



**Shadow Report
On Qatar's implementation of the Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of
Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**

February 2018

- Introduction

The National Human Rights Committee's (NHRC) believes in the importance of the cooperation with the Treaty Bodies and their recommendations in order to regulate the governments' performance and encourage them to enhance the human rights' situation in their countries and fulfil their commitment to do their best to enable their citizens to enjoy their political rights. Proceeding from this point, this Report aims to help in assessing the performance of Qatar's Government regarding the implementation of the Convention, supporting the State in understating our observations on the submission of the Second National Report and shedding more light on our role and recommendations.

- Methodology

This Report has been prepared following the review of the second periodic report of Qatar on the implementation of the CEDAW, reviewing the concluding observations on Qatar's initial report and perusing Qatari legislation, laws, regulations and practices that are issued for women.

The Report focuses on the developments that have been accomplished since 2014 to date. It also avoids, whenever it is possible, the repetition of general information that have previously been presented or that provided in the National report to save the time of the treaty bodies' committee and gain benefit.

The information that is supported by data available to us has been provided here in the form of paragraphs selected based on our view of priorities, followed by specific recommendations for each paragraph. Finally, the Report is concluded with comprehensive and general recommendations.

Table of contents

Executive Summary	4
First: Legislative and procedural developments	5
Secondly - Institutional framework for the protection and enhancement of women's rights	7
Thirdly - Developments in political and civil rights	8
Fourthly - Development of economic, social and cultural rights	9
Fifth - Violence against women	13
Sixth - Violations of women's rights during the siege:	15
Seventh - General recommendations	16

Executive Summary:

The report focuses on the latest developments in Qatar since the submission of the concluding observations by Qatar's CEDAW in 2014 to date and also addresses priority issues according to NHRC's vision. The State has taken an important positive step towards the appointment of four women in the Shura Council and has passed legislation for domestic workers that would establish frameworks for the fundamental protection of labour right as these groups were excluded from the Labour Law. The procedures of access to justice for all staff and employees has improved through forming the Labour Dispute Settlement Committee competent to consider and adjudge all individual disputes arising in relation to the application of the Labour Law and the domestic workers law through a period not exceeding three weeks following the date of the first hearing.

The Report also tackles the situation of women in terms of civil and political rights, the extent of development in decision-making, women's appointment in positions, and considers their participation to be poor in comparing with their numbers in designated and elected councils as well as assuming ministerial portfolios. It also addresses the gaps that still exist in the civil rights, the continued denial of Qatari women to grant citizenship to their children, to keep the age of marriage at 16 years, the difficulties of marriage to a different nationality, and other provisions and practices incompatible with the Convention.

The Report also provides information about economic, social and cultural rights and describes it as being faster in development than political and civil rights. Women work in the private and public sectors equally and even exceed men in number in jobs to which they are assigned. They also receive equal opportunities in training and development, but the percentage of their appointment in supervisory positions is poor.

At education level, the State of Qatar has offered equal learning opportunities in primary and secondary education. For university and higher education however, the number of enrolled women are double that of males. In addition, women equally enjoy social security as do men. However, women are discriminated against in regard to housing, land and credits at the legislative and procedural levels.

In terms of cultural rights, women in Qatar enjoy full freedom to participate in cultural life and sports, to attend all art and sport events, and to receive full support and encouragement.

The Report also addresses the issue of reproductive health and violence against women, and the perspective of applying some international standards in the State of Qatar. It recommends that more efforts should be made to raise awareness about the concept of reproductive health and about the rejection of violence in all its forms. The Report also demands collecting statistical data regarding violence and development of mechanisms of communications and complaints receiving.

Moreover, information about the violations that women and children suffer as a result of the siege against Qatar imposed by Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Egypt. The United Nations bodies have recommended denouncing these violations and assisting the victims.

The Report concludes with general recommendations demanding the amendment of legislations and procedures in line with international human rights standards, the CEDAW and the withdrawal of reservations, and preparing legislation on violence and development of women's data collection, as well as other issues.

First: Legislative and procedural developments

A- Amiri Decree No. (22) of 2017, regarding the appointment of four Qatari women in the Shura Council

This Decree is a positive step towards enhancing women's participation in legislative life, as it allows women for the first time to participate in the membership of this council since its establishment in the early Seventies of the last century. However, no date for the election of members of the council, as stipulated by the constitution, is identified.

