

Permanent Mission
of the
Syrian Arab Republic
Geneva



الجمهورية العربية السورية
البعثة الدائمة لدى مكتب الأمر المنحلة
جنيف

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The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva, presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Special Procedures Branch, and with reference to the letter of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls dated 18 October (Ref. OL SYR 3/2023) would like to attach, herewith, the response to the abovementioned letter.

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Special Procedures Branch, the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 21/12/2023



Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
Special Procedures Branch
Mandate of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls.

Response to the letter of the Working Group on discrimination against women and girls, dated 18 October (Ref. OL SYR 3/2023):

- The Syrian Constitution equates men and women in all fields (economic, social and political), and this equality is reflected in national laws. Furthermore; some laws provide positive discrimination in favor of women, including Article 73 of the Personal Status Law amended by Law No. 20 of 2019. According to this Article, the husband has an obligation to provide money (Nafaqa) to his wife. It is the man's duty (husband, father, brother) to support women. However; if the woman works outside the home, she loses this advantage as she becomes able to support herself financially. In case a woman doesn't want to travel with her husband, there is no obligation on her to do so but she only loses the advantage of being financially supported by her husband. Nevertheless, if a woman stipulates in the marriage contract that she wants to work outside home, or she doesn't want to accompany her husband in case of travel she reserve the right to receive the financial support (Nafaqa) from her husband. The terminology "obedient wife" is not mentioned in any legal text in force in Syria.
- The right to work is guaranteed for women in the Constitution. Labor Law No. 17 of 2010 equalized males and females. There is no prohibition on any work that might a woman chooses. However; the law protects women from some jobs that might be physically inappropriate to them. It also equalized in wages among them men and women for the same working conditions. Women in Syria held the highest positions in executive, judicial and legislative powers, including the current Vice President, the current Attorney General and the former speaker of the parliament.
- The right to education is also guaranteed for women, and the Constitution imposes compulsory education for both males and females, and equal educational opportunities for the secondary, university and higher levels are equally provided for both. There is no discrimination in scholarships opportunities inside or outside the country as well.
- Health care, including reproductive health services, are provided free of charge through a network of hospitals and health care centers throughout the country.

- A new draft law on domestic violence is under consideration currently at the national level.
- The Strategic Plan for Gender Justice was adopted in 2023 and now under implementation. The Plan includes 6 main priorities based on the national program to support and empower women in Syria.
- Raising awareness campaigns on women rights and related issues are organized at different levels, including on CEDAW convention, domestic violence another related areas.
- The Syrian Arab Republic is committed to develop and strengthen its national legislation, and consider that an ongoing process. Rounds of national consultations are organized periodically to discuss issues related to women rights in legislation. Syria also attaches great importance to follow up on the accepted recommendations which it received through the UPR or by treaty bodies. Despite the complex challenges the country has been facing, the efforts in this field have never stopped as Syria is committed to the advancement of women and ensure their full and effective participation in all aspects of life.