



**Shadow Report submission**  
**On**  
**The State's initial national report on implementation of the**  
**International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

**National Human Rights Committee of Qatar**

**Doha, Qatar**

**October 2019**

## **Contents:**

### **I. Methodology**

### **II. Executive Summary**

### **III. Civil and political rights situation:**

1. The right to life
2. The right to be protected from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment
3. The right to liberty and security of person
4. The right to freedom of movement and freedom to choose residence
5. The right to litigation and to a fair and just trial
6. The right to vote and stand for elections
7. The right to freedom of thought, belief and religion
8. The right to freedom of opinion and expression and of the media
9. The right to peaceful assembly
10. The right to form associations and freedom to join them
11. The right to nationality

### **IV. Impact of unilateral arbitrary measures taken against the State of Qatar on civil and political rights.**

## **I. Methodology**

The National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) has developed this report through studying national legislation and procedures, as well as information obtained from monitoring, documenting and receiving complaints with the aim to protect and promote human rights.

The NHRC consulted with coordinators of the Foreign Community offices in the State of Qatar, a group of local volunteers and human rights defenders.

The section concerning “Civil and Political Rights Situation” includes a brief description of the reality of a range of fundamental rights and freedoms, followed by recommendations on each of the rights recognized in the Covenant.

The national report has been reviewed with a view to ensuring that the information contained in the national report did not recur in this report, with a special focus on encouraging the State to better implement the provisions of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

## **II. Executive Summary**

The State of Qatar continues to retain the death penalty while avoiding its application for the most serious crimes. Although national laws provide for mechanisms to monitor places of detention and to ascertain irregularities, there are no comprehensive statistics on the number of visits, the nature of the irregularities that may face detainees in places of detention. Moreover, there are no comprehensive data on investigations and convictions relating to acts of torture and ill-treatment Committed by law enforcement officials.

Some of the provisions of the law of Protection of Community, the Terrorism Act, and the law on establishing the State Security Service pose a challenge to the protection and promotion of the human rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These laws allow for prolonged periods of detention, in contravention of international human rights standards.

In the same context, the Constitutional Court is still inactive despite the issuance of the law regulating its establishment in 2008.

In addition, a number of administrative decisions are legally declared immune to judicial control, and pre-trial detention are renewed for long periods that may exceed half of the maximum penalty established for the offence in respect of which the defendant has been placed in pre-trial detention.

As part of the development of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, a draft law regulating publications, publishing, media activities and arts had come before the Committee to present its opinion, and the Committee made its observations thereon and recommended that some of its provisions be reviewed to achieve harmony with international standards of freedom of expression.

Our recommendations in this report suggested: 1) amending legislation and procedures to achieve full harmony with civil and political rights, by lifting or easing the restrictions imposed by law on the establishment of associations and the formation of trade unions, that contribute to shrinking space for civil society; 2) amending legislation that contains discrimination, such as the Nationality Law and the Housing Law; 3) expediting issuance of the election law, which is supposed to pave the way for the Legislative Council elections (Shura Council) as it is still being formed by appointment bearing in mind that women currently held four seats for the first time in the history of the Council.

The present report concludes with information on the impact of arbitrary unilateral measures taken by several countries against the State of Qatar, citing the report of the OHCHR technical mission of to the state of Qatar (17-24 November 2017) issued on January 8, 2018. The measures taken by these countries represent collective punishment against the citizens and residents of the State of Qatar. The measures have led to permanent repercussions and deprivation of the rights to work, education, health, property, movement and freedom to perform religious rituals.

The report of the OHCHR technical mission to the state of Qatar highlighted that the unilateral measures, consisting of severe restrictions of movement, termination and disruption of trade, financial and investment flows, as well as suspension of social and cultural exchanges imposed on the State of Qatar, had immediately translated into actions applying to nationals and residents of Qatar, including citizens of KSA, UAE and Bahrain. Many of these measures have a potentially durable effect on the enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of those affected.

The report also noted that the considerable economic impact of the crisis takes over the dimension of an economic warfare.

### III. Civil and political rights he situation:

This section gives a brief on Qatar’s obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, after joining the covenant by Decree No. 40 of 2018, in accordance with Article 68 of the Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar, which gives the covenant the power of law.