B- Promulgation of Law no. (15) of 2017 regarding domestic workers

This law was passed for regulating the work of domestic workers who are identified as natural people who carry out domestic work - such as a driver, a nanny, a cook, a gardener and the like - under the administration and supervision of the owner for a fee. The law guarantees many basic rights including identifying minimum and maximum age for domestic workers, the maximum working hours determined at 10 hours daily, with breaks for rest and eating, identifying weekly rest of not less than 24 consecutive hours, setting annual paid leave for three weeks that the worker may divide and choose the date and place for spending the leave, This is as well as the end of service benefit for each year spent.

In reviewing the draft, the NHRC made several observations, including the commitment to attach a translation of the employment contract in the language of the worker's country.

The law does not provide any provision regarding some of the important rights and guarantees of domestic workers including, for example:

It does not stipulate articles for regulating provisions regarding annual leaves;

It does not stipulate the right for forming labour organizations in line with that which is stipulated in Qatari Labour Law No. 14 of 2014 and its amendments on the right of workers to form labour organizations - Chapter XII - Articles (116-123);

It does not identify minimum wage for workers ;

It does not provide for the obligations of the recruitment offices towards the worker/employer.

NHRC has provided a recommendation to increase the probationary period, during which the recruitment office will be obliged to refund the amounts obtained from the employer. However, the law was passed without taking into account this recommendation, despite its importance to protect the rights of the parties.

***The NHRC recommends translating the labour contracts into the languages of domestic workers in a mandatory manner, regulating sick leave provisions, identifying equal minimum wage for domestic workers of all nationalities, providing more space for the civil society, and establishing stricter disciplines to identify the responsibilities of the recruitment office.**

C- Development of procedures related to access to justice:

The State of Qatar has established new mechanisms related to access to justice for all employees and labourers in the State of Qatar who work in the private and joint sectors. It is laudable that domestic workers

can benefit from such mechanisms as other workers and employees, by virtue of the provision of article 18¹ of Law no.15 of 2017 regarding domestic workers.

- Mechanism:

- In the event that a dispute arises between the worker and the employer concerning the application of the provisions of the Labour Law, the domestic employment law or the employment contract, they shall both submit the dispute to the Labour Relations Department or the National Human Resource Development Department of the Ministry of Labour, as the case may be.
- The competent administration shall take the necessary procedures to settle the dispute amicably within a period not exceeding seven days from the date of its submission, and shall present the result of the settlement to both parties during the following seven days. If such settlement shall be accepted by both parties, then what the parties has agreed upon shall be documented in signed minutes, approved by the competent administration and shall have the validity of an executive bond.
- If the dispute is not settled within the period referred to in the preceding paragraph, the parties reject the settlement offered by the competent administration, or the period has elapsed without providing any of the parties opinion regarding the acceptance or the rejection of the offered settlement, the competent department shall then refer the dispute within the next three working days to the Labour Dispute Settlement Committee². Such a referral shall be accompanied by a memorandum containing a summary of the subject matter of the dispute, the arguments of the parties, its documents and the observations of the competent administration. The secretariat of the committee, within three business days as of the date as of the date of the referral. Furthermore, both the worker and the employer shall be notified of the hearing date at least three days before the hearing is held.
- The Labour Dispute Settlement Committee shall have jurisdiction over all disputes arising out of the application of the provisions of the Labour Law or the Employment Contract. The Committee shall issue its decision regarding the dispute presented before it within three weeks of the convention of the first hearing.
- All concerned parties may appeal the decision issued by the Labour Dispute Settlement Committee before the competent circuit of the Court of Appeal within fifteen days as of the date of the issuance of the Committee Decision. The appeal shall not result in suspension of the decision unless the competent court decides otherwise.
- The competent circuit in the Court of Appeal shall promptly review the appeal and shall issue its decision within thirty days as of the date of the first hearing before it.
- Cases presented before the Labour Dispute Settlement Committee shall not be accepted before the other courts prior to acquiring the approval of the said Committee.

