Quantitative Analysis of Human Rights and Vulnerable Groups for Saudi Arabia

Utilization of the Danish Human Rights: The SDG – Human Rights Data Explorer for the Common Country Analysis for KSA

Background Paper, Draft, January 2021, Aljaz Kuncic[1]

1. Background[2]

The Danish Human Rights SDG – Human Rights Data Explorer (sdgdata.humanrights.dk) is the result of an experimental data mining project. Their classification algorithm has helped to identify links to the SDGs for more than 140,000 human rights recommendations and observations. Online there is a searchable database that links monitoring information from the international human rights system to the Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It allows users to explore the recommendations and observations of international human rights monitoring bodies, as they relate to the implementation of the SDGs and their 169 targets in specific countries.

"On average, states receive more than 70 recommendations per year under the various human rights monitoring mechanisms of the UN. With 193 UN Member States, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) alone has generated over 68,000 recommendations since its beginning in 2007. In order for governments to implement these recommendations in a systematic and efficient manner, it is necessary to categorize them into thematic clusters."[3]

The SDG – Human Rights Data Explorer lets you explore 150,000 recommendations and observations from 67 monitoring mechanisms of the international human rights system. Almost **60% of these are directly linked to a SDG target** and hence immediately relevant for national SDG implementation.

Its suggested use is both at the national as well as regional/global level, giving the following guidelines for National and Global and regional level:

National implementation
The SDG – Human Rights Data Explorer can be used to explore how human rights recommendations for individual countries are linked to specific SDG targets. The recommendations can then be used to:
  •   identify the priority issues that need to be addressed in a given country;
  •   guide the strategies and actions to achieve the relevant SDG targets and related human rights obligations; and
  •   identify vulnerable groups such as migrant workers, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities, who need special considerations in strategies and actions to achieve particular SDG targets and related human rights obligations, to ensure they are not left behind.

2. Algorithm to determine the links to SDGs and vulnerable groups

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[2] https://sdgdata.humanrights.dk/en/what-is-the-upr-sdg-data-explorer, accessed on 6th of January 2021
[3] https://sdgdata.humanrights.dk/en/methodology

"The human rights recommendations have been categorised through an analytical process using semi-supervised machine learning. Through this process, an algorithm has been initially trained to classify UPR recommendations based on a small set of training examples (classified by a human expert) and a large amount of unclassified data."[4]

"Sustainable Development Goals categories: The 169 targets under the 17 Sustainable Development Goals serve as categories for the classification of the recommendations. The current data material reflects about 70 of the 169 targets. Recommendations are linked directly at the target level, with no residual categories at the Goal-level. This means that recommendations are only classified if they are linked to a specific target under one of the 17 Goals."[5]

The 12 categories of rights-holders identified in the SDG – Human Rights Data Explorer are:[6]
- Women and girls
- Children
- Indigenous peoples
- Persons with disabilities
- Migrants
- Refugees and asylum-seekers
- Internally displaced persons
- Ethnic and religious minorities [Members of minorities]
- Human rights defenders
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI)
- Older persons
- Youth

3. The case of KSA

Summary statistics:
- 870 cases over years 2008 (41), 2009 (122), 2013 (235), 2016 (47), 2017 (7), 2018 (359) and 2019 (59)
- almost half of all the noted cases was made in 2017 or later, which has all three sources of observations and recommendations, but not all subareas: Special procedures (Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights in 2017 and Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism in 2018), Treaty Bodies (Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 2018 and Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2019) and UPR (2018)
- there are 96 Observations and 774 Recommendations
- the mechanisms giving those are either Special Procedures (Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights in 2017; Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences only in 2009; Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism in 2018; all account for 35), Treaty Bodies (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) only in 2008; Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 2016 and 2018; Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2019, all account for 229), or Universal Periodic Review in 2009, 2013 and 2018 (all together at 606)
- out of the 606 UPR cases, 422 were accepted and 184 noted

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[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

- out of all 870 cases, 460 have an SDG link identified, and 515 are linked to the vulnerable groups (the remaining close to 50% for SDGs and 40% for vulnerable groups are mostly generic recommendations that do not specifically address one or several SDG targets or vulnerable groups)

We want to answer the following questions:
1. Overall, what is the distribution of observations and recommendations across SDGs and across vulnerable groups, and are there vulnerable groups that are more than proportionally affected within the SDGs?
2. What is the change and trend (if any) over time (2009, 2013 and 2018) of UPR observations and recommendations across SDGs and across vulnerable groups?
3. What is the change and trend (if any) over time (2009, 2013 and 2018) of UPR Noted vs. Supported observations and recommendations in total as well as across top 3 vulnerable groups and SDGs?
4. What is the change and trend (if any) over time (2009, 2013 and 2018) of countries giving UPR observations and recommendations in total?