Civil rights are inherent to the human person and are prescribed for all individuals on the territory of any state, regardless of their nationality. Political rights are reserved for citizens only, and therefore they are limited to those holding the nationality of the state party.

#### 1. The Right to life:

The State of Qatar retains the death penalty and restricts it to the most serious crimes, in accordance with the law in force at the time of the commission of the crime. Since 1995, the death penalty had been applied only twice due to the severity of the offences committed.

#	Types of Criminal Offense	Date of execution
1	Premeditated murder	7/4/2016
2	Premeditated murder in conjunction with attempted murder	19/10/2017

Table (1)

The Code of Criminal Procedure provides a range of guarantees for those sentenced to death<sup>1</sup>. These guarantees are consistent with the provisions of the ICCPR, such as the right to seek pardon or commutation of sentence...etc.

<sup>1</sup> See the 2014 NHRC annual report available at: <http://www.nhrc-qa.org>

**The National Human Rights Committee recommends that accession to the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights be considered.**

**2. The Right to be protected from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment:**

In March 2015, the State of Qatar redrafted its own and general reservations to the Convention on the Prevention of Torture by withdrawing its reservation to articles 21 and 22, and modified its general reservation and linking it to articles 1 and 16 of the Convention, as the State of Qatar continues to issue sentences incorporating corporal punishment (such as flogging) for specific offenses, drawing on Islamic law as its source pursuant to Article 1 of Law No. 11 of 2004 issuing the Penal Code. Listed below statistics on the number of sentences implemented incorporating flogging in the last 5 years:

#	Year	Number
1	2014	173
2	2015	249
3	2016	321
4	2017	451
5	2018	446
Total		1640

Table (2)

**The State has several mechanisms to monitor places of detention, as follows:**

**A. Periodic self-inspection within the penal and correctional institution:**

Pursuant to the Implementing Regulations for the Law on Penal and Correctional Institutions, the official responsible for managing the inspection institution must ensure that the safety, health and organizational standards are met within the institution, record that in the register for period inspections and provide periodic reports, or whenever necessary, to the Director of the Department of Penal and Correctional Institutions on the situation of the institution with regard to its ability to

ensure respect for the rights of detainees and their enjoyment of their rights and guarantees provided for under the Law.

The table below shows the number of inmates in penal and correctional institutions received from the Department of Penal and Correctional Institutions at the Ministry of Interior for 2018:

Year	Female	Male	Total
2014	64	975	1039
2015	66	1033	1099
2016	64	1339	1403
2017	63	1467	1530
2018	43	1287	1330

Table (3)

The Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Interior monitors the human rights conditions of detainees and prisoners, according to a mechanism that has been put into effect since 2007 and was developed in the year 2014. The Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Interior carried out several inspection visits in the context of the implementation of the oversight and monitoring mechanism, as the number of visits reached (100) visits since 2012 until the end of 2018.

#### **B. Judicial surveillance by the Office of the Public Prosecutor:**

In accordance with provisions on the judicial surveillance contained in Articles (395, 396) of Law No. (23) of 2004 Regarding Promulgating the Criminal Procedure Code, Members of the Public Prosecution have the right to enter detention places that are within the province of their competence, as to ensure that there is no prisoner with illegal capacity, they may peruse registers, arrest orders, and imprisonment orders and take copies of them, and contact any prisoner and hear any possible complaint he may make. They should receive any help to get the information they require. Any prisoner in the detention places, may, at any time, submit to the officer in charge a written or oral complaint, and may request him to submit it to the Public Prosecution after confirming it in the special register; the officer in charge accepts it and notifies the Public Prosecution immediately about it.

The National Human Rights Committee has not received comprehensive and detailed data on the number of judicial inspection visits, the nature of the offenses, and the investigations and convictions of torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials.

