



# HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE UAE

The UAE is deeply committed to promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and is proud of the progress it has made over its 49-year history. As a modern, dynamic nation, the UAE is constantly modernizing its laws in line with international best practices.

In recent years, significant progress has been made to ensure the rights of workers, women, and children; further promote religious tolerance; and provide international humanitarian aid to those in need while investing in health, education, economic empowerment, and security initiatives at home and abroad.

# THE UAE AS A REGIONAL LEADER IN PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS

## Women's Empowerment

Gender equality is of paramount importance in the UAE, with women participating fully in all aspects of civil and political life.

- The UAE Constitution guarantees equal rights for both men and women, including legal status, access to education and the workforce, and inheritance. Federal laws also mandate equal pay across the public and private sectors.
- Women in the UAE hold leadership positions across society. The UAE's Federal Cabinet includes nine women (nearly one-third of cabinet members), one of the highest proportions in the Middle East.
- After the 2019 elections, women comprised half of the Federal National Council.
- In 2012, the UAE Cabinet made it compulsory for government bodies to include women on their boards of directors, joining Norway, Spain, France and other European nations that have similar requirements. The UAE is the first Arab country to adopt this regulation.
- Women have also made major strides in contributing to the UAE's national achievements, particularly in the space sector. 34% of the Emirates Mars Mission team was comprised of women, and women made up 70% of the team behind the UAE Astronaut Program, which produced the UAE's first astronaut.

## Humanitarian Aid and International Cooperation

The UAE is one of top providers of humanitarian aid worldwide and works with its international partners to promote and protect human rights around the world.

- The UAE hosts the International Humanitarian City in Dubai, the largest humanitarian hub in the world.
- Through more than 40 UAE donor entities, the UAE provided AED 28.62 billion (USD 7.79 billion) in assistance to more than 42 developing countries in 2018.

- Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UAE has played a leading role in maintaining open supply chains and delivering medical and food aid to countries in need. To date, the UAE has provided aid to over 120 countries, assisting more than 1.6 million medical professionals worldwide.
- The UAE is part of the OECD Development Assistance Committee, being one of the largest providers of official development assistance (ODA) worldwide, having provided USD 2.2 billion in 2019.
- The UAE is a regional leader in combating human trafficking and is the first country in the Arab region to enact a comprehensive anti-trafficking law. Since human trafficking most often begins in the home countries of victims, the UAE has signed agreements with several countries to exchange best practices on the prevention of human trafficking to enhance assistance for victims of this crime.

## Interfaith Tolerance

Home to more than 200 nationalities, the UAE is committed to freedom of worship and coexistence between all faiths.

- The UAE hosts approximately 40 Christian churches, two Hindu temples, a Sikh temple and a Buddhist monastery that welcome multi-national congregations. A Jewish community meets and practices in Dubai.
- In February 2019, His Holiness Pope Francis visited the UAE in the first-ever visit by a sitting pope to the Arabian Peninsula. This visit led to the historic signing of the Document on Human Fraternity with Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb.
- In February 2019, the UAE announced that it would construct the Abrahamic Family House, a building dedicated to interfaith harmony and home to a church, synagogue, and mosque on the same site.
- For the last seven years, the Forum for Promoting Peace in Muslim Societies has held an annual conference in Abu Dhabi to discuss ways to further Islamic values such as friendship, peace, and inclusion.
- The UAE has also established various centers to counter ideological and religious extremism, including the International Institute for Tolerance, the Hedayah Center, and the Sawab Center.

# Labor Rights

The UAE hosts millions of workers from around the world and is deeply committed to safeguarding the rights of all workers.

- The UAE is a signatory to several international conventions on the rights of workers and is a member of the International Labor Organization.
- The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratization has launched numerous awareness campaigns to educate laborers about their rights.
- The UAE has established offices in courts to provide legal support to workers in labor disputes, and units have been established across the country to provide protection for workers.
- The Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) was established in 2008 as a forum for dialogue and cooperation between Asian countries of labor origin and destination. Through cooperation on the joint development of labor mobility programming, implementation, and reporting, the ADD helps to ensure that Member States develop partnerships for adopting best practices.
- Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, the UAE has supported workers by facilitating their ability to secure temporary employment, access new job opportunities, and receive housing, food, and medical assistance. The UAE also coordinated the repatriation of hundreds of thousands of workers to ensure their safe return home.

**While the UAE has made substantial progress in its short history, it constantly strives to build upon its achievements in the human rights field.**

The UAE National Human Rights Committee is currently launching a consultative process to strengthen and develop protections for human rights in the UAE. This process is simply our next step forward as we seek to chart the next 50 years, and the Committee will lead the preparation of the National Human Rights Action Plan for the UAE. This process comes in close coordination with the Federal National Council, civil society institutions, and other relevant bodies to ensure that diverse perspectives are included in reflecting the country's vision for the future.