



The Equal Rights Trust is an independent international organisation whose purpose is to combat discrimination and promote equality as a fundamental human right and a basic principle of social justice.

The Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law is a non-governmental organisation which aims to protect political rights and civil freedoms and to develop democracy and rule of law in Kazakhstan and other countries.

“Unity! Stability! Creativity!” This is the slogan of Nur Otan, the political party of Nursultan Nazarbayev, the Republic of Kazakhstan’s first and only president.

This report, examining discrimination and inequality in Kazakhstan, finds that the unity promoted by Nazarbayev is narrow, excluding those whose religion, ethnicity or political opinion challenges his vision, and denying an equal role to women, persons with disabilities and other groups.

A 2011 law on religion imposes onerous registration requirements, indirectly discriminating against minority religious groups. The promotion of the Kazakh language – spoken by only 74% of the population – creates barriers for ethnic minorities in accessing public services, employment and education. The state discriminates on the basis of political opinion, detaining its critics and limiting freedom of expression, assembly and association.

The unified Kazakhstan promoted by the government also provides little space for other groups. Women are subject to discriminatory laws and are underrepresented in the workforce and public life. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons are subject to discrimination by both state and non-state actors. Persons with disabilities and those living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus are subject to paternalistic laws which are grounded in stereotypes.

The legal framework on equality is far from unified. The constitutional non-discrimination provision omits key grounds and there is no comprehensive equality legislation. Implementation of the provisions which are in place is weak. Thus, this report finds that, if Kazakhstan aspires to genuine unity, inclusive of all, much remains to be done.



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