

CHAPTER III

THE POLICIES UNDER CROWN PRINCE SALMAN TOWARDS WOMEN'S RIGHTS

In this chapter, the writer will explain about the background of Crown Prince Salman as well as his policies and actions towards women's rights in Saudi Arabia and also the relation between Arab Saudi and United Nations

A.The Background of Crown Prince Salman

Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud or known as Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) is currently now serving as a Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia and also holds the positions of First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and President of the Council for Economic and Development Affairs. Salman was named Crown Prince in 2017, after winning a power struggle with the appointed heir (Zahack, 2015).

The Crown Prince Salman was born on August 31, 1985. He is an eldest child of King Salman of Saudi Arabia and Fahda bint Falah bin Sultan bin Hathleen al-Ajmi, King Salman's third wife. In 2018, he married Princess Sarah bint Mashhoor bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and had four children (Staff, 2017).

He completed his primary education in Riyadh and Salman was ranked among the kingdom's top ten students. He then obtained law degree from King Saud University and got ranked second in class. While being a student at a university, Salman was enrolled in various training programmes. After

graduating from university, he established a number of firms working in the private sector and spent several years there (Zahack, 2015).

In 2007, Crown Prince Salman began his political career as full-time adviser to the Council of Ministers for two years. In 2009, he became special adviser to his father, when King Salman was serving as the governor of Riyadh province. During that time, Crown Prince Salman rose his position to serve as part-time consultant for the Experts Commission until March 2013. He was also served as the secretary general of the Riyadh Competitive Council and a special advisor to the chairmain of the Board for the King AbdulAziz Foundation for Reserach and Archieves. In October 2011, after the death of Crown Prince Sultan bin AbdulAziz and made King Salman ascent to power by becoming second deputy prime minister and defense minister, he made Bin Salman as his private advisor (Zahack, 2015).

In June 2012, when the Crown Prince was Nayef bin AbdulAziz Al Saud died, and made Bin Salman's father became the New Crown Prince, Bin Salman moved up into the number two in the hierarchy. In March 2013, Mohammed Bin Salman was appointed as the President of Crown Prince court. In 2014, he was appointed a state minister and member of the council of ministers (Zahack, 2015).

On 23 January 2015, Mohammed bin Salman was appointed as Minister of Defense. His most notable move as defence minister was leading Operation Decisive Storm, a Saudi-Led coalition in Yemen against the Houthi rebels. In the same year, he was named the chair of the Council for Economic and Development Affairs which oversees the kingdom's economic affairs, ultimately shaping its political and security poicies (Zahack, 2015).

In 2015, after his father seceded to the throne because of the death of King Abdullah in the early January, King

Salman made Bin Salman became Deputy Crown Prince, behind his cousin, Mohammed bin Nayef who was the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. However, on 21 June 2017, Mohammed bin Salman was appointed as Crown Prince. Salman was also named deputy prime minister and maintained his post as defence minister when King Salman issued royal decree removed Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef and made Bin Salman who was 31 years old as the next in line to the throne. With the rise of Mohammed bin Salman as the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, it means he has the power to manage the affairs of the state (Zahack, 2015).

Here's three of twenty list of the royal decrees made by King Salman:

- Royal Decree: HRH Prince Mohammed bin Naif bin Abdulaziz Al Saud is relieved from his positions as Crown Prince and from his position as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior
- Royal Decree: HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz is appointed Crown Prince and Deputy Prime Minister. He will remain Minister of Defense
- Royal Decree: Paragraph B of Article 5 from the laws on Ruling is to be amended to the following: "the power will go to the sons of the founding King" Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Faisal Al Saud and the sons of his sons, and the fittest among them to hold the reins of power shall be appointed to rule and there shall be none other than the sons of the founding king and the crown prince from one single branch of descendants of the founding King (Staff, 2017).

Figure 3. 2. Mohammed bin Salman (left) with Mohammed bin Nayef (right)



(Source : Simon Henderson, <https://aijac.org.au/australia-israel-review/mbs-khashoggi-and-the-saudi-power-structure/>)

Saudi Vision 2030

Under the leadership of Crown Prince Salman, he announced the plan of “Saudi Vision 2030”. Actually this plan is first launched on April 2016 when Bin Salman was the second deputy of Crown Prince and the president of the Council of Economic and Development Affairs.

