



**National Human Rights Committee's Shadow Report on the  
Progress in Implementing the Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**

**January 2024**

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## **Introduction:**

### **A - Methodology of the Report:**

State of Qatar has submitted its report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination for the 112th session scheduled to be held from April 8-26, 2024, in compliance with its international obligations under Article 9(1) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of year 1965, ratified on July 22, 1976.

In light of this commitment, the National Human Rights Committee has decided to present its written contribution (shadow report) on the progress in implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. This report aligns with the Committee's role and underscores its dedication to:

Placing this report before the Committee on Racial Discrimination, contributing to the assessment of Qatar's performance in implementing the convention. Assisting the Qatari government in recognizing and considering the observations of the National Human Rights Committee.

This written contribution was developed after reviewing various sources, including national reports, recommendations from the Committee on Racial Discrimination, and a review of national legislation, laws, regulations, and practical practices.

The selection of report topics was based on priorities from the perspective of the National Human Rights Committee, considering independent monitoring of convention implementation, including received complaints, fieldwork, information gathering, and visits.

The report focused on challenges faced in applying the international convention to prevent racial discrimination over the past four years, succinctly presenting achievements to avoid repetition of national report content. Subsidiary recommendations were provided for each issue explained in the paragraphs, followed by general recommendations.

### **B - Executive Summary:**

The first section of the report included an introduction containing the report's methodology and executive summary. In the second section, the report provided information on legislative and procedural developments regarding the application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, highlighting achievements and challenges.

State of Qatar has worked on implementing recommendations calling for continuous improvement of its human rights system, resulting in notable progress in economic, social, and cultural rights over the past four years. For instance, laws were enacted to establish the minimum wages for domestic workers, and a committee, named the "Minimum Wages Committee," was formed. In addition, a decision was issued by the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Workers Support and Insurance Fund, outlining the regulations and procedures for disbursing workers' entitlements based on final decisions from the Labor Dispute Resolution Committee. Cases of disbursing

delayed monthly wages were considered if it served the public interest, as well as emergency and exceptional cases for public interest reasons. Moreover, cases eligible for disbursement before the law's enactment were identified, ensuring justice and equality for many workers who experienced delays or were deprived of their financial entitlements.

Similarly, a ministerial decision was issued to specify the rights and duties of patients, actively implementing international human rights covenants and agreements joined by the State of Qatar, particularly concerning the right to health. This decision guarantees privacy, non-discriminatory healthcare, and dignified treatment, within the limits of available resources.

General challenges were reflected in the development of some civil and political rights legislations. A law on the election of the Shura Council was enacted, incorporating discriminatory provisions among citizens. However, appropriate directives were issued by His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar to the Cabinet to work on legal amendments to ensure equality in the right to vote and run for office. In the same context, 26 women applied for membership in the Shura Council, but none of them were successful in obtaining a seat through the electoral process. Only two women were appointed.

The report of the National Human Rights Committee affirmed that a significant percentage of non-Muslims among the workforce, coming from more than 160 countries, practice their religious rituals and ceremonies in designated places, whether in churches or halls allocated by embassies, taking into account legal regulations. The committee observed that all communities enjoy the right to establish their private schools and cultural clubs, teach their mother tongue, and hold all their religious events and celebrations without interference from the authorities.

The report highlighted one complaint from individuals belonging to minorities, specifically the Baha'i faith, alleging discrimination against them and damage resulting from administrative decisions that resulted in their expulsion from Qatar. The government entities provided information stating that "Qatar has not taken any action against the Baha'is because of their belief. All residents in the country are allowed to practice their rituals according to the legal frameworks. Previous measures taken by the authorities against some individuals belonging to the Baha'i community were a result of them violating the law and encroaching on the freedom granted to them by the state."

The report mentioned that one of the important pending legislations to support freedom of opinion and expression is the draft Media Activities Law, approved by the Cabinet since September 2018, but it has not been issued to date. It prohibits publication that incites hatred, hostility, or affects social cohesion.