### **C. Monitoring and surveillance mechanisms under the Ministry of the Interior**

According to the Guidebook on the Rights and Duties of inmates of the Department of Penal and Correctional Institutions, and as part of the work of the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of the Interior, relevant inspection teams make unannounced visits to penal and correctional institutions in order to ascertain the conditions of these institutions and the situation of inmates. This is conducted through questionnaires that include comprehensive questions to be answered by the concerned institutions on the realization of the rights of inmates including the right to livelihood, and civil, legal, educational, social, health rights and other rights.

Since 2007, the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Interior has made more than 70 inspection visits<sup>2</sup>. As we mentioned earlier, the number of inspection visits until the end of the year 2018 has reached (100) inspection visits. As for the violations committed by members of the police force against detainees, it did not go beyond committing a single violation, where some officers extorted money from one of the detainees under the pretext that they would help him to get out from jail through a lawyer, which is a legally designated offence and the necessary action was taken pursuant to Decree law No. 31 of 2006 including Dismissal from service while reserving the right to pension or end of service benefits.

As for torture and ill-treatment committed by law enforcement officials of the police force, during the years 2018 and 2019, there is a case of an alleged assault by a member of police force against some people in a market, where a disciplinary board's resolution was issued against him and was carried out pursuant to Decree Law No. 31 of 2006.

### **D. Independent Monitoring by the National Human Rights Committee**

Article (4) of the law establishing the National Human Rights Committee stipulates that “The Committee enjoys full independence in pursuing its human rights work.”.

---

<sup>2</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> national report of the state of Qatar on the implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

Among its functions is conducting field visits to penal and correctional institutions, places of detention, labor gatherings, health and educational facilities and monitoring the human rights situation by the chairman and members.

During 2018, the NHRC conducted 125 visits, including 94 field visits to places of detention in the public prosecutor's office, police stations, Penal and Correctional Institution, psychiatric centers, and other relevant bodies and headquarters, and 60 visits to the Ministry of Interior's Research and Follow-up Department, where the largest number of complaints are submitted by petitioners who have been arrested and detained due to violations relating to residency, or who have cases and reports falling within the jurisdiction of this department and have been temporarily detained<sup>3</sup>.

**Accordingly, The National Human Rights Committee recommends the following:**

- **Studying the question of accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (commonly known as the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture (OPCAT)).**
- **Establish an independent commission within the judiciary to investigate allegations of torture and ill-treatment.**
- **Dissemination by the competent authorities of information on monitoring places of detention, such as the number of inspection visits, the nature of the violations, the measures taken to investigate, and the punishment of the perpetrators of acts of Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**
- **Replacing corporal punishment with voluntary social work.**
- **Removing all reservations to the Convention against Torture.**

---

<sup>3</sup> The National Human Rights Committee received only one complaint concerning degrading and ill-treatment, where a Nigerian citizen claimed to have been beaten during his arrest by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). In November 25, 2018, the National Human Rights Committee addressed the competent authority regarding this case, and the competent authority confirmed that the arrest came in the framework of the legal and humanitarian procedures applicable to all accused at the time of arrest, taking into account the dignity of the accused and all his rights.

### **3. Right to liberty and security of person:**

#### **A. Security Level<sup>4</sup>:**

Qatar has come on top of the Mena region with a rank of 30 in the Global Peace Index (GPI) for 2017, among (163) countries included in the report.

A report issued by the World Economic Forum in 2017 ranked Qatar in the first place globally in the index of least countries in terms of the rates of crime and violence; it was also ranked (6) in terms of the fight against organized crime, and (9) in terms of public confidence and satisfaction in police services and ranked (12) globally among countries free of terrorism.

According to the 2017 Basel Index – established by the Basel Institute on Governance in Switzerland - the State of Qatar ranked (40) globally, and the first among Arab states in terms of Anti-Money Laundering and financing of terrorism. The index evaluates the effectiveness of financial policies and banking procedures of each country and the effectiveness and transparency of the judicial system.

In this context, it is noteworthy that the State issued the first legislation of its kind in the region regulating Political Asylum in 2018, with a view to the implementation of Article 58 of the Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar, which guarantees the right to political asylum, and in response to the proposal of the National Human Rights Committee.

#### **B. Arbitrary Arrest or Detention:**

Some of the provisions of laws relating to the protection of society, terrorism, and the State Security Service present a challenge to protect and promote the human rights enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the obligations of the State of Qatar in several relevant conventions. These laws allow for prolonged detention of detainees, in contravention of international standards, which stipulate that “Anyone who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of any charges against him.