¹ Article 18 of Law No. 15 of 2017 regarding domestic workers stipulates that "disputes arising between the employer and the employee related to the application of the provisions of this law or employment contract shall be governed by the provisions of "chapter XI bis of the said Labour Law".

² Law No. (13) of 2017 amending the provisions of the Labour Law promulgated by Law No. (14) of 2004 and Law No. (13) of 1990 promulgating the Civil and Commercial Procedural Law, stipulating that one or more Labour Dispute Settlement Committee shall be established in the Ministry, and shall be formed under the chairmanship of a judge of the Court of First Instance chosen by the Judiciary Supreme Council and two members nominated by the Minister, provided that one of them shall have the required experience in the field of accounting. Moreover, the Council of Ministers shall issue its decisions regarding the formation of the committee, the rules and procedures to be followed before it, the mechanism for implementing its decisions, and remuneration of its members. A decision of the Minister shall be issued specifying the headquarter of the committee. One or more employees of the Ministry shall be appointed as the secretariat of the committee, and the Minister shall issue its decision regarding their assignment, determine their competencies and remuneration.

- Courts shall continue to adjudicate the cases filed before the date of the implementation of this law, and shall be competent to study the cases filed after that date until the Commission commences its competencies.

***The NHRC recommends that the competent government agency of the Ministry of Labour opens a specialized office or department to provide legal assistance to female domestic workers in order to remove barriers regarding the access to justice. It also recommends that the Department collects and publishes statistics regarding the number and nature of complaints submitted by these female workers to the Department of Labour Relations, and detailed data on their utilization of the legal system of the Labour Dispute Settlement Committee and Courts.**

The NHRC also recommends embassies of the countries of which female domestic workers are affiliated to provide legal and social support services to such female domestic workers in order that they benefit from the legal system in the State of Qatar.

Secondly - Institutional framework for the protection and enhancement of women's rights

The State of Qatar has several institutional structures that support women at the governmental and non-governmental levels, including the "Family Department" in the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, the Human Rights Department of the Ministry of Interior and the Qatar Social Work Foundation. These provide various services in a number of centres and benefits equally all women and girls in Qatar, such as the Family Counselling Centre, the Orphan Care Centre, the Centre for Empowerment and Care of the Elderly, the Shafallah Centre For Persons With Disabilities, the Social Development Centre and Best Buddies Qatar foundation for people with disabilities.

The NHRC is considered to be an independent body established in 2002 to protect and promote human rights in the State of Qatar. The Committee monitors the status of women's rights by examining national legislations and making recommendations to the Government to develop such legislations, requesting repeal or amendment of new laws in accordance with international standards and the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. The NHRC also encourages the removal of reservations made to the Convention. The committee also receives complaints and provides free legal support, and takes all possible means to find solutions to eliminate violations and to provide appropriate protection in coordination with the competent authorities. The NHRC has programs and studies to disseminate the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and to educate the society about that Convention.

Law No. 12 of 2015 amending certain provisions of Decree of Law No. 17 of 2010 regulating the NHRC, concerning granting immunity to members of the Commission has been issued. It states³ that: "The Commission shall enjoy full independence in its exercise of human rights activities, and the members of the Committee shall not be held criminally or disciplinarily responsible for their statements made before the Committee and its Sub-Committees concerning matters within their competence. Except for cases of flagrante delicto, the Committee headquarter, branches or offices shall not be entered nor inspected except at the presence of a public defender, at least, by virtue of an order of the competent judge.

The law states⁴ that "the Committee shall consist of a number of members, not less than seven, experienced in and concerned with human rights, representing civil society, and a representative of each of the following:

- 1- Ministry of Interior
2. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
3. Ministry of Justice
- 4- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

³Article (4) of Law No. 12 of 2015 regarding the regulation of the NHRC.

⁴Article (5) first paragraph of Law No. 12 of 2015 regarding the regulation of the NHRC.

The right to vote shall be for representatives of the civil society only.

It is worth mentioning that the NHRC is accredited with the Class A by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI). Furthermore, it works to implement the "Accreditation Committee" recommendations to ensure greater independence with regard to the members' selection and removal process.