Discrimination in the Qatari nationality law remains one of the significant challenges facing the implementation of the convention. Its provisions distinguish between original citizens and those who acquired nationality. Additionally, Qatari women are unable to grant citizenship to their children and non-Qatari spouses on an equal footing with Qatari men.

The Housing Law ensures equality between men and women regarding the benefit from the housing system. However, the National Human Rights Committee received complaints about administrative obstacles for many women who applied for housing.

In its second section, the report addressed the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination for the most vulnerable groups. Throughout the years, State of Qatar has achieved cumulative accomplishments in protecting the rights of most vulnerable groups and preventing discrimination against disadvantaged categories. Challenges were noted, including workers' rights following Qatar's announcement of abolishing the sponsorship system, changes in employment, wage acquisition, and challenges in granting full rights to domestic workers, as outlined in the Domestic Workers Law, among other issues.

The report, in its second section, provided information on the promotion and protection of women's rights and the Second Population Policy (2017-2022) of the Permanent Population Committee. The policy implemented various qualitative plans and programs, resulting in demographic, educational, health, and environmental changes, especially in the field of reproductive health. It aimed to support women's participation, provide necessary conditions to increase their participation in the workforce while maintaining family cohesion.

Challenges were highlighted, including the lack of progress in explicitly criminalizing domestic violence in national legislation, the absence of comprehensive data on violence, low reporting levels due to cultural and social stigma, unclear procedures involving protection, investigations, prosecutions, and compensations. Victims also lacked awareness of their rights and available avenues for redress.

Additionally, challenges regarding the rights of persons with disabilities were addressed, including the delayed issuance of legislation protecting their rights and the limited number of civil society institutions concerned with women's and persons with disabilities' rights.

The third section of the report shed light on the role and general recommendations of the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC). It emphasized the NHRC's independence, its efforts to align with the Paris Principles, and the implementation of recommendations from the GANHRI Sub-Committee on Accreditation. The NHRC's quasi-judicial tasks, such as receiving complaints and grievances, were outlined, with around 3000 complaints received annually, mostly related to the right to work. The NHRC also provided consultative services to the government, including proposals and recommendations for improving legislation, procedures, and practices to enhance human rights. The NHRC was involved in awareness and human rights culture dissemination, independent monitoring of detention facilities, collaboration with civil society, and cooperation with regional and international human rights mechanisms.

The NHRC concluded the report by presenting general recommendations, urging continued amendments to national legislation in line with international human rights standards, the removal of all discriminatory provisions, the establishment of a national body or committee specialized in combating racial

discrimination, in application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and ratification of agreements protecting migrant workers and their families, the Protocol to the Convention against Torture, and ILO conventions on trade unions and collective bargaining. The NHRC also recommended expanding space for civil society, developing a national human rights strategy for Qatar.

## **First Section - Legislative and Procedural Developments Regarding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**

### **A- Achievements:**

State of Qatar has diligently worked towards implementing recommendations urging the continuous enhancement of its legislative framework, the development of access to justice, the promotion of equality, the protection of freedom of expression, and other fundamental rights. The following significant achievements have been realized:

- The issuance of Decrees No. 40 and 41 for the year 2018 marked Qatar's accession to the international covenants on civil and political rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights.
- The issuance of Law No. 11 for the year 2018 regulating political asylum.
- The issuance of Law No. 10 for the year 2018 concerning permanent residency. Permanent residency cardholders enjoy various privileges, such as being treated like Qataris in education and healthcare in government institutions. They are given priority in appointments after Qataris in both military and civilian public positions and have the right to own real estate and engage in certain business activities without a Qatari partner.
- The issuance of Law No. 13 for the year 2018, which eliminated the exit permit for expatriate workers. Employers are allowed to exempt no more than 5% of workers in the establishment due to the nature of their work.
- Cabinet Resolution No. 15 for the year 2017 establishing the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking as the national coordinator for monitoring, preventing, and combating human trafficking.
- Cabinet approval in October 2017 for a draft law establishing a Workers Support and Insurance Fund and supporting its activities.
- The issuance of Law No. 15 for the year 2017 concerning domestic workers, granting rights to domestic workers for the first time and equating them with other workers after being exempt from labor law.
- The creation of the "Labor Dispute Resolution Committee," which resolves presented disputes within three weeks from the date of the first session.
- Notable developments in 2022 include the issuance of the Social Insurance Law <sup>1</sup> and the Military Retirement Law <sup>2</sup>, along with an Emiri decree increasing retirees' pensions <sup>3</sup>. The minimum pension amount is set at QAR 15,000, with an additional special allowance of up to QAR 4,000. The total pension, including this allowance, should not exceed QAR 100,000.