---

<sup>4</sup> State achievements 2017-2018/ General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers

Anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge shall be brought promptly before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time or to release. Anyone who is deprived of his liberty by arrest or detention shall be entitled to take proceedings before a court, in order that that court may decide without delay on the lawfulness of his detention”.

The table below outlines the number of remand orders in the past five years, in implementation of article 18 of Law No. 3 of 2014 on combating terrorism:

Year	Number
2014	75
2015	92
2016	88
2017	62
2018	83

**Table (4)**

The provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure allow for the prolongation of pretrial detention sometimes up to half of the maximum penalty established for the offence in respect of which the defendant has been placed in pre-trial detention, as well as prolongation of pretrial detention by investigation authorities and prolonging pretrial detention provided for in the Code of Criminal Procedure<sup>5</sup>.

The table below outlines the number of remand orders in the past five years, in implementation of article 110 of Law no. (23) for 2004 Regarding Promulgating the Criminal Procedure Code:

Year	Number
2014	7257
2015	9533
2016	12405
2017	13634
2018	10272

**Table (5)**

<sup>5</sup> The National Human Rights Committee received complaints about arbitrary detention in 2018, all of which are allegations of detention without valid charge. The Committee investigated the legal status of the detainees and interviewed them more than once, and addressed the competent authorities, where it appeared that the competent authority used the provisions of the Terrorism Law to arrest and detain suspect, and all of which were released.

### **C. Enforced Disappearance:**

The National Human Rights Committee did not report or receive any cases of enforced disappearance within the State of Qatar during 2018. However, two complaints of enforced disappearances of Qatari nationals in Saudi Arabia were reported in 2019 (one of whom was released in 2019).

**The National Human Rights Committee recommends the following:**

- **Studying the question of accession to the International Convention for the Prevention of Enforced Disappearance.**
- **Repeal Law No. 17 of 2002 on Protection of Community.**
- **Amending Law No. 5 of 2003 establishing the State Security Service and articles relating to remand detention in accordance with international human rights standards.**
- **Amending Law No. 3 of 2004 on Combating Terrorism.**
- **Limiting the use of pretrial detention and consider wider application of precautionary measures instead.**
- **Amending Law no. (23) for 2004 Regarding Promulgating the Criminal Procedure Code to specify a maximum period of pretrial detention, provided that it does not exceed half of the maximum penalty established for the offence in respect of which the defendant has been placed in pre-trial detention.**

### **4. The right to freedom of movement and freedom to choose place of residence:**

As part of the efforts to lessen the tight limits on the freedom of movement of expatriates coming to the State of Qatar, Law No. 13 of 2018 amending some provisions of Law No. (21) of 2015 regulating the entry and exit of expatriates and their residence was issued to cancel the exit permit, where not more than 5% of the total number of employees shall obtain pre-approval before leaving the country due to the nature of their work. This applies to those who are covered by the Labor Law No. 14 of 2004. Otherwise, employees and workers who are covered by the Human Resources Law, or the Law on Domestic workers, shall obtain pre-approval before leaving the country and should the employer object, they can apply to the Grievance Committee, where decisions on grievances will be made within three working days of receiving them.

The table below outlines the number of applications submitted to Exit Permit Grievances Committee for three years:

Year	Number of applications submitted to the Committee	Number of applications approved
2017	3703	3699
2018	1876	1866
2019	1053	1039

Table (6)

### 5. the Right to Litigation, Just and Fair Trial:

One of the most recent developments was the establishment of the Labor Disputes Settlement Committee - Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs - which commenced its work on March 18, 2018. It is worth mentioning that 5013 complaints were referred to the Committee by the Department of Labor Relations in 2018; decisions have been issued in 1370 cases of the total number if the complaints received.

The Dispute Settlement Committee includes three sub-commissions, each chaired by a judge and staff members from the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs, and each commission has a secretariat.

The category of domestic workers can also lodge a complaint with the Labor Relations Department, which may refer cases to the Labor Dispute Resolution Committee.

