

ABSTRACT

The appointment of Saudi Arabia as Chair of the *Commission on the Status of Women* (CSW) in March 2024 has generated global controversy. This is due to Saudi Arabia's longstanding record of gender discrimination, including the male guardianship system, restrictions on individual freedoms, and repression of women's rights activists. Although several reforms have been introduced under the Vision 2030 framework, such as lifting the driving ban for women, structural barriers and discriminatory laws continue to restrict women's rights and participation in society.

This study aims to analyze the alignment between Saudi Arabia's appointment as Chair of the CSW and the effectiveness of women's rights advocacy at the domestic level. It also seeks to examine the responses of international human rights *International Non-Governmental Organizations* (INGOs) such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, UN Watch, and ALQST to this appointment.

The research employs a qualitative method with a library research approach. The analysis is guided by liberal feminist theory, which emphasizes the importance of legal and institutional reform for achieving gender equality, and constructivist theory, which highlights the role of norms, identity, and international interactions in shaping state behavior and global perceptions.

The findings indicate that Saudi Arabia's appointment as Chair of the CSW serves more as a symbolic act to enhance its international image rather than as a genuine catalyst for domestic change. The responses of INGOs underline the gap between global representation and domestic realities, stressing that transnational advocacy remains essential in pressuring Saudi Arabia to pursue substantive reforms. Thus, the country's role in the CSW reflects an ambiguity between international legitimacy and domestic structural challenges to gender equality.

Keywords: Saudi Arabia, Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Women's Rights, Human Rights INGOs, Gender Equality.