***The NHRC recommends the expansion of the institutional framework by amending the Law on Private Associations and Institutions in line with international human rights standards, to enable more opportunities for the civil society and institutional frameworks to protect and promote women's rights.**

Thirdly - Developments in political and civil rights

A - Participation in decision-making:

The perception of women's participation in the society is generally improving. Though Qatari women hold several leadership positions, yet their political participation remains weak. In 2017, women first joined the Shura Council with the appointment of four women.

In comparison and as it is known, in the municipal council elections in 1999, six women were nominated and none were elected. In 2014-2015, five women nominated themselves out of 127 candidates. Two were elected against 29 elected men, although 40% of the voters in these elections were women.

Survey results⁵ showed that 62% of the participants prefer men as their representatives in the Central Municipal Council, which is the same preference for about 50% of the women.

- The first female Minister of Education was appointed in 2003, followed by the appointment of a female Minister of Health in 2008, then a female Minister of Communications, a female President of the Supreme Council of the Family and a female Vice President of the Supreme Council of Education. Currently, women have only one ministerial portfolio in the Ministry of Health, which is considered to be a decline in women ministerial positions.

B - Foreign representation:

In the field of diplomacy, there were 18 female diplomats in the diplomatic corps between 1996 and 2002, while the number increased to 38 by 2016.

The first female Qatari ambassador was appointed in 2010. In 2011, a female ambassador was appointed as a Permanent Representative of the State of Qatar in Geneva. Furthermore, in 2013, another woman was appointed as an Ambassador. Currently, only two Qatari women occupy the position of an ambassador.

It should be noted that several Qatari women have served as members of United Nations treaty committees.

C - Holding positions in the judiciary:

Women have been appointed as judges since 2010, which is unprecedented among Gulf States in this regard. There are currently two female judges, three women in the Public Prosecutor's Office and 27 female lawyers out of a total of 152.

⁵ Qatar Fourth National Human Development Report

D - Civil Rights:

The NHRC monitored the empowerment of women, as they have the right to conclude contracts, manage funds and property, and the right to litigation. However, Qatari women continue to be denied equality in their right to grant their nationality to their non-Qatari husband and their children. There are difficulties to conclude marriages with non-Qataris, where both sexes (female and male) require the approval of a competent committee.

There has been no change with regard to the Code of Criminal Procedure concerning the testimony of women in compliance with the provisions of the Islamic Sharia, which is considered to be the major source of legislation.

There has also been no change in the Qatari Law of the Family. The minimum age for marriage remains unchanged at 16 years, and the law allows women to be denied custody of their children in the event of a second marriage after divorce.

*** The NHRC recommends that the role of women in political, parliamentary and judicial field be further encouraged, that the age of marriage of women be raised to 18 years, the review and amendment of the Qatari Law of the Family in line with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. It also recommends the abolishment of reservations to conventions, in particular that made to article 9/2 of the Convention, regarding the right of women to give their nationality to their children and husbands, in addition to granting women the right to consent to marriage males of different nationality. Moreover, the NHRC notes the necessity to review the Code of Criminal Procedure, especially when considering the fact that women currently have positions as judges.**

Fourthly - Development of economic, social and cultural rights

A - Equality in employment

The economic rights package is developing faster than the political and civil rights package. This is evident in the increase in the percentage of Qatari women working in public and private sectors, as the number of private sector appointed male employees reached 348 in 2015, representing a percentage of 45.6% of the total number of employed personnel. By comparison, the number of private sector appointed female employees during the mentioned period reached 415, representing a percentage of 54.4%.⁶

In 2016, the total number of jobseekers in the public sector reached 4407, of which 1569 were males and 2838 females. 787 males and 1599 females were employed.⁷

In 2017, the total number of jobseekers reached 2648, of which 1153 were males and 3844 females, while in 2017, 3665 were employed among them 2184 were females and 1471 were males⁸. The increase in the proportion of female recruitment and recruitment applications may be due to the male orientation of posts in the military field.

Qatari women are well presented in many non-traditional occupations and jobs, including civil aircraft piloting, police and military fields, etc.

⁶ Internal Achievements of the State 2015-2016 - Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

⁷ NHRC Annual report, 2016.

⁸ Statistics of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, 2017.