3.1. Overall distributions of observations and recommendations across SDGs and across vulnerable groups and vulnerable groups that are more than proportionally affected within the SDGs and which SDGs are the most relevant for different vulnerable groups

Identifying Sustainable Development Goals priority areas from the Human Rights lens:
- the 460 observations and recommendations that have a link to SDGs identified have a total of 693 references to SDGs, with 100 of them referencing 2 goals, 36 referencing 3 goals, 13 referencing 4 goals, 3 referencing 5 goals, and the maximum links being 6 referenced SDGs (Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) - CRC/C/SAU/CO/3-4; Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights - A/HRC/35/26Add.3)
- the figure below shows that the most salient link to sustainable development goals is to **SDG 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, with more than a third of all observations and recommendations mentioning it, followed by SDG 5 on Gender equality and SDG 8 on Decent economic growth with around 18%**, with SDGs 4, 3, 17, and 10 having mentionable but small numbers, while SDGs 1, 2 on poverty and hunger, SDGs 6, 7, and 9 on water, energy and industry, and all the environmental goals SDG 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 have received little or no mentions.
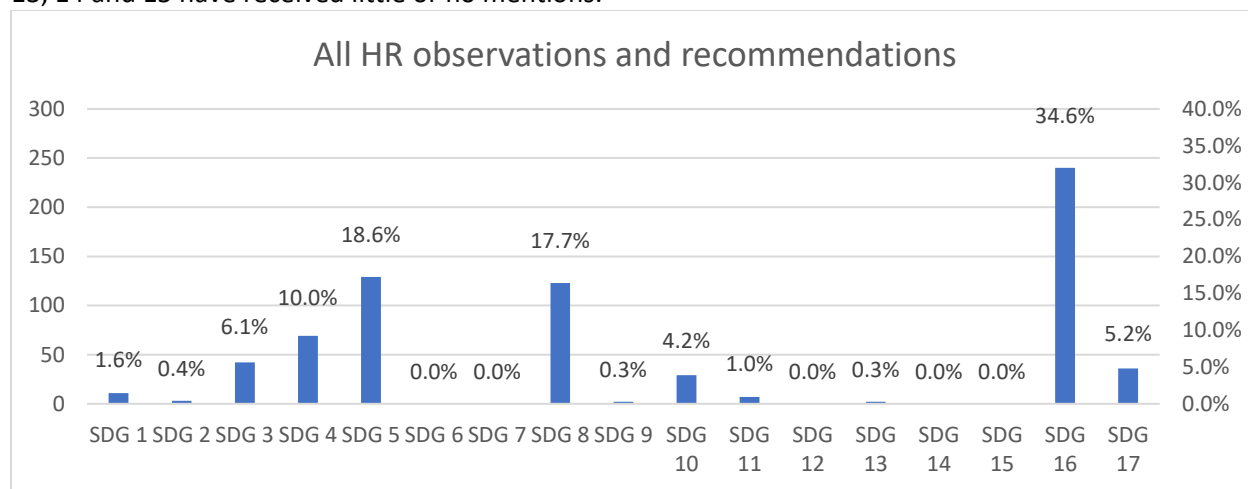
Identifying vulnerable groups from the Human Rights lens:

- out of the 515 observations and recommendations that refer to one or more vulnerable groups with a total of 712 links, 379 identify one vulnerable group, 96 identify 2, 30 identify 3, 4 identify 4, 4 also identify 5, and 2 identify 6 as the maximum (both from the same document from Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) - CRPD/C/SAU/CO/1)

