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Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur for Follow-up on Conclusions and Recommendations of the United Nations Committee against Torture, I refer to the examination of the first periodic report of Qatar (CAT/C/58/Add.1) by the Committee at its 707th and 710th meetings held on 9 and 10 May 2006 (CAT/C/SR.707 and CAT/C/SR.710). The Committee adopted Conclusions and Recommendations (CAT/C/QAT/CO/1), in which further comments by the Government of Qatar were requested in relation to the specific issues of concern listed in paragraphs 12, 15, 16, 20 and 21.

On behalf of the Committee, allow me to thank you for your Government's communication of 12 December 2006 (CAT/C/QAT/CO/1/Add.1) in which some comments were provided. These comments have been reviewed and assist the Committee ongoing analysis of specific issues of concern.

As Rapporteur on Follow-up, I would be grateful for clarification as to the following matters, where sufficient information has not yet been provided to complete an analysis of the progress made regarding implementation of relevant aspects of the Convention.

With regard to the Committee's recommendation made in paragraph 12 of its Conclusions and Recommendations, the Committee notes with concern your comments in paragraph 16 of CAT/C/QAT/CO/1/Add.1, stating that Qatar's Criminal Code authorizes the application of criminal sanctions for certain offenses "where the accused or the victim is a Muslim." The Committee would appreciate the State Party's clarification on the penalties actually imposed as criminal sanctions (and the number of cases involved) for the crimes of theft, robbery, adultery, slander, drinking alcohol or apostasy, as stated in paragraph 16. Please also provide the Committee with an indication of the review process of those provisions of the Criminal Code which allow the punishments such as flogging and stoning as criminal sanctions, reiterating the Committee's observation that "these practices constitute a breach of the obligations imposed by the Convention."

H.E. Mr. Abdulla Falah Abdullah Al-Dosari
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In reference to the Committee's recommendation in paragraph 15 of its Conclusions and Recommendations, the Committee would welcome the State Party's provision of information on training and awareness-raising of public officials about the prohibition of torture, including any such programmes provided to medical personnel engaged in rehabilitation. The Committee would also appreciate information on the State Party's Plan for Action for the World Programme for Human Rights Education.

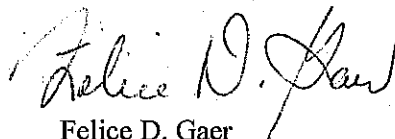
In paragraph 16 of its Conclusions and Recommendation, the Committee called on the State party to ensure in law and practice that all persons detained or in custody have prompt access to a lawyer and to an independent doctor, as well as the means to notify a relative when detained. The Committee is grateful for the information provided by the State party. However, the Committee notes with concern reports that persons arrested under emergency laws, including the 2004 Anti-Terrorism Law the Counter-Terrorism Law and the Law on the Protection of Society are detained for a prolonged period with no possibility to challenge their detention, without access to legal counsel or the means to notify the family members. The Committee would appreciate the State party's clarification on the number of those detained under these laws, and the average length of their detention. Please also provide the Committee with detailed information on the guarantee of measures to challenge the lawfulness of detention or the length of detention. Further, the Committee would appreciate receiving the State party's clarification on the role of the National Human Rights Committee in this regard.

As regards the issue of violence against migrant workers cited in paragraph 20 of its Conclusions and Recommendations, the Committee notes with interest the State party's comment that, under the Constitution of Qatar, all persons residing in the State of Qatar have the right to lodge complaints with the competent authorities. Nonetheless, the Committee remains concerned that migrant workers are not sufficiently protected by law and are unable to access the justice system to lodge complaints regarding violence they suffer. Please provide the Committee with information on the measures taken to ensure the protection of migrant workers, female domestic workers in particular, including measures that facilitate their ability to lodge complaints, such as those to alleviate the cost of going to court or language barriers. The Committee would also welcome updated data on the number of complaints of ill-treatment of migrant workers that have been made, how many were investigated, how long the investigations took in average, and the outcomes of the investigations.

Finally, the Committee would appreciate the clarification of the steps taken by the State party to guarantee respect for human rights of all persons during body searches and ensure that such searches are in full compliance with international standards, as recommended in paragraph 21 of its Conclusions and Recommendations.

The Committee looks forward to pursuing the constructive dialogue it has started with the authorities of Qatar on the implementation of the Convention, and in this context, to receiving clarification to our follow-up questions.

Accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest considerations.



Felice D. Gaer

Rapporteur for Follow-up on Concluding Observations
Committee against Torture