The available statistical data for the number of complaints submitted by the domestic workers during the year 2018 by Ministry of Administrative Development, Labor and Social Affairs are given below:

Total Number of complaints	Number of complaints settled out
318	285

Table (7)

One of the main challenges is the failure to operationalize the Constitutional Court despite the issuance of the law on its establishment in 2008, as well as providing immunity for administrative decisions so they cannot be challenged before the judiciary, such as administrative deportation decisions.

**The National Human Rights Committee recommends the following:**

- Operationalization of the Constitutional Court pursuant to Law No. 12 of 2008- Amending Law No. 7 of 2007 on the Settlement of Administrative Disputes, and to make administrative decisions by the executive authority subject to judicial oversight.

**6. The Right to vote and stand for elections:**

Citizens exercise the right to vote, stand for elections and participate in public political life through the Central Municipal Council elections (advisory council). In terms of participation in parliamentary life, the electoral law is still being awaited.

The State of Qatar has taken a positive step by appointing four women to the Shura Council for the first time. It is worth paying tribute to women's gains in the field of justice, such as the appointment of three female judges and three female officials in the Public Prosecution office. Women are also present in many diplomatic representation and supervisory positions in government agencies.

**The National Human Rights Committee recommends the development of an election law in line with international human rights standards, which guarantees equal political rights for all citizens, representing all groups and segments of society, including women and persons with disabilities. The Committee also recommends increased participation of women in decision-making positions.**

**7. The right to freedom of thought, belief and religion:**

Followers of different faiths are free to exercise religious practices in the State of Qatar; this represents a model of coexistence and respect of other religions, by respecting the conditions and regulations on the exercise of freedom in accordance with the law.



All Christian denominations enjoy full freedom in practicing their religious rituals in a Religious Complex which organize social and educational activities. The Government allows non-Muslim religious groups to import holy books and other religious literature for personal or collective use.

Furthermore, The Doha Center for Interfaith Dialogue is also a private institution for public benefit working to promote a culture of dialogue and coexistence.

During the period 2010-2018, the National Human Rights Committee did not report or receive any complaints on discrimination or harassment of followers of any religion in the State of Qatar.

## **8. The right to freedom of opinion and expression and of the media:**

The State of Qatar is open for all intellectual currents and trends from inside and outside the state. It receives intellectuals, academics, clergy and other political and social researchers. In the universities, open debates and dialogues are organized.

Government Ministries and departments, Civil society institutions and private and State Trading Enterprises (STEs) receive human rights organizations and international unions to collect information and submit studies - such as International Trade Union (ITUC), Building and Wood Worker's International (BWI), Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Amnesty International, known for their harsh criticism of the situation of workers' rights and other situations. More than a report has been launched by these organizations from Qatar in press conferences.

The Building and Wood Worker's International (BWI) has signed a memorandum of partnership and cooperation with Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (the body responsible for the implementation of the 2022 World Cup projects).

On the other hand, the State of Qatar has sought to modernize its legislative system to develop the right to freedom of opinion and expression. The draft law regulating publications, publishing, media activities and arts comes in line with many international standards in some of its provisions as it stipulates that “Freedom of the press and opinion are guaranteed by law and newspapers and media are not subject to any pre-publication censorship”.



It also stipulates that “Journalists are independent and have no authority over their work other than the law”. Other provisions reflect significant progress, particularly with regard to journalists' self-regulatory principles, values and codes of practice, and the criteria for the appointment of newspaper editors.

**However, the National Human Rights Committee regrets the state monopoly on licensing and cancellation decisions within the draft law, as well as the maintenance of control over many activities.**

**The National Human Rights Committee submitted its observations on the draft law in the light of international standards for freedom of expression. The Committee recommends that the competent authority consider its observations and take them into account.**

#### **9. The Right to peaceful assembly:**

The Qatari Constitution guarantees the right to freedom of peaceful assembly. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights also affirms this right, which is defined as the right of individuals to hold meetings whether conferences or public meetings, or to organize peaceful demonstrations or rallies, or gathering to protest against a position, procedure or decision imposed by the government, while avoiding infringing the rights of others, or using this right to advocate violence, incitement to hatred, racism or any other violations in contravention of applicable laws.