- the figure below shows that the most frequently identified vulnerable groups are very dominantly **Women and girls with a third of all mentions**, followed by Children at 28%. Vulnerable groups featured relatively often in observations and recommendations are also Migrants and Persons with disabilities at 12% and 9%, respectively, while sometimes mentioned are also Minorities, Human rights defenders, and Youth, while no or almost no mentions go towards LGBTI, Internally displaced, Older persons and Indigenous peoples.
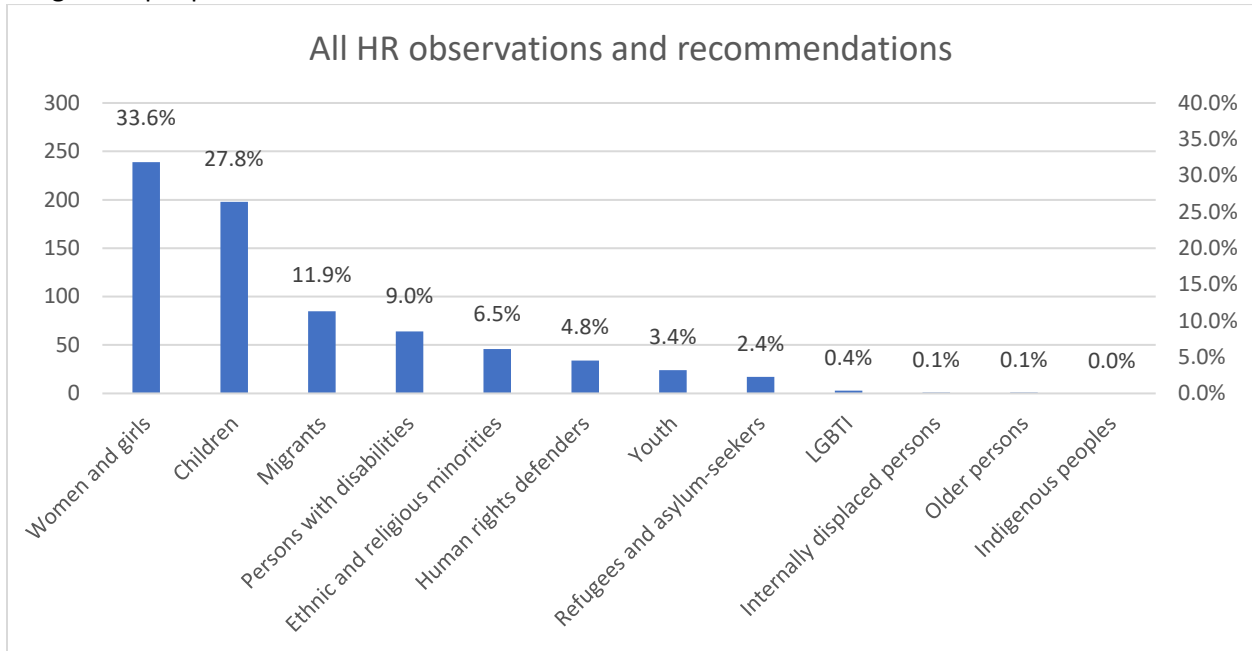

Identifying vulnerable groups that are more than proportionally affected within the SDGs (SDG saturation with vulnerable groups), and which SDGs are most relevant for each vulnerable group (vulnerable group saturation with SDGs):

- the figure below shows two ways to look at the overlap between human rights observations and recommendations on SDGs and vulnerable groups
- the first figure shows **vulnerable groups that are more than proportionally affected within the SDGs (SDG saturation with vulnerable groups) or in other words Relevance of vulnerable groups for different SDGs**, and it tells us the following, going by the SDGs that have at least a couple of percentage points in HR mentions (in order of importance, with total % stated):
  - SDG 16 (35%): Children are the most important vulnerable group, accounting for 33% of all references to this goal, followed by Women and girls at 26%, Human rights defenders at 11%, and Persons with disabilities, Migrants and Members of minorities all between 7 and 8%
  - SDG 5 (19%): Women and girls are expectedly the most important vulnerable group within this goal, accounting for 57% of all references to this goal, followed by Children with almost 20%, and Persons with disabilities with 7%, with Migrants and Members of minorities at around 5%
  - SDG 8 (18%): Children are the most important vulnerable group within this goal, accounting for 37% of all references to this goal, followed closely by Migrants with 33%,

and then Women and girls at 13%, and Persons with disabilities and Refugees and asylum-seekers at around 5%.