The idea of this plan is to diversify their economic by ending its depending on oil and give a bigger role to the private sector. The goal is to develop a thriving private sector that can provide sources of non-oil exports and generate economic growth.

Saudi Arabia is known as a world’s largest petroleum exporter and home of 18 percent of the world’s oil reserves, it

makes Saudi Arabia depending on oil so much. For decades, oil has played a major role in Saudi Arabia's economy and governmental budget. Based on the report that published by McKinsey Global Institute (MGI), the oil price boom from 2003 to 2013 brought unprecedented prosperity to the kingdom by doubling its GDP and making it the 19th largest economy in the world. Moreover, the household income grew by 75 percent, about 1,7 million jobs were created and \$450 billion was invested in health, education, infrastructure and helping to boost living standards and improve the quality of life.

However, in the year of 2014 until 2015 the oil price collapse. The prices dropped about 50 percent, from \$100 to around \$46. It had a massive impact on Saudi Arabia's economy and social structure. The Kingdom's budget in 2013 was surplus of 6.5 percent of GDP, it became deficit of 2.3 percent in 2014 as proceeds from oil exports dropped.

Actually, The diversification of the economy away from its dependence on government spending and oil revenues has been discussed and has become a policy goal stated since the 1970s. however, this becomes less priority when world oil prices rise and unexpected wealth is available.

Because of this, the uncertainty of world oil prices makes Saudi Arabia have to think smartly so that expenditure does not suffer a deficit anymore and also to maintain the title as "the largest economy in the world". In addition to the obscurity of world oil prices, Saudi Arabia is also aware that, Saudi Arabia itself needs oil not only for export. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia sets a policy not to rely too much on oil exports and focus on other sectors. Therefore, Saudi Arabia issued a plan "Saudi Vision 2030".

The targets of "Saudi Vision 2030" is not only end their depending on oil sector but also improve the delivery of public service, social services and the provision of justice. It

can be seen by the themes of the vision that is “ a vibrant society, a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation”.

What is meant by a vibrant society, Saudi Arabia will focus on its people and the Islamic faith. The kingdom will increase the number of umrah visitors from 8 million to 30 million, build the largest Islamic museum in the world, add the number of Saudi Heritage sites registered with UNESCO, encourage healthy lifestyle, promote the growth of cultural and entertainment opportunities within the kingdom and develop Saudi cities so that they can be recognized in the 100 top-ranked.

In order to achieve ‘ a thriving economy’, the Kingdom will diversify the economy revenues and create dynamic job opportunities for the citizens of Saudi Arabia. The way to achieve that is by commitments to education so that by 2030 there will be at least five universities among the top of 200 universities in the world, entrepreneurship and innovation, renewable energy and tourism, privatization of state owned assets by establishing a sovereign wealth fund that will be financed through the partial IPO of Saudi Aramco and focusing on small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) by encouraging financial assistance.

The last is “ an ambitious nation”, to achieve that, the Kingdom will focus on accountability, transparency, and effectiveness in its governing strategy. The Kingdom also will establish zero tolerance for all levels of corruption, push transparency by expanding online services and improving governance standards, establish the King Salman Program for Human Capital Development in order to train more than 50,000 government employees and bolster the non-profit sector.

In order to achieve the goal of “ Saudi Vision 2030” as the state of the heart of the Arab and Islamic worlds, the investment powerhouse, and the hub connecting three

continents. Therefore, Saudi Arabia should be able to open to foreign visitor trade, investment, tolerance, international codes of conduct such as more transparency and secular laws.

