



Human Resources and
Social Development

The National Policy for the Elimination of Forced Labor in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Introduction:

The National Policy for the Elimination of Forced Labor expresses the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's commitment to eradicate all forms of forced labor. It reflects the Kingdom's commitment to this goal, as stipulated in Article 28 of the Basic Law of Governance issued by Royal Decree No. (1/90) dated 27/08/1412AH, which states "The state shall facilitate employment opportunities for every capable person and enact laws that protect both the employee and the employer." In line with this commitment, several laws and regulations have been issued to safeguard rights, eliminate forced labor, and prohibit its practice. These include:

The Labor Law, issued by Royal Decree No. (51/ρ) on 23/08/1426AH, along with its executive regulations issued by Cabinet Resolution No. (70273) on 11/04/1440AH. Article 20 of this law prohibits employers from exerting pressure on an employee's freedom to serve their own interests or views in a manner inconsistent with the principle of free labor. Article 61 also obligates employers to refrain from forced labor, withholding wages or any part thereof without legal justification, and to treat employees with appropriate respect.

The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law, issued by Royal Decree No. (40/ρ) on 21/07/1430AH, prohibits all forms of human trafficking. It defines trafficking as compelling, threatening, deceiving, abducting, or exploiting a person through authority, weakness, or other means.

The Child Protection Law, issued by Royal Decree No. (14/ρ) on 03/02/1436AH, aims to protect children from all forms of abuse and neglect. It prohibits various practices, including employing children under the age of 15, assigning them tasks that may harm their physical or psychological well-being, and exploiting them sexually, financially, or for criminal activities or begging.

The Anti-Begging Law, issued by Royal Decree No. (20/ρ) dated 09/02/1443AH, prohibits all forms and methods of begging and imposes penalties for engaging in it.

The Law of Protection from Abuse, issued by Royal Decree No. (52/ρ) dated 15/11/1434AH, prohibits and penalizes all forms of exploitation, physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, and threats of such actions.

The Anti-Harassment Law, issued by Royal Decree No. (96/ρ) dated 16/09/1439AH, aims to combat harassment, prevent its occurrence, enforce penalties on perpetrators, and protect victims. The law imposes stricter penalties if the perpetrator holds direct or indirect authority over the victim or if the crime occurs in the workplace.

The Law of Combating Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, issued by Royal Decree No. (39/ρ) dated 08/07/1426 AH, stipulates harsher penalties for offenders who exploit individuals under their care, authority, or those who involve minors in committing crimes.

Regulations of Domestic Workers and Those of Similar Status, issued by Cabinet Resolution No. (310) dated 07/09/1434AH, ensure the fulfillment of domestic workers' rights and wages. These regulations prohibit assigning workers any dangerous tasks that threaten their health, physical safety, or human dignity.

The Kingdom has also ratified several international conventions aimed at eradicating forced labor, including:

- **International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 29 on Forced Labor (1930)**, ratified by Royal Decree No. (15/ρ) dated 12/03/1398AH.
- **ILO Convention No. 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labor (1957)**, ratified by Royal Decree No. (15/ρ) dated 12/03/1398AH.
- **The 2014 ILO Protocol to the Forced Labor Convention**, ratified by Royal Decree No. (43/ρ) dated 26/08/1442AH.
- **The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons**, ratified by Royal Decree No. (56/ρ) dated 11/06/1428AH, which supplements the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime of 2000AD, ratified by Royal Decree No. (20/ρ) dated 24/03/1425AH. This protocol aims to prevent and combat human trafficking, with special attention to women and children.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Royal Decree No. (7/ρ) dated 16/04/1416AH, which emphasizes the rights of children, including protection from sexual and commercial exploitation, and hazardous and harmful labor. Additionally, **the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts**, ratified by Royal Decree No. (38/ρ) dated 18/07/1431AH, and the **Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography**, ratified by Royal Decree No. (39/ρ) dated 18/07/1431AH.

ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Immediate Action for its Elimination (1999AD), ratified by Royal Decree No. (3/ρ) dated 22/01/1422AH, along with its accompanying **Recommendation No. 190** as a guiding framework, complementing its provisions.

ILO Convention No. 95 on the Protection of Wages (1949AD), ratified by Royal Decree No. (10/ρ) dated 08/01/1442AH.

ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Employment (1973AD), ratified by Royal Decree No. (37/ρ) dated 18/06/1434AH.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified by Royal Decree No. (28/ρ) dated 22/05/1429AH.

The Arab Charter on Human Rights, adopted by the Council of the Arab League in Tunis in 2004AD, ratified by Royal Decree No. (19/ρ) dated 27/03/1430AH. The charter prohibits slavery, servitude, forced labor, and trafficking in persons for prostitution or sexual exploitation, as well as the exploitation of children in armed conflicts.

The Arab Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, ratified by Royal Decree No. (38/ρ) dated 10/06/1433AH, emphasizes the prohibition of any threat or use of force, coercion, or exploitation of individuals in vulnerable situations for purposes such as using, transporting, harboring, or receiving persons for exploitation in all forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor, servitude, slavery, practices similar to slavery, or servitude.

Policy Terminology

The following terms, wherever they appear in this policy, shall have the following meanings:

- **Policy:** The National Policy for the Elimination of Forced Labor in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- **Trafficking in Persons:** The use, recruitment, transportation, harboring, or receipt of a person for the purpose of exploitation.
- **Threat:** An act of intimidation or planting fear by exerting pressure on an individual's will, instilling fear of harm to themselves, persons, or objects connected to them.
- **Victim:** A person subjected to any form of forced labor.

