and ensure that the law enforcement system is not abused to harass individuals
4.	Take measures to strengthen the administration of justice on an independent and impartial basis and combat impunity

#### **24. Continuing to Provide Humanitarian Aid**

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received four recommendations related to the continued provision of humanitarian aid and efforts towards conflict resolution. In most cases, Saudi Arabia will accept these four reasonable recommendations concerning humanitarian aid. Kindly refer to the table below for the recommendations.

**Table of Recommendations Related to Continuing Provision of Humanitarian Aid**

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continue to expand efforts in the field of conflict resolution and humanitarian assistance
2.	Continuing the great efforts made by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the field of relief, humanitarian and development assistance, especially through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre.
3.	Continuing the significant humanitarian, relief and development efforts made by the Kingdom in all fields
4.	Sharing its pioneering experience in providing humanitarian aid through digital platforms such as “Ihsan” or “Shifa” platforms.

#### **25. Supporting Rights of Vulnerable Groups**

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received four recommendations related to supporting the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups. Given the acceptance of similar recommendations in previous reviews of the review mechanism, Saudi Arabia will most likely accept these recommendations. Please refer to the table below for more details.



Table of Recommendations for Supporting the Rights of Vulnerable Groups

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continue to support and protect the rights of socially vulnerable groups such as children, women, persons with disabilities and the elderly
2.	Mainstream expertise in the field of care for vulnerable groups, especially children, the elderly and people with disabilities
3.	Strengthen efforts to guarantee the rights of women, workers and persons with disabilities
4.	Involve older people and people with disabilities in national legislation to protect their rights

## 26. Freedom of Expression

Saudi Arabia received three recommendations related to supporting freedom of opinion and expression. However, it is highly likely that Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will reject these recommendations, as it has done with similar recommendations in previous reviews.

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Strengthening its efforts to promote freedom of opinion and expression, whether online or offline, in accordance with international human rights laws
2.	Take meaningful steps to guarantee the right to freedom of expression
3.	Significantly increase efforts to effectively ensure freedom of opinion and expression and protect the activity of human rights defenders and journalists

## 27. Supporting Rights of LGBT Community

Two recommendations were directed to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia regarding supporting the rights of the LGBT community. These recommendations call for abolishing laws that discriminate based on sexual orientation and decriminalizing relationships between members of the LGBT community. In most cases, Saudi Arabia will not accept these two recommendations when clarifying its position. These recommendations were made prior to the 56th session of the Human Rights Council.

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Repeal laws that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and gender expression (Argentina);
2.	Decriminalize and legalize same-sex sexual conduct between consenting adults (Iceland);

## 28. Combating Corruption

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia received two recommendations related to combating corruption. Saudi Arabia is currently ranked 53rd out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index issued by Transparency International. This ranking represents an improvement of one position compared to its rank in 2022, where it was placed 54th among the 180 countries included in the index.<sup>14</sup>

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continue to support the efforts of the National Anti-Corruption Committee
2.	Continue efforts to exchange successful experiences in combating corruption, which undermines the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

## 29. Resolving Disputes Peacefully

Saudi Arabia will likely accept this recommendation, especially considering the progress made towards reaching a ceasefire agreement with the Houthi group in Yemen.

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continuing its great efforts to resolve conflicts peacefully and support humanitarian issues

## 30. Facilitating Hosting of Pilgrims

Saudi Arabia received a recommendation regarding its ongoing efforts to facilitate the hosting of pilgrims visiting the Kingdom. It is expected that Saudi Arabia will accept this recommendation.

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continuing its great efforts to facilitate and host pilgrims who visit the Two Holy Mosques for Hajj and Umrah

## 31. Dealing with De Facto Authority (Taliban)

Saudi Arabia received a recommendation regarding ensuring that its approach to the de facto authority, the Taliban, is contingent upon their respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Saudi Arabia is expected to accept this recommendation.

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Ensure that any engagement with the current de facto Taliban authority is conditional and centered on its respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the people of Afghanistan, in particular the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities and minorities

<sup>14</sup> CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX, SAUDI ARABIA, <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2023/index/sau>

### 32.Promoting Cultural Rights

Saudi Arabia received a recommendation to redouble its efforts in enhancing cultural participation. It is expected that Saudi Arabia will accept this recommendation.

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Redouble efforts to enhance cultural participation

### 33.Promoting Rights of Elderly

Saudi Arabia has received a specific recommendation regarding the promotion of rights for the elderly, emphasizing the importance of continued cooperation with relevant bodies responsible for this group. Given the Kingdom commitment to the care of this demographic, it is likely that Saudi Arabia will accept this recommendation. It is noteworthy that in June 2022, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia approved the Elderly Rights and Care System, which outlines measures for addressing the needs of this vulnerable population.

Under Article 15 of the system, it is prohibited to handle an elderly person's finances without their consent, intentionally violate their rights and neglect their care, or misuse their entrusted funds. The system also includes penalties, such as imprisonment for up to one year and fines of up to 500,000 Saudi riyals, for individuals who violate the rights and care of the elderly. By implementing this system, Saudi Arabia aims to enhance the rights of older persons in line with the United Nations Principles for Older Persons and other relevant international instruments to which it is a party.

#	Content of Recommendation
1.	Continue its cooperation with the independent care provider to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights by older persons

#### **Fourth: Results & Recommendations**

Kingdom fourth Universal Periodic Review cycle received a significant number of recommendations for Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, totaling 354 recommendations. This represents the highest number of recommendations presented to Saudi Arabia compared to previous cycles, underscoring the need for additional measures to implement the accepted recommendations. Saudi Arabia is particularly urged to consider recommendations related to joining international agreements and treaties and cooperating with international mechanisms for human rights protection.

To ensure the consistency of the commitments made by Mrs. Hala Al-Tuwaijri at the end of the review session, it is crucial to establish a committee responsible for studying and implementing the accepted recommendations. Based on this, Maat proposes a set of additional recommendations:

- Opening channels of dialogue with civil society organizations, including local, regional, and international organizations. Collaboration with all stakeholders, including civil society organizations, is essential for improving human rights conditions and fulfilling commitments within the framework of the universal periodic review mechanism.
- Addressing the issue of the Bidoon in Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by either granting them Saudi citizenship or allowing them the freedom to travel.
- Establishing a comprehensive platform that enables immigrants to openly discuss the daily challenges they face, while also promoting their integration into society.
- Timely submission of overdue reports and documents to UN treaty bodies.
- Promptly responding to visit requests from special rapporteurs, ensuring that they do not cancel their visits due to prolonged waiting periods for a response.