

-Humanitarian Law RULES!

Center for the Study of Humanitarian Law
Newsletter

Women Allowed driving In Saudi Arabia: What's rational behind?

Most of the time women are given less freedom and they are strictly limited their rights in Islamic states, mostly in the Middle East and does in Saudi Arabia. The world appreciated and congratulated Saudi Arabia which is the only one, and the last state that bar women from driving; it ended the ban in June 2018 (Caroline Alexander, Sep 2018). In a political power, Saudi Arabia became the last country to extend the vote to women in 2011.

The advancement of women's rights is uneven at best in Saudi Arabia, as well as across North Africa and the Middle East, a region that regularly rates the worst or second worst to sub-Saharan Africa in overall assessments of gender equality (Caroline Alexander, Sep 2018). What are rational behind Relating to the ending ban for women to driving and having licenses? The author states that the change came amid the Saudi monarchy's ambitious campaign to diversify the economy and wean the kingdom from dependence on oil revenue. He adds that if more women are going to have jobs, they need to be able to drive to work. Furthermore, the author argues that it's not the provision of the civil liberties. Beyond these, it opens for human rights development, especially in right to work, women participation and in the process of promoting gender equality.

In fact, the government has, previously, jailed some country's prominent activist human rights campaigners before giving the ban lift-accusing them that they are collaborated with unspecified aggressive foreign units. Thus such provision above mentioned is contradicted to the civil liberty by giving women to drive to work by themselves. Of course, it gives freedom to engage actively in terms of works in the society; however, it does not guarantee the equality of men and women. It's just a small step towards that of equality.

There are some challenges in Saudi Arabia even it allows women to drive. The obstacles to the equality are law more favoured to men than women-allowing laws giving a husband the right to unilaterally divorce his wife and law enforcement. Of course, it needs time shape the behaviour of the people to treat women as the same as men. Due to religious belief and culture, Saudis women still face hurdles in terms of equality. Regards to this, Prince Khaled told reporters that "This is the right time to do the right thing;" and adding that the decision was a "huge step forward" and that Saudi "society is ready," (D.W discoveries, 2018). Whether, Saudi Arabia reduces amount of oil dependent revenue to diversify its future economy or provide civil liberties to women or whatsoever. Any future development on rights and role of women in the Saudi Arabia state, only time will be the proof.

Reference:

1/Made For Minds: *Women Rights in the Islamic World*, available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/womens-rights-in-the-islamic-world/a-40714427> (accessed: Oct. 2, 2018)

2/ Made for Minds: *Saudi Arabia to allow women to drive: state media*, available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/saudi-arabia-to-allow-women-to-drive-state-media/a-40699328> (accessed: Oct. 2, 2018)

3/Caroline Alexander, Bloomberg: *Mideast Takes Small, Uneven Steps on Women's Rights: Quick Take* https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-09-27/mideast-takes-small-uneven-steps-on-women-s-rights-quicktake?utm_medium=social&cmpid=socialflow-facebo (accessed: Sep.28, 2018)

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September 2018

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