

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)

UPR Submission

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Norway



سازمان دفاع از قربانیان خشونت
Organization for Defending Victims
of Violence

www.odvv.org

About ODVV

1. The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-partisan organization in Special Consultative Status to ECOSOC. ODVV was established in 1988 in Tehran and has been active in the field of human rights and humanitarian activities.

2. ODVV is also associated to the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), a member of the UN Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO), AMAN Network of Rehabilitation Centers in the Middle East and North Africa and International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT). ODVV has cooperated with international organizations in a variety of issues and has working relations with many NGOs in Iran and around the globe.

3. ODVV is focused on promoting human rights, supporting victims of violence, empowering Iranian civil society, and offering human rights consultations to the Iranian institutions and organizations. ODVV is actively involved in running various human rights education courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences. Other activities include:

- Participation in UN Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council sessions in Geneva;
- Publication of different books and booklets on human rights such as Rights of the Child, Unilateral Coercive Measures (Economic Sanctions), Racism, Racial Discrimination, Islamophobia and Xenophobia;
- Publishing *Defenders Quarterly* (in English), human rights news and developments *Weekly* (in Farsi), updating ODVV websites in English, Farsi and Arabic;
- Internship for Iranian and international students.

4. ODVV is submitting the following report on the human rights situation of Norway, in order to contribute to the improvement of the human rights situation.

Refugees and asylum-seekers

5. Norway is witnessing the rise of anti-immigration right-wing politics that continued to take initiatives to restrict the rights of asylum-seekers and refugees. Consequently, the controversial practice of refoulement, which the international law forbids, continued in 2015 affecting more than 1,000 people.¹

6. Norway adopted restrictive amendments to its Immigration Act that reduced criteria and safeguards for the “safe third country” and “safe country of origin” concepts,² therefore the By November 2017, only 3,378 people had claimed asylum, compared to 31,145 in 2015, according to government statistics.³ Also, Afghan nationals represented the fifth biggest group of people who seek asylum in Norway by the end of November 2017 and the country had the highest number of persons being forcibly returned to Afghanistan.⁴

Religious minorities and hate crimes

7. Norway seems to be in breach of its human rights obligations to ensure the fundamental rights of religious minorities which can undermine the principle of democracy and good governing in the country. There is a rise in anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim violence and harassment. In 2015, Oslo police reviewed 143 hate crimes, roughly double the number in 2014. The actual number is assumed to be significantly higher, as many incidents are not reported or are miscategorized by police.⁵ Also according to 2018 report of Human Rights Committee on civil and political rights in Norway, an issue that needs particular attention is hate speech and its various manifestations, including on the Internet, and against groups such as Romani, Roma, Muslims, Jews and the Sami.⁶

8. Under international human rights law, the state should neither deny nor impose particular religious beliefs or particular manifestations of religious beliefs. Norway is the first Nordic country to propose a ban on the burqa -full face and body covering - in kindergartens, schools and universities.⁷

Violence against Women

9. Norway signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence but gender-based violence, including rape and sexual violence, remained a serious concern. The number of rape cases reported to the police had been increasing

¹<https://borgenproject.org/human-rights-in-norway/>

²<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=22835&LangID=E>

³<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/norway/report-norway/>

⁴ibid.

⁵<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2016/norway>

⁶<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=22835&LangID=E>

⁷<https://borgenproject.org/human-rights-in-norway/>

steadily over the years. In 2016, 1,663 cases of rape were reported to the police, an increase of nearly 21.9% since 2015.⁴ However, violence against women, was heavily underreported.

10. According to human rights committee, statistics showed that one in ten women had been raped and half of those who reported rape were under the age of 18. Sami women reported higher incidences of all forms of violence compared to other women.⁵ Following the consideration of Norway's ninth periodic report, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women expressed concerns about the high level of gender-based violence against women.⁶

Recommendations

11. The country is urged respect key refugee rights under the 1951 Refugee Convention, such as the principle of non-refoulement which prohibits the return of individuals to a country where they face serious threat of persecution or harm.

12. Norway is recommended to reverse its November amendment to the 2008 Immigration Act and ensure that the asylum claims of an asylum seeker will be examined.

13. The country is encouraged to adopt more substantive measures against all forms of discrimination, in particular Islamophobia and xenophobia and establish mechanisms for monitoring and ensuring accountability. Also, intensify the efforts to promote tolerance and diversity in the community and to combat hate-crimes.

14. Given its credible records, Norway is urged to respect religious diversity. Allowing individuals to manifest their beliefs by wearing a religious symbol does not constitute endorsement by the state nor does it undermine state neutrality.

15. Norway must raise awareness in relation to violence against women and combat domestic violence, and sexual abuse against women and girls.

⁴<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/norway/report-norway/>

⁵<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=22835&LangID=E>

⁶<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/europe-and-central-asia/norway/report-norway/>