

MIDDLE EAST AND THE GULF STATES

Field presence	OHCHR Regional Office for the Middle East, based in Beirut, Lebanon Operation established in 2002
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Countries of engagement

Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates (complementing OHCHR's presences in Palestine** and Yemen and the Human Rights Component of the United Nations Peace Mission in Iraq)

Engagement with the human rights mechanisms

See overview table on page 256

Specific mandates of the Human Rights Council

Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. A Special Rapporteur will be nominated upon completion of the mandate of the Commission.

Demands for reform continued to be made in Bahrain, but were also voiced in other countries of the Middle East and Gulf region. In response to protests, some States have embarked on public investment programmes to improve public services or engaged in selective political reform processes, while others resorted to severe restrictions on freedoms of expression, association and assembly. In some States, human rights defenders and political activists were imprisoned for demanding political reforms.

Ensuing developments in the region have exposed the weak institutional structures related to governance, rule of law and administration of justice and demonstrated the urgent need to address discrimination against women, minorities, migrant workers and stateless persons. The region faces challenges in developing institutions and mechanisms that will address past atrocities and advance core principles of equality and non-discrimination.

Thematic priorities

The uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa, which started in 2011 with popular demands for freedom, dignity and social justice, have had a profound impact on the lives of people across the region, including in those countries covered by the Regional Office for the Middle East. While the protests brought about hope and a new openness in societies across the region, they also resulted in unrest and protracted conflict in a number of countries.

Since the conflict began in Syria three years ago, more than 100,000 people have lost their lives, over 2.3 million Syrians have taken refuge in neighbouring countries, approximately 75 per cent of whom are women and children and approximately 6.5 million people have been internally displaced. The impact of the conflict constitutes a severe challenge for the region as a whole. In March 2013, due to the continued lack of access to Syria, OHCHR strengthened its monitoring and reporting capacity through the deployment of three human rights officers to Lebanon to create a Syria Monitoring Team to gather first-hand reliable information on human rights violations in Syria. The presence of the OHCHR team in the field has ensured regular reporting of ongoing violations inside Syria.

- ▶ Strengthening the effectiveness of international human rights mechanisms with a focus on: ratification and the review of reservations; reporting to treaty bodies; establishment of national standing coordination bodies for reporting and implementation of recommendations; engagement of civil society and visits by special procedures.
- ▶ Integrating human rights in development and the economic sphere with a focus on: the implementation of a rights-based approach in national development and UN programmes.
- ▶ Enhancing equality and countering discrimination with a focus on: women; stateless persons; minorities and migrants.
- ▶ Widening the democratic space with a focus on: freedoms of expression, assembly and association and national human rights institutions (NHRIs).
- ▶ Combating impunity and strengthening accountability and the rule of law with a focus on: transitional justice, and torture and ill-treatment.
- ▶ Early warning and protection of human rights in situations of conflict, violence and insecurity with a focus on: integrating human rights in UN preparedness, response and recovery efforts in relation to crises; and the implementation of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.

OHCHR expected contribution

ALL HUMAN RIGHTS FOR ALL IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE GULF STATES

RIGHTS-HOLDERS	DUTY-BEARERS
	<p>[EA1] ► Constitutions, laws, administrative measures and policies to promote respect for freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association.</p> <p>► Establishment or strengthening of NHRIs compliant with international standards (Paris Principles), including in Bahrain, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.</p> <p>► Mainstreaming of human rights in national development plans.</p> <hr/> <p>[EA2] ► Ratification of ICCPR and ICESCR by those countries which are not yet Party to these instruments and review of reservations to CEDAW.</p> <hr/> <p>[EA3] Establishment and functioning of accountability mechanisms in accordance with international standards:</p> <p>► To monitor, investigate and redress acts of torture and ill-treatment; and</p> <p>► To undertake transitional justice processes where applicable.</p> <hr/> <p>[EA4] ► Legislation, policies and practices increasingly comply with anti-discrimination and equality standards in relation to the rights of women and of migrants.</p>
<p>[EA7] ► Increased number of submissions to treaty bodies, special procedures and Universal Periodic Review from civil society actors.</p>	<p>[EA6] ► Increased compliance and engagement of Member States with international human rights mechanisms, including through the establishment of participatory standing national coordinating bodies on reporting/replying to individual communications and enquiries; and integrated follow-up to recommendations of all human rights mechanisms.</p>
<p>[EA10] ► Increased responsiveness of international community in ensuring accountability for gross human rights violations.</p>	
<p>[EA11] A human rights-based approach increasingly integrated into:</p> <p>► Common Country Assessments/United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs)/ Consolidated Appeal Processes and programmes relating to housing, water, sanitation and land;</p> <p>► Preparedness, response and recovery efforts to crises emanating from natural disasters, conflict and other situations of violence and insecurity; and</p> <p>► Support to non-UN security forces, and UN security policies and programmes in compliance with the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.</p>	

By 2017, OHCHR expects to have contributed to the achievement of the results outlined on the table above, in support of national efforts in the different thematic priority areas (colour scheme). OHCHR will pursue these behavioural, institutional and legislative changes in cooperation with relevant partners, using the different strategic tools at its disposal – monitoring and reporting, capacity-building and advisory services, advocacy and awareness-raising (see chapter one) – on the basis of an assessment of the specific context. It is expected that if achieved, these results will contribute to improving the duty-bearers' compliance with their international human rights obligations and to the rights-holders' ability to claim their rights and thereby to the enjoyment of all rights for all in the Middle East and the Gulf States.