Qatar law provisions state that there shall be equality in wages of the same job. The NHRC has observed an orientation towards more equality in opportunities in training and development. For example, the number of training programs in the field of development of human resources has reached 691 training programs at the Labor Ministry. the number of participants during the year 2015, was (10466) employees from various government authorities, which included 4775 males representing 45% and 5691 females representing 54 % of all the participants.

On the first quarter of 2017, the number of participants of the training programs reached (4504) employees from various government authorities, which included a percentage of 41% of males and 59% of females.

As for the supervisory titles, the number of males exceed the number of females in governmental supervisory titles, such as the head titles of institutions and departments. In a project that has been initiated by the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs in order to train the employees who occupy supervisory titles. The number of participants in this project has reached 141 trainees from Qatari leaderships that included a number of 104 males and 37 females⁹.

***NHRC encourages women to choose more supervisory titles in the governmental and joint sector and recommends updating and publishing more statistics on the average income of men and women.**

B) Equality in Education

The compulsory education law has contributed to increase the enrolment rate in primary education, which exceeded 90% for females throughout the period 2008-2015. Male enrolment rates have risen after it was lower than the female enrolment rates to become about 91% for both sexes in 2015, which is a matter that indicates that there are equal opportunities for male and female enrolment in schools.

- Since 2011, there has been a doubling of the number of females enrolled in higher education at the University of Qatar to become double the number of males. In 2014, a reverse gap between the genders appeared as there were 1261 graduates, composed of (988) females and (273) males¹⁰. This is because males prefer to work in the police or armed forces rather than completing higher education, according to the fourth Human Development Report of the State of Qatar.
- In the years 2015-2016, the number of male students enrolled at Qatar University dropped by a percentage of 9%, while in the same period, the percentage of females registered at Qatar University increased by a percentage of 7%¹¹. The male percentage was 11% higher for university enrolment in 2017 and 15% for females for the same year¹².
- In 2016- 2017, Qatari males graduated from the University of Qatar amounted to 147, while the number of female Qatari women amounted to 889 university graduates¹³.

***The NHRC recommends that the competent authority of the Ministry of Education study the causes and consequences of the increase in the number of females to become more than males, and make recommendations and acts appropriately so that males do not become less educated than females in the society, which may create a gap between the two genders.**

C) Social security

The State of Qatar provides social security that provides a decent and dignified life for its citizens. The number of beneficiaries of the security services has reached (14,000) beneficiaries, including (9773) females and (4227) males during 2015-2016. A number of (39) beneficiaries from social security were recruited to participate in the labour force for the same period¹⁴.

⁹Internal Achievements of the State 2015-2016 - Secretariat of the Council of Ministers

¹⁰ Millennium Development Goals 2014 - State of Qatar - Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

¹¹ Internal Achievements of the State 2015-2016 - Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

¹² Internal achievements of the State 2016-2017 Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

¹³ Internal achievements of the State 2016-2017 Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

¹⁴ Internal Achievements of the State 2015-2016 - Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

The number of female beneficiaries for the year 2016 reached (10640) out of the total of (15475) beneficiaries, including a number of (80) cases of social security beneficiaries that were recruited to participate in the labour force for the same period¹⁵.