Scope of the Policy

This policy is implemented to eliminate forced labor as defined in **Convention No. 29 of 1930AD on Forced Labor**, ratified by Royal Decree No. (15/ρ) dated 12/03/1398AH.

Policy Objectives and Guiding Principles

Policy Objectives:

To take the necessary measures to eliminate forced labor; to provide protection and support to victims; and to enhance victims' access to justice and legal recourse.

Guiding Principles:

- **Enhancing Decent Working Conditions for All;** Promoting decent work conditions that respect fundamental human rights as well as the rights and dignity of workers, within a framework of standards that ensure fair wages, guaranteeing a dignified life while safeguarding the physical and mental well-being of workers during their employment.
- **Adopting an Integrated Governmental Approach;** Ensuring coordination, collaboration, and integration among all relevant entities to eliminate forced labor. This includes aligning government policies and interventions based on evidence, procedures, and mechanisms for implementing the policy, strengthened by dedicated resources for monitoring, evaluation, research, and data cooperation.
- **Victim-Centered Response;** Establishing victim-centered responses as a cornerstone for developing and providing support, assistance, and care services tailored to the needs of victims. This considers the age and gender of forced labor victims and reduces hindrances to accessing protection and care services.
- **Non-Discrimination;** Fostering equality and respect for human rights by combating discrimination in the provision of support, care, and protection services for victims, regardless of their age, gender, nationality, or social status.

Definition of Forced Labor

Forced labor, as defined by the **International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 29 on Forced Labor (1930)**, is "All work or services exacted from any person under the threat of any penalty and for which the person has not offered themselves voluntarily." The element of threat or coercion includes any direct or indirect means of intimidation, fear, or compulsion to perform a task.

Under the Kingdom's laws and regulations, forced labor includes exploiting individuals by compelling them to perform involuntary labor, coerced work or service, or forced begging.

Policy Pillars and Objectives

This policy consists of three main pillars:

First: Eliminating Forced Labor through Prevention and Protection Measures

The Kingdom seeks to implement effective measures to prohibit forced labor and protect human rights under this policy's objectives without discrimination. These measures aim to reduce individuals' exposure to forced labor, particularly among the most vulnerable groups. This pillar includes the following objectives:

1. Enforcing the Kingdom's commitments under international conventions related to the eradication of forced labor.
2. Strengthening the legislative framework through new or amended laws to combat forced labor.
3. Raising social awareness about the risks of forced labor.
4. Building institutional and individual capacities.
5. Enhancing inspection and monitoring mechanisms across all sectors encompassed by the definition of forced labor in Convention No. 29 (1930AD), ratified by Royal Decree No. (15/ρ) dated 12/03/1398AH.
6. Improving recruitment and employment systems, fostering principles of fair employment.

Second: Providing Protection, Care, and Support for Victims of Forced Labor

The Kingdom aims to implement effective measures to provide legal, social, and economic protection, care, and support for forced labor victims without discrimination. These measures enable victims to recover from the physical and psychological effects of forced labor, reduce the risk of re-victimization, and encourage them to cooperate with authorities and participate in legal actions against their exploiters. This pillar includes the following objectives:

1. Strengthening efforts to accurately identify victims and provide them with immediate assistance.
2. Providing safe shelters and care services tailored to the needs of victims without discrimination, considering the victim's gender.
3. Supporting and facilitating the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims while alleviating the negative impacts of forced labor.

Third: Enhancing Access to Justice

The Kingdom emphasizes enhancing the effectiveness of law enforcement, the prosecution system, and the imposition of stricter penalties while safeguarding victims' rights and ensuring their access to justice and remedies. It also underscores the imposition of penalties on violators of statutory provisions related to the prohibition of forced labor. The objectives under this pillar include the following:

1. Enabling victims and individuals affected by forced labor practices to access justice, remedies, and compensation.
2. Strengthening the enforcement of laws and ensuring a strict framework of criminal penalties and evidence-based investigations to prosecute offenders while upholding the principle of non-criminalization of victims.
3. Improving frameworks for investigative cooperation among entities within the Kingdom and on regional and international levels.
4. Imposing and intensifying deterrent criminal penalties and violations against perpetrators of forced labor crimes and violations.

Fourth: Building Partnerships and Enhancing Cooperation

The Kingdom seeks to build partnerships and enhance cooperation at the national, regional, and international levels in a manner that promotes and supports the participation of civil society, collaboration among government sectors, and the involvement of the private and nonprofit sectors. This approach is rooted in the Kingdom's Vision 2030, through the National Transformation Program, which serves as a cornerstone for uniting efforts among various entities according to their respective jurisdictions to eliminate forced labor in the Kingdom. This is achieved through the integration of preventive and precautionary plans and the implementation of initiatives arising from this policy. The objectives under this pillar include the following:

1. Building partnerships and fostering cooperation at all levels within the Kingdom.
2. Enhancing partnerships and international cooperation by exchanging knowledge, expertise, and information.
3. Strengthening collaboration and supporting the role of civil society and the nonprofit sector to actively contribute to efforts to eliminate forced labor.

Responsible Entity for Policy Implementation

The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development will be responsible for implementing this policy through related executive plans in collaboration with government entities, each according to its jurisdiction. This includes activities related to achieving the policy's objectives in alignment with existing laws, regulations, and procedures.