B. The New Policies under Crown Prince Salman

After the rise of Mohammed bin Salman as the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, he began to carry out his duties and form better policies for Saudi Arabia in the future. One of them is to achieved “Saudi Vision 2030” which plan is to bring economic and social change to the kingdom and end its addiction to oil. The action and policy that has been unveil by the Crown Prince Salman are ;

a. Political Reform

In November 2017, Mohammed bin Salman arrested dozens of Saudi Royal figures, high-level businessmen and government ministers. That matter announced by the Kingdom where they arrested the prominent of billionaire investor Prince Alwaleed bin Talal who owns 95% of Kingdom holding, 10 princes, four ministers and tens of former ministers. Those arrested were held at Riyadh’s Ritz Carlton (Kirkpatrick, 2017).

Mohammed bin Salman as the head of a new anti-corruption committee that also supported by the Council of Seniors Scholar have done things that were appropriate and in line with the royal decree that said "will trace and combat at all levels" (Becky Anderson, 2017).

b. Economic Modification

To reach the goal of “Saudi Vision 2030”, Crown Prince Salman set out the policies to develop public sectors such as education, tourism and recreation. The plan is such as

a construction of hi-tech \$500bn economic zone on its north to west coast and extending to Jordan and Egypt.

c. Social reform

This policy was the most monumental change in the history of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia especially for women, because this policy in line with the commitment of Saudi Arabia to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

Previously, women in Saudi had to depend on chauffeurs and male relatives to travel anywhere with a car, go outside without abaya or a head-to-toe-cloak, cannot receive an equal inheritance, have higher education without male permission, go to the movies or sports and other actions which is not in accordance with sharia law (Coker, 2018).

In September 2017, the Kingdom announced that they would allow the women to drive in Saudi Arabia. The royal decree that signed by Crown Prince Salman would be implemented on 24 June 2018. Based on the data of Saudi Information Ministry statement that, there were ten Saudi women were issued the driving license and there will be around 2.000 women will join the ranks of licensed drivers in the Kingdom (BBC, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, power behind the throne, 2018). And also, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers, there would be more than 30 million women could receive license and drive by 2020 (SANT, 2018).

Other than license driver for women, the Kingdom announced on October 2017 that women would be allowed to enter and attend the sports stadiums that mostly used for football matches, in a one event to celebrate the Saudi Arabia National's day and it would start in early 2018. The general sports authority has provided everything that would create an attractive sports environment for families and certainly

provide everything that women needs in order to secure their privacy such as “family sections” in the stand for women and also seperated by barriers from the men-only crowd (France-Press, 2017). The first match that women attended for the first time was the Al-Ahli versus Al-Batin in January 2018. It also followed by introduce sports for girls and allow to play sports in public schools (Batrawy, 2017).

The other right for women in Saudi Arabia is able to join military. Saudi Arabia’s military has opened application to women for the first time. It would accept applications for women’s military post in provinces of Mecca, Riyadh, Medina and Al-Qassim. Even though women do not need male permission to join the military. However, they need to pass the interview and fulfill the 12 requirements of the application that one of them are women must not be married to a non-saudi and must reside with her guardian in the same province as the location of the job (Perper, 2018).

The lifting ban on cinema is also the part of series social reform that ordered by the most influential person in the world, Crown Prince Salman. The Kingdom announced that they would allow commercial movie theaters to open for the first time after more than 35 years of banning because during 1980’s followed by the wave of ultraconservative believe that western movie as sinful. The decision to reserve that ban was made in December 2017 and would be operate in 2018. Previously, if the citizen of Saudi Arabia wanted to watch the movie, they will go to other country such as United Arab Emirates, Bahrain or just watch the movie from the internet. *Emoji Movie* was the first screening film in Saudi Arabia in the public, it took place at state-run cultural center, because there was not theater opened yet. The permanent theater opened in March 2018 and the first movie in the theater was *Black Panther*, the audience were men and women who can sit freely. The Culture and Information ministry said that the government will begin within 90 days licensing movie houses to open. However, it did not indicate what kinds of movies that

government would allow but made clear that films would be governed by Islamic Law. The Kingdom would censor the content of the film if it is contrary to Sharia law and clash with the values and principles in Saudi Arabia (Alan Cowell, 2017).

C. Saudi Arabia Relations with The United Nations

United Nations or UN is an international organization that established on 24 October 1945 after World War II. Its aim to preventing conflict. With all the member states, they band together to confront common challenges, manage shared responsibilities and exercise collective action in an enduring quest for a peaceful, inclusive and sustainably developing world, in conformity with the principles of justice and international law and with respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (Nations, 2018).