D) Reproductive health

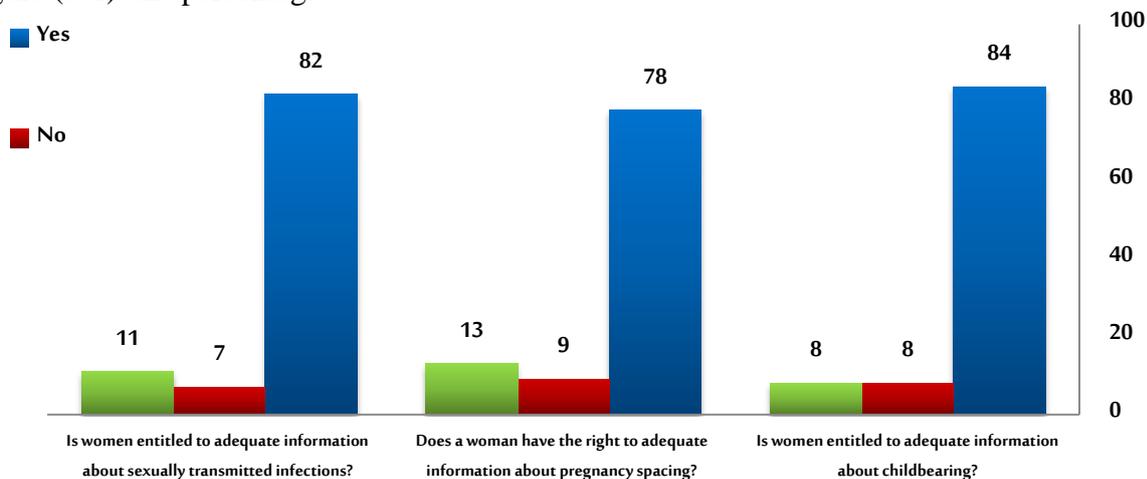
Reproductive rights in the context of Islamic law are considered to be the main source of legislation within the provisions of the Family Code and provisions of the Penal Code, which defines offenses of assault, rape and abortion. Moreover, the State has ratified the CEDAW, taking into consideration, that the State took reservations on several provisions of CEDAW by excluding the provisions of article no. 16/1 regarding marriage and family relations, which are considered as violating provisions of the Islamic Shari'a Law. This is as well as the acceptance of the text of article 1 of the CEDAW provided that the phrase "Regardless of her marital status" shall not mean encouraging family relations outside marriage. This is in addition to declaring that the phrase "change of patterns" that are mentioned in article 5/1 should not be understood as abandoning their role as mothers and nannies, thereby disrupting the family structure.

Qatar is required to perform prenuptial examination for Qataris and non-Qataris with the aim of detecting infectious or hereditary diseases. Health agencies develop reproductive health awareness programs such as family planning programs, contraceptive use, spacing and pregnancy preparation. This is while taking into account that the state seeks to increase the number of its citizens and not vice versa, without interference with the desire of individuals, whether wishing to control or increase their offspring.

The NHRC has conducted a survey on "Women's Rights" during the period from 2012 to 2013. It included 1026 Qatari respondents: 47% males and 43% females. The aim of this survey was to identify Qatari citizens' views on civil, political, economic and social rights of women in order to measure the impact of the Commission's activities on society. (Attached)

The majority of respondents believe that women have the right to adequate information on reproduction; the spacing between pregnancies: sexually transmitted infections, in the percentage of 84%, 78% and 82%, respectively:

Figure (3-1): the percentage



¹⁵ Internal Achievements of the State 2015-2016 - Secretariat of the Council of Ministers.

*** The NHRC recommends more reproductive health programs to be developed and targeting the age of marriage, to raise awareness about the concept in order to rid it of any negative concepts, especially those relating to sexual health, which remains a sensitive subject in the Arab culture.**

E) The right of housing

Widows and the divorced are subject to difficulties in obtaining land grants and housing loans provided by the State. For being entitled to obtain a house, the Housing Law requires that a woman must be 35 years old and not married, or to be divorced or widowed and provided that five years have passed since the death of the husband or her being divorced. The NHRC received 30 complaints of widows and divorced in 2016 regarding the difficulty of the procedures related to granting land, the lack of transparency of the necessary conditions towards this matter. Accordingly, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs has been notified with that matter, and a response has been received, in which it is stated that the matter is under consideration in the Council of Ministers. Until now there is no announcement of the outcome of this study and the NHRC is concerned that this group is not receiving sufficient attention.

*** NHRC reiterates its recommendation to the government to abide by the implementation of CEDAW and to review Law No. (2) of 2007 regarding the housing system to eliminate discrimination against widows and divorcees and enable them to obtain their rights of housing and decent living.**

F) Participation in cultural and sporting life:

The State of Qatar shows keen interest in various aspects of cultural life such as the establishment of libraries, museums, theatres and art centres, supporting publishing companies, cultural magazines and organizing dozens of festivals, cultural, sports and social events throughout the year.

The State Committee for the Sports of Women was established to raise awareness and encourage sports for all women, including women with disabilities, and to form sports teams and participate in matches.

The State provides free and semi-free sports club services to the entire population of women, men and children through regular physical fitness training, sports training and the provision of highly trained and experienced trainers and supervisors.