- o SDG 4 (10%): Children are the most important vulnerable group within this goal, accounting for 40% of all references to this goal, followed by Women and girls with 26%, Persons with disabilities with 17%, and Members of minorities at around 7%.
- o SDG 3 (6%): Persons with disabilities are the most important vulnerable group within this goal, accounting for 28% of all references to this goal, followed closely by Women and girls and Children with 27% each, and then Migrants with 7%, and Youth with 5%
- o SDG 17 (5%): Women and girls are the most important vulnerable group within this goal, accounting for 35% of all references to this goal, followed by Children with 24%, Persons with disabilities with 16%, Members of minorities with 10%, Migrants with 6%, and Youth with 4%


Relevance of vulnerable groups for different SDGs
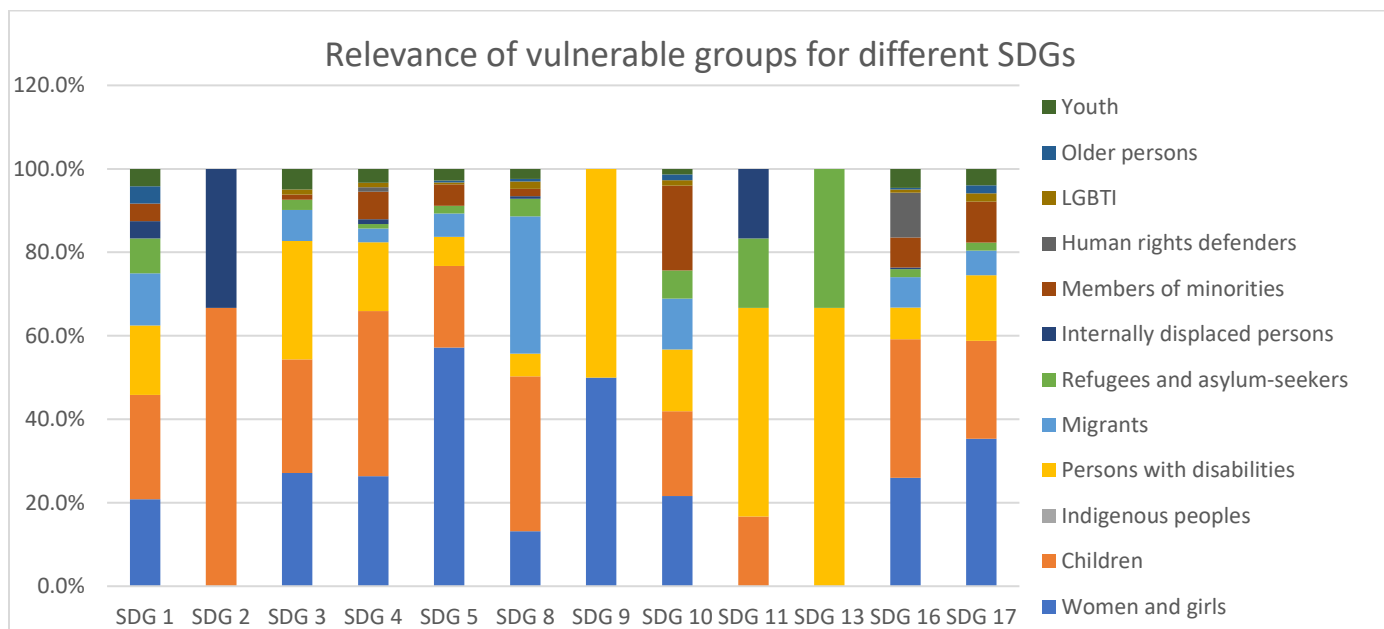
- the second figure shows **which SDGs are most relevant for each vulnerable group (vulnerable group saturation with SDGs) or in other words, Relevance of SDGs for different vulnerable groups**, and it tells us the following, going by all vulnerable groups (in order of importance, with total % stated):
    - o Women and girls (33.6%): 40% of all Women and girls observations and recommendations are linked to SDG 5, followed by SDG 16 with 23%, SDGs 3 and 8 with 7%, SDG 17 with 6%, and SDG 10 with 5%
    - o Children (27.8%): 31% of all Children observations and recommendations are linked to SDG 16, followed by SDG 8 with 22%, SDG 5 with 15%, SDG 4 with 13%, SDG 3 with 8%, and SDGs 10 and 17 with around 5%
    - o Migrants (11.9%): 50% of all Migrants observations and recommendations are linked to SDG 8, followed by SDG 16 with 17%, SDG 5 with 11%, SDG 10 with 8%, and SDG 3 with 6%
    - o Persons with disabilities (9.0%): 21% of all Persons with disabilities observations and recommendations are linked to SDG 3, followed by SDG 16 at 18%, SDGs 4 and 5 at 14%, SDG 10 at 10%, SDG 8 at 8%, and SDG 17 at 7%