The National Human Rights Committee has monitored spontaneous demonstrations by workers' groups without prior approval, where police patrols demonstrated a high degree of professionalism to preserve the safety and dignity of demonstrators.

**However, the National Human Rights Committee considers restricting the right to strike according to Labor Law No. 14 of 2004 as one of the drawbacks. In response, the Committee recommends that the law on public meetings and marches be amended to allow more space for civil society.**

## **10. the Right to freedom of associations and the right to join them:**

The labor law and the law on associations and foundations through the conditions and restrictions relating to procedures, limit the establishment of unions and associations in addition to determining the scope of their work, where administrative decisions issued in this regard are unchallengeable in courts.

**The NHRC recommends that Law No. 12 of 2004 on Private Associations and Foundations be amended to allow more space for civil society.**

## **11. The right to nationality:**

Under the provisions of law No. 10 of 2018 on Permanent Residence, the Minister of Interior may grant a permanent residency identification card to a non-Qatari if they meet the conditions specified in the draft law. The law stipulates that certain categories of expatriates could obtain the PRP, including children of Qatari women married to non-Qataris or those who have performed distinguished service to the state or those with special qualifications.

The permanent resident card grants its holders a number of privileges including:

- Treatment as Qataris in government healthcare centers and educational facilities in the state;
- Priority in recruitment after Qatari nationals in military and civilian public posts;
- The right to own property and to carry out certain commercial activities without the requirement to have a Qatari partner as per the conditions that will be issued by the Council of Ministers.

While the Constitution of the State of Qatar guarantees equality between men and women in rights and duties, the discrimination between them in relation to granting citizenship to their spouses and children remains one of the most critical challenges to the realization of this right, as non-Qatari spouses and children of Qatari women face difficulties in obtaining some health and education services, especially for persons with disabilities, such as access to school seats and assistance tools.

This is in addition to discrimination between Qatari citizens and naturalized citizens in the enjoyment of full political and civil rights.

**The National Human Rights Committee recommends that the nationality law be amended to achieve full equality between citizens and granting women the right to transmit their nationality to their husbands and children.**

#### **IV. Impact of the unilateral arbitrary measures taken against the State of Qatar on civil and political rights:**

on Monday, 5 June 2017, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Arab Republic of Egypt severed diplomatic relations with the State of Qatar, with no legal grounds or factual for their action.

On 14 June 2017, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said in a press statement “the measures being adopted by the blockading countries are overly broad in scope and implementation and have the potential to seriously disrupt the lives of thousands of women, children and men, simply because they belong to one of the nationalities involved in the dispute. I am alarmed about the possible impact on many people's human rights in the wake of the decision by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain to cut diplomatic and economic ties with Qatar. Directives issued by Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain to address the humanitarian needs of families with joint nationalities appeared to be inadequate, and my office had received reports of specific individuals being ordered to return home or to leave the country they are residing in. Among those likely to be badly affected are couples in mixed marriages, and their children; people with jobs or businesses based in states other than that of their nationality; and students studying in another country. I am also extremely troubled to hear that the UAE and Bahrain are threatening to jail and fine people who express sympathy for Qatar or opposition to their own governments’ actions, as this would appear to be a clear violation of the right to freedom of expression or opinion. I urge all the States involved to solve this dispute as quickly as possible through dialogue, to refrain from any actions that could affect the well-being, health, employment and integrity of their inhabitants, and to respect their obligations under international human rights law”<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/AR/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21739&LangID=A>

The report on the impact of the Gulf Crisis on human rights issued on 8/1/2018 by the OHCHR technical mission to the state of Qatar (17-24 November 2017) pointed out that “the unilateral measures, consisting of severe restrictions of movement, termination and disruption of trade, financial and investment flows, as well as suspension of social and cultural exchanges imposed on the State of Qatar, had immediately translated into actions applying to nationals and residents of Qatar, including citizens of KSA, UAE and Bahrain. In that sense, they constitute core elements of the definition of unilateral coercive measures. The considerable economic impact of the crisis takes over the dimension of an economic warfare, with significant financial losses for the State, companies and individuals, and the confidence of investors being eroded”.