The Qatar National Theatre, The Islamic Museum, The Qatar National Museum, The Cultural City Katara, The National Library, The Aspire Sports City, The Souq Waqif are among the most important cultural and sporting establishments in the State of Qatar.

All of these establishments are designed in an inspiring manner, which guarantees a high level of well-being, accessibility and quality of services for the entire population.

At the level of art and literature, the number of female writers is more than seventy¹⁶, with five Qatari women writers, including a poet, publishing new works at the Qatar Book Fair in 2017. Dozens of Qatari women work in media, acting, theatre, art and other arts.

¹⁶ (Female promising Writers) is a Workshop organized by Moza Almalki int Center for Rehabilitation & Training., supported by the Middle East Partnership Initiative

Fifth - Violence against women

According to the statistical report of the Centre for Protection and Social Rehabilitation (AMAN) for the year 2017, there are:

- 277 cases of adult females and 35 girls who were subjected to physical violence;
- 9 cases of adult females and 12 girls who were subjected to sexual violence;
- Forty-eight adult females and 19 children victims of composite violence;
- 32 cases of female adults and 12 girls who were subjected to psychological violence.

During the year 2017, the Centre for Protection and Rehabilitation (AMAN) conducted an online questionnaire to survey the public on the issue of violence against women, targeting 400 individuals. The results showed that only 26 percent responded that the role of the media in reducing violence against women was good, compared with 74 percent who said that this role is weak or average. In another question regarding violence scenes against women, most commonly in drama, psychological violence represented 58 percent, 40 percent for physical violence and 2 percent for sexual violence.

The Centre for Social Protection and Rehabilitation is concerned with the protection and rehabilitation of victims of violence and family breakage of women and children and their reintegration into society. The Centre also provides legal, social and psychological counselling and works to rehabilitate the target groups through external visits and internal care at the Centre's shelter.

Cultural customs pose a challenge especially regarding reducing domestic violence and providing protection to battered women. More than 20% of Qatari males and 6% of Qatari females believe that beating a wife is justified in certain circumstances. According to the report of the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics for year 2014: "The reporting of cases of domestic violence is socially or culturally unacceptable, and many victims of domestic violence are unaware of their legal rights and support services, and there are also concerns about the social, legal and political repercussions on the victims and their families. The lack of training among medical, educational and public safety personnel leads to lower detection levels in primary health care centres, schools and kindergartens, thus concealing the true level of violence¹⁷. "

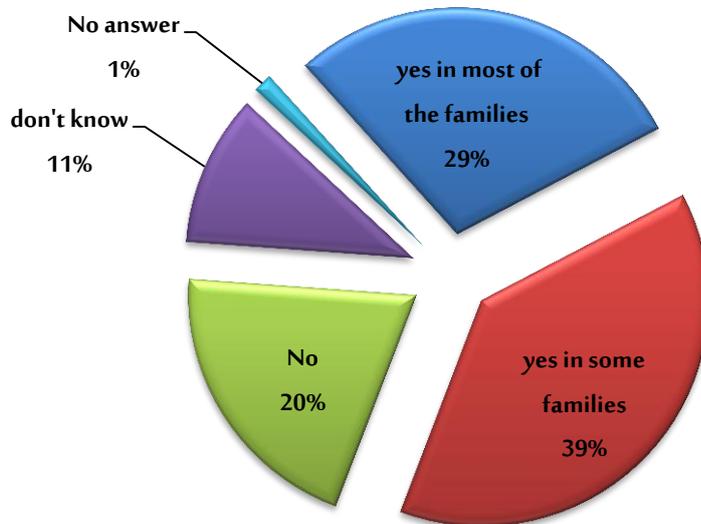
The civil society institutions have contributed in reducing the violence, including Family Counselling Centre that has opened branches in each department of the capital at the Ministry of Interior, Hamad Medical Corporation and Public Prosecutor.

Some female domestic workers have been subjected to negative practices and inhumane behaviour by forcing them to work for long periods, without having weekly rest or receiving their financial dues or full benefits under their employment contracts. Some employers reduce their salaries under moral pressure and threaten them of being imprisoned or deported.

The Domestic Workers Law that has been issued in 2017 is expected to improve many of the female workers' conditions. The NHRC observed that the application of some of the provisions such as that related to the weekly holiday is increasing in a remarkable manner.