- o Ethnic and religious minorities (6.5%): 31% of all Members of minorities observations and recommendations are linked to SDG 16, followed by SDG 10 with 25%, and SDG 5 with 18%
- o Human rights defenders (4.8%): practically all Human rights defenders observations and recommendations are linked to SDG 16
- o Youth (3.4%): 36% of all Youth observations and recommendations are linked to SDG 16, followed by SDG 5 with 18%, and SDGs 3 and 8 with 12% each
- o Refugees and asylum-seekers (2.4%): 24% of all Refugees and asylum-seekers observations and recommendations are linked to SDG 8, followed by SDGs 10 and 16 with 17%, and SDG 5 with 14%
- o LGBTI (0.4%): 30% of all LGBTI observations and recommendations are linked to SDG 8, followed by SDG 16 with 20%, and SDGs 3, 4, 5, 10 and 17 with 10% (one mention each)
- o Internally displaced persons (0.1%): equally distributed at 16.7% (one mention each) across SDGs 1, 2, 4, 8, 11, 16.
- o Older persons (0.1%): equally distributed at 16.7% (one mention each) across SDGs 1, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17
- o Indigenous peoples (0.0%): no mentions

Relevance of SDGs for different vulnerable groups
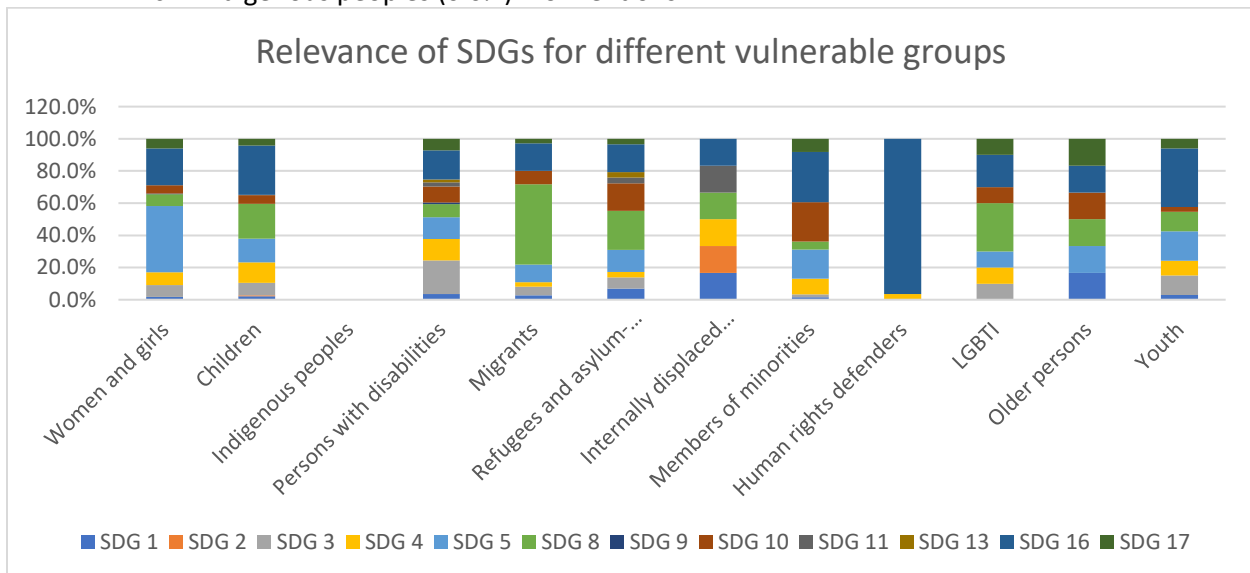
3.2. Examining over time (2009, 2013 and 2018) dynamics of UPR observations and recommendations across SDGs and across vulnerable groups

- 606 cases over years 2009 (113), 2013 (235), and 2018 (258), with a bit than one half (43%) having a link to SDGs identified and 51% to vulnerable groups
- with the distribution across SDGs, expressed as a share of all UPR observations and recommendations in that year, we see a couple of trends across SDGs and time in the first figure, which signal the increasing or decreasing importance of SDGs for KSA from the HR lens as seen by other countries:
   - o a strong upward trend for observations and recommendations relating to SDG 16, a strong downwards trend for those for SDG 4, and a smaller but clear downwards trend for SDGs 8, 10, 17 and 11

