

Question for written answer E-003203/2021
to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs
and Security Policy
Rule 138
Cyrus Engerer (S&D)

Subject: Women's rights violations in the UAE

Women in the UAE face continued discrimination. For example, the Personal Status Law of 2005 states that 'a husband's rights over his wife' include the wife's 'courteous obedience to him' (Article 56), and places conditions on a married woman's right to work or leave the house (Article 72).

Under Article 356 of the Penal Code, 'debasement of honour with consent' is punishable by one year or more in prison. On the basis of this law, a Swedish-run hospital in Ajman Emirate was forced to report pregnant, unmarried women to the police. In some cases these referrals have led to prosecution and deportation, according to Amnesty International. Additionally, under Article 53 of the Code, 'a husband's discipline of his wife' is 'considered an exercise of rights', language that can be read as an official sanction of spousal abuse.

However, in 2019, the VP/HR said 'We always welcome the UAE's policies ... as well as its overall advancement, particularly in the areas of development, youth and women's empowerment, social communication, tolerance and coexistence.'

1. What improvements have there been since this statement on women's human rights in the UAE?
2. Does the VP/HR plan to address this issue in the future?