¹⁷ http://www.gsdp.gov.qa/portal/page/portal/GSDP_AR/knowledge_center_ar/Tab2/HDR%201%20June%202015.pdf

The NHRC conducted a survey among more than 1,000 citizens and Qatari nationals. Respondents' opinions regarding whether domestic violence is practiced in Qatar are as follows:



***The NHRC recommends to increase the awareness regarding the rejection of domestic violence against women in all its forms as well as raising the society's awareness of the domestic workers law as well as raising the awareness of female domestic workers themselves.**

It also recommends the establishment of a mechanism to collect data about violence, the development of access mechanisms for listening to and receiving reports and complaints, and providing more protection means against abuse, profiteering and offenses, such as the development of a Hotline system with the police and the Public Prosecutor's Office. This is in addition to the establishment of a sheltering centre with adequate capacity in which all legal and social services are available.

The NHRC reiterates its recommendation regarding the development of comprehensive legislation against violence.

Sixth - Violations of women's rights during the siege:

The non-humanitarian siege imposed on the State of Qatar since June 5, 2017 continues to this day to be in force by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Bahrain as well as the Arab Republic of Egypt. Moreover, the violations continue without any response from these countries to rectify the situation. Therefore, the NHRC is monitoring and documenting the humanitarian impacts as well as the social and economic implications of these violations.

The Commission recorded a number of (3970) cases since the beginning of the siege until December 2017. There have been (504) violations to the right to education, (1174) violations to the right to property, (629) violations to the right to family reunification, (1261) violations to the right to freedom of movement, (37) violations to the right to health, (163) violations to the right to exercise of religious rites, (109) violations to the right to work and finally (93) violations to the right to residence.

A large number of women and children have been affected by the siege, especially in cases of family reunification and disintegration. Whereas, arbitrary measures have been taken by the countries of the siege, preventing Qatari citizens from visiting their lands and preventing their citizens from visiting the State of Qatar.

NHRC has received complaints of women who have been severely affected on the physical and moral levels. For example, there is the testimony given by Ms. (E.R) before the NHRC. She was prevented from travelling to her children as she had a Qatari citizenship: "I am a divorced Qatari mother. I have children from my husband and I travel four times a year to the Kingdom of Bahrain to see my children. Following the decision (the siege declaration), however, I could not. The father did not allow the children to travel to Qatar in order for me to see them because the government of Bahrain prevent its citizens from entering Qatar as part of the siege measures".

Ms. (A.F) stated that: "I was married to an Emirati citizen who filed a case of dropping custody of my children and he is married to another woman. After the decision of the siege, the judge in the UAE ordered to drop my custody of the children without any reason and stripped me of all my rights. I could not even be present at the court that issued this judgment."

The Technical Mission of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a report on the impact of the current Gulf crisis on human rights in December 2017. This occurred following the Mission's visit to Doha from 17 to 24 November 2017 and its investigation of the facts on the ground and meeting with 40 of the affected. (Attached)

In the third paragraph of the report, the Mission referred to the effects of the siege regarding disintegration of the family and the presence of 1337 affected Qatari women - according to statistics of the NHRC- who are married to citizens of the siege countries.

***The NHRC recommends that all treaty mechanisms, special rapporteurs, experts and working teams shall issue statements of condemnation and accusation against human rights violations resulting from the siege as well as considering aid to victims and ensuring access to compensation.**

Seventh - General recommendations

- Revision of all national legislations concerning women in order to free them of provisions that are inconsistent with international human rights standards and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.
- Re-examine all discriminatory administrative procedures that prevent women from obtaining their rights.
- Withdrawal of the reservations made in CEDAW.
- Establishing a mechanism or legislation to combat violence against women and achieving appropriate protection and deterrence.
- Development of data collection related to women, especially on violence and early marriage.
- Increasing the political participation of women, their presence in making decisions and supervisory positions.
- Provide more space for civil society to defend women's issues.

Attachments to the report:

- **A survey for the rights of women in the State of Qatar / the NHRC.**
- **Report of the Technical Mission of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights on the impact of the current Gulf crisis on human rights / December 2017**