Based on the article number one (1), the purpose of the United Nations are;

To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with

1. the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace;
2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace;
3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social,

cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; and

4. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.

To achieve the purposes in Article 1, members state of United Nation shall act in accordance with the principles in Article 2, those are;

1. The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members.
2. All Members, in order to ensure to all of them the rights and benefits resulting from membership, shall fulfill in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter.
3. All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.
4. All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.
5. All Members shall give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the present Charter, and shall refrain from giving assistance to any state against which the United Nations is taking preventive or enforcement action.
6. The Organization shall ensure that states which are not Members of the United Nations act in accordance with these Principles so far as may be necessary for the maintenance of international peace and security.
7. Nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state

or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII (Nations, 2018).

From the start in 1945, one of the main priorities or agenda was to “achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion” (Nations, 2018). Therefore, when the United Nations held a conference in Rio de Janeiro in 2012, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was born and adopted by all the United Nations member states on September 25, 2015. The SDGs will guide the development until the year 2030. It means that, all the goals of SDGs must be achieved in 2030. The 17 goals of SDGs are ;

Goal 1 : No Poverty, Goal 2 : Zero Hunger, Goal 3 : Good Health and Well Being, Goal 4 : Quality Education, Goal 5 : Gender Equality, Goal 6 : Clean Water and Sanitation, Goal 7 : Affordable and Clean Energy, Goal 8 : Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 9 : Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Goal 10 : Reduced Inequalities, Goal 11 : Sustainable cities and Communities, Goal 12 : Responsible Production and Consumption, Goal 13 : Climate Action, Goal 14 : Life Below Water, Goal 15 : Life On Land, Goal 16 : Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and the last is Goal 17 : Partnership of the Goals. (Nations, 2018)

Figure 3.3. UN Sustainable Development Goals



United Nation is the biggest international organization in the world because it has 193 official member states. One of them is Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia joined United Nations on 24 October 1945 and has played an active role throughout its history. It can be seen when the Kingdom has committed to provide an urgent response to some of the emergency humanitarian crises in recent years, as happened in some states such as Myanmar, Haiti, Yemen, Nepal, Iraq, and Syria (Programme, 2018).

Moreover, as the member states of the United Nation, Saudi Arabia also support the UN's Sustainable Development Goals or SDGs. This can be seen by the policy that author previously explained and statements by King Salman and Crown Prince Salman regarding the UN SDGs.

“ We are part of this world and we live the problems and challenges it is facing. We all share this responsibility and we will contribute, God willing, actively to the development of solutions to many of the world’s pressing issues, including the issues of the environment and sustainable development. We will continue in this regard to work with international organizations, institutions, and partners” (King Salman bin AbdulAziz)

“In order to preserve the unique environmental character of the region, environmental sustainability laws and mechanism will be developed. Natural resources will be conserved in accordance with the best practices and standards in place globally” (Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman) (Forum, 2018).

One of the points of the SDG's which is focused by the author is Gender Equality, point number 5. According to the explanation of SDG's toward gender equality, it means that gender equality is not only fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world (Nations, Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). There are also the targets of “Gender Equality number 5” that must be achieved, among others are;

- End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
- Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure

and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate

- Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership all levels of decisionmaking in political, economic and public life
- Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels (Nations, Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls).

The policies of Saudi Arabia on gender equality followed by the United Nations announced that Kingdom of Saudi Arabia elected to the UN Women's Right commission in 2017. According to the United Nations, Saudi Arabia is one of 45 countries that sitting on a panel in "Promoting women's right, documenting the reality of women's live throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women". The UN decision to made Saudi Arabia as the part of the commission is to support the Kingdom which are working for change for women.

(Agerholm, Saudi Arabia elected to UN women's rights commission, 2017).

Moreover, in April 2018, Saudi Arabia elected to the executive board of UN Women, it also known as the United Nations entity for Gender Equality and the powerment of women and the Kingdom will be active from 2019 to 2021 (Khalife, 2018).