The report also confirmed enormous violations of:

- the right to education including expulsions of Qatari students - studying in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt - to prevent them from continuing their studies or attending their exams;
- the right to health including lack of access to medicines (including life-saving items) and medical supply. Before 5 June, 50 to 60 per cent of Qatar pharmaceutical stock came from 20 suppliers' companies based in the Gulf countries with most international pharmaceutical companies based in UAE. The opening of new hospitals has been delayed due to construction material and other equipment being blocked in Dubai;
- the right to freedom of opinion and expression, as well as various forms of media defamation, hate campaigns against the leadership and people of Qatar, calling for a regime change or a coup d'état, attacks against leading figures and symbols of Qatar, as well as appeals for attacks on, and murder of Qataris. The report pointed out that the Governments of KSA, UAE and Bahrain announced, via their news agencies, that any individuals within their jurisdiction expressing empathy vis-à-vis Qatar would be subjected to criminal sanctions in the form of hefty fines and/or detention.

The (OHCHR) has expressed its concern at the demand to close the Al Jazeera network and its affiliated channels and said that this demand represents a serious threat to media freedom if States, under the pretext of a diplomatic crisis, take measures to force the dismantling of Al-Jazeera.

Demanding the closure of the Al Jazeera network is unacceptable attack on the right to freedoms of expression and opinion<sup>7</sup>.

On May 29, 2018, the OHCHR called upon the Saudi authorities to provide immediate information on the whereabouts of Qatari national Nawaf Al-Rasheed, where the working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances addressed the Saudi authorities to reveal his fate.

**The National Human Rights Committee in Qatar continues to work with OHCHR and encourages the OHCHR to undertake the following:**

- To take further steps to compel the blockading states to reverse their arbitrary unilateral decisions
- To continue to address the blockading states to stop and address the violations resulting from the inhumane blockade, and to redress and compensate the victims for the material and psychological damage caused to them by the blockade.
- To present reports and data documenting the various types of violations affecting large numbers of individuals, particularly with regard to family dispersal, including the horrific repercussions of family disintegration on women and children.
- To call on states to respect the fundamental freedoms of those in their territory.
- To submit a detailed report on human rights violations by special rapporteurs and contractual mechanisms to the Human Rights Council with the aim to address the violations committed and guarantee that they will not recur.
- To take further action at all levels of international human rights mechanisms and raise the issue of the repercussions of the blockade in the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at the next session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.
- To cooperate with specialized international agencies such as the International Labor Organization (ILO), UNESCO, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the

---

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21818&LangID=E>

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), with a view to sharing information and supporting complaints against the blockading states.

- UN Special Rapporteurs to act more expeditiously in addressing the violations resulting from the blockade and to visit the countries of the blockade, as well as to include the repercussions of the blockade in their reports to the Human Rights Council.
- The Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights to expedite intervention and address the blockading States and visit the State of Qatar and the blockading States.
- The Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers to move swiftly to enable victims to exercise their right to litigation and to pressure the blockading states to allow recourse to their national courts to recover victims' property and address their legal situation.
- The OHCHR technical mission to visit the countries of the blockade and consider the negative repercussions of the blockade on citizens of the countries of the blockade and citizens of the State of Qatar, and to include the findings in a report to be submitted to the UN Secretary-General.
- To call on the United Nations General Assembly to issue a universal declaration on the siege of peoples and neutralization of civilians from any political disputes.

**The National Human Rights Committee of the State of Qatar has made recommendations to the Human Rights Council, as follows:**

- **To take all possible measures to lift the blockade and the resulting violations, and demand compensation for all damages to all individuals.**
- **To demand the establishment of a fact-finding committee and meeting victims directly.**
- **To call on the blockading states to allow field visits by special rapporteurs and international human rights organizations, allow victims to access the national justice system and litigation procedures to restore their rights, immediately cease defamation campaigns and incitement to hatred, and hold accountable those responsible.**



**- To call on the blockading states to eliminate all unilateral arbitrary measures, respect their obligations under international human rights law, and immediately stop violations and redress the victims.**