UPR shares of observations and recommendations across SDGs
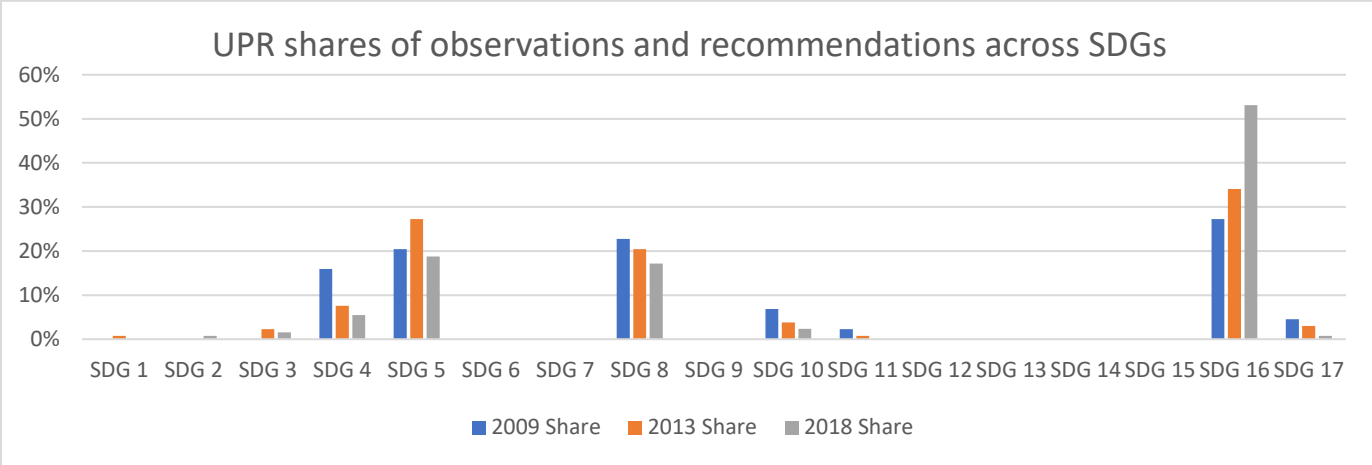
- with the distribution across vulnerable groups, expressed as a share of all UPR observations and recommendations in that year, we do not see many trends across groups and time in the first figure, which signal the relative constant focus on selected vulnerable groups for KSA from the HR lens as seen by other countries:
  o there is a slight negative trend with Migrants and Members of minorities

UPR shares of observations and recommendations across vulnerable groups
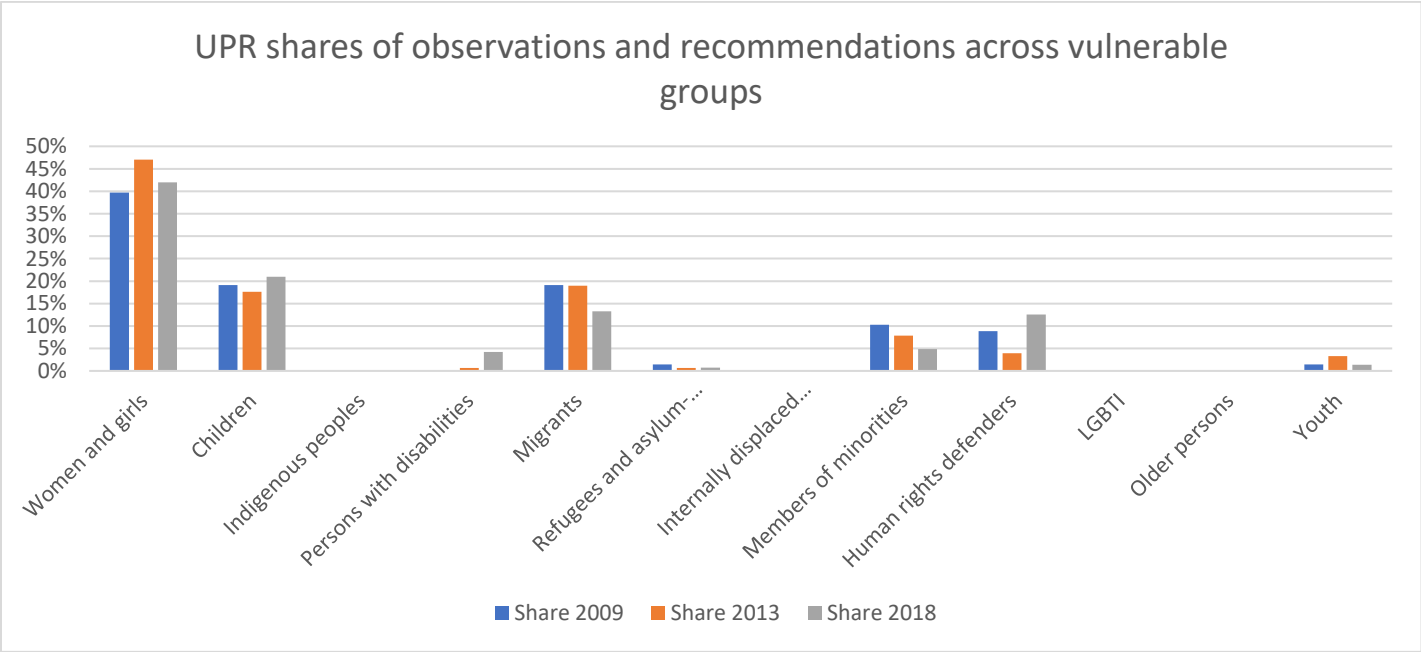
3.3. Examining the changes over time (2009, 2013 and 2018) of UPR Noted vs. Supported observations and recommendations in total as well as across top 3 SDGs and top 2 vulnerable groups

