

## **Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: 20 Years After Vienna**

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**Author:** Noura Erakat

Since their independence from colonial domination, Arab regimes have practiced authoritarian populism wherein the concentration of power within an executive branch is combined with a redistributive welfare state. This arrangement establishes a social contract between the state and its population that guarantees economic rights. The pursuit of neoliberal development, which is at odds with the meaning of development in the UN Convention on the Right to Development as well as the Vienna Convention on Human Rights, without regard for local context in the Arab world has undermined this tenuous arrangement. As the national economy of Arab regimes grew, the gap between rich and poor has expanded and social-based disparities have become more entrenched. Development benefitted only a select class of economic and political elite. This development has contributed to the ongoing Arab Uprisings and the lessons learned inform the prescriptions for future development.