- This can tell us whether there is a shift in policy in KSA towards willing to improve conditions of a certain group in regards to international norms
- Share of supported (out of the total) UPR observations and recommendations remained relatively stable without an apparent trend across the 3 rounds of UPR, it was 79% in 2009, 64% in 2013, and 71% in 2018

- Table below shows there are no large differences or trends between noted and supported observations for the top three SDGs
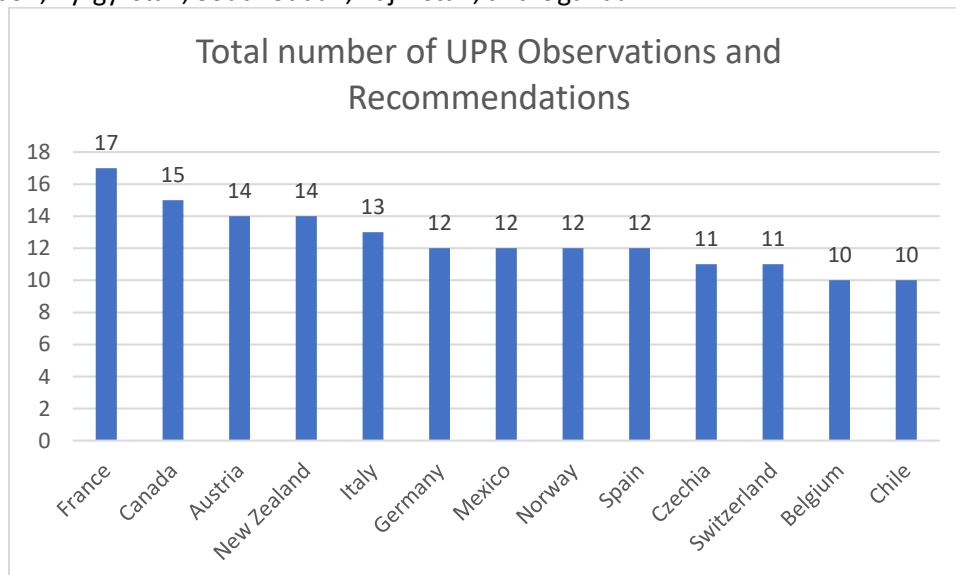
	SDG 16			SDG 8			SDG 5				Total
	Noted	Supported	Share of S	Noted	Supported	Share of S	Noted	Supported	Share of S		
2009	3	9	75%	1	9	90%	0	9	100%		12
2013	18	27	60%	4	23	85%	7	29	81%		45
2018	17	51	75%	0	22	100%	1	23	96%		68
Total	38	87	70%	5	54	92%	8	61	88%		125

- The second Table below does not show large differences or a trend for Women and girls, as the most salient vulnerable group, but it does show a negative trend through the years on the observations and recommendations on the second most salient vulnerable group – Children, where the share of supported recommendations went from 92% in 2009, down to 59% in 2013, and further down to only 50% in 2018

	Women and girls			Children		
	Noted	Supported	Share of S	Noted	Supported	Share of S
2009	7	20	74%	1	12	92%
2013	20	52	72%	11	16	59%
2018	9	51	85%	15	15	50%
Total	36	123	77%	27	43	61%

3.4. Identifying the change and trend over time (2009, 2013 and 2018) of countries giving UPR observations and recommendations in total

- This can give us indices on possible political or situational motives within the UPR of other countries to either give or not give HR observations or recommendations
- The top countries in sum (across all three years) of all observations and recommendations are shown in the graph below, for those with a sum of 10 or more, and in addition, the countries who have listed only one observation or recommendation in the past 3 UPRs (guided by very limited interest or signaling maybe) are Armenia, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Gabon, Kyrgyzstan, South Sudan, Tajikistan, and Uganda

Total number of UPR Observations and Recommendations

France 17, Canada 15, Austria 14, New Zealand 14, Italy 13, Germany 12, Mexico 12, Norway 12, Spain 12, Czechia 11, Switzerland 11, Belgium 10, Chile 10

- The table below shows the dynamics of all the countries giving observations or recommendations to Saudi Arabia through the UPR in either or all the UPR periods, with no visible dynamics or excesses

Recommending state UPR	2009	2013	2018	All periods	Recommending state UPR	2009	2013	2018	All periods
Afghanistan			2		Lebanon	1	2	2	1
Albania		3			Libya			2	
Algeria	5		2		Liechtenstein			6	
Argentina		2	3		Lithuania		4		
Armenia		1			Malaysia	3	2	2	1
Australia		4	5		Maldives		2	1	
Austria	4	4	6	1	Mexico	6	3	3	1
Azerbaijan	2	2	2	1	Montenegro			2	
Bahrain	3	2	2	1	Morocco	3	2		
Bangladesh			2		Myanmar			5	
Belarus	2		3		Nepal		1	2	
Belgium	2	4	4	1	Netherlands		3	2	
Benin		2			New Zealand	8	3	3	1
Bhutan		1			Nicaragua	1	1		
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)			3		Nigeria	1	4	2	1
Bosnia and Herzegovina		1			Norway	5	4	3	1
Botswana			2		Oman	1	2	3	1
Brazil		2	2		Pakistan		2	3	
Brunei Darussalam		2	2		Paraguay		3		
Burundi			2		Peru			4	
Cambodia		2			Philippines	1	2	3	1
Canada	5	5	5	1	Poland		2	3	
Chad	2	1			Portugal			3	
Chile	3	3	4	1	Qatar	1	2	3	1
China		2	2		Republic of Korea	2	3	2	1
Colombia		2			Republic of Moldova		3		
Comoros			2		Romania		4	2	
Costa Rica		2	6		Russian Federation	1	1		
Croatia			2		Senegal		3	2	
Cuba	3	2	2	1	Serbia			2	
Cyprus		2	2		Sierra Leone		4		
Czechia		6	5		Singapore	1	2	2	1
CÃ´te d'Ivoire			1		Slovakia		2		
Denmark		2	2		Slovenia		4	3	
Djibouti		2	2		Somalia		3		

Ecuador		2			South Africa	2			
Egypt	3	3	2	1	South Sudan		1		
Eritrea			1		Spain		6	6	
Estonia			5		Sri Lanka		2		
Ethiopia		2			State of Palestine	3	2	2	1
Finland	3	2	2	1	Sudan	2	2	3	1
France	4	8	5	1	Sweden	3	4	2	1
Gabon			1		Switzerland	4	4	3	1
Georgia			2		Syrian Arab Republic		5		
Germany	3	3	6	1	Tajikistan		1		
Ghana			2		Thailand	1	2	2	1
Greece		2	3		Togo		2		
Haiti			3		Tunisia		3	2	
Honduras			2		Turkey	1	2		
Hungary		1	2		Turkmenistan		2		
Iceland			4		Uganda		1		
India			2		Ukraine		1	1	
Indonesia		2	3		UAE	1	2	2	1
Iran (Islamic Republic of)			6		Ukraine	3	2	3	1
Iraq		1	3		USA		3	3	
Ireland		2	1		Uruguay		4	3	
Israel	4				Uzbekistan	1	3	2	1
Italy	4	5	4	1	Venezuela	1	3	1	1
Japan		3	3		Viet Nam		2		
Jordan		2	2		Yemen	1		1	
Kuwait	3	1	1	1					
Kyrgyzstan		1							
Latvia		2	2						