In the same context, the Chairman of the Board of the Workers Support and Insurance Fund issued regulations and procedures for disbursing workers' entitlements <sup>1</sup>. These include final decisions from the Labor Dispute Resolution Committee, final judgments from the competent court, cases of

disbursing overdue monthly wages if it serves the public interest, and emergency and exceptional cases for the public interest. This has contributed to achieving social justice and equality before the law for hundreds of thousands of workers.

A ministerial decision was issued to specify the rights and duties of patients <sup>1</sup>, in line with the international human rights covenants that Qatar has joined, especially concerning the right to health. This includes obtaining the patient's consent to receive healthcare services, ensuring privacy, receiving healthcare without discrimination, in a dignified manner, and at all times within the available capabilities, among other provisions.

## **B- Challenges:**

### **1- Right to Vote and Run for Office**

The constitution of the State of Qatar explicitly states that citizens are equal in rights and public duties. It also emphasizes the equality of all individuals before the law, without discrimination based on gender, origin, language, or religion.

The constitution affirms that the people are the source of authorities and exercise them according to the provisions of the law. The state ensures the right to vote and run for office for its citizens, as per the law, to guarantee their participation in choosing representatives for the Shura Council to assume legislative powers, approve the general budget, and exercise oversight over the executive authority as defined by the constitution.

Although the legislature has discretionary powers in formulating the law on the electoral system for the Shura Council, its authority is constrained by the constitutional principle of adherence to equality among citizens in rights and public duties. The law governing the election of the Shura Council, issued as Law No. 1 of the year 2021, includes provisions that differentiate between citizens. Despite these challenges, the country witnessed the birth of its first legislative council through elections in which citizens participated, achieving some of their aspirations in exercising their political rights. The voter turnout reached 63.5%, and although 26 women competed for Shura Council membership, only two were appointed.

Appropriate directives have been issued by His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar to the Cabinet to work on preparing legal amendments to ensure equality in the right to vote and run for office. These amendments were presented to the Shura Council, which, upon its election and formation, completed the necessary legal framework to consider and approve these amendments <sup>1</sup>.



The National Human Rights Committee served as a monitoring body for the integrity of the electoral process and its procedures, and it provided some observations as follows:

- a. The election law should be issued in accordance with international human rights standards, ensuring equal political rights for all citizens, representing all segments of society. This reinforces the state's efforts to complete the construction of an institutionalized state, culminating in the ongoing reform journey initiated by the State of Qatar.
- b. The state should continue to support women's rights by combating stereotypes that hinder their participation in parliamentary life. Special temporary measures, such as preferential treatment and increased quotas for appointments, should be maintained to achieve substantive equality in areas where women are underrepresented or deprived.

## **2- The Right to Freedom of Belief and Worship in the State of Qatar**

The Constitution of the State of Qatar unequivocally asserts that Qatar is an independent Arab Islamic state, with Islam and Islamic Sharia as the primary sources of legislation. The state operates under a democratic system, and its official language is Arabic. The Constitution also guarantees freedom of worship for all, in accordance with the law and the requirements of maintaining public order and morality.

Additionally, Qatar has acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, declaring that it “interpreting the right to practice and adopt one's religion as not violating the rules of public order, public morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others”.

In Qatar, a substantial percentage of the workforce comprises non-Muslims from over 160 countries. Resident expatriates are allowed to practice their religious rituals and customs in designated places such as churches or embassy halls, while adhering to legal regulations. Furthermore, all communities have the right to establish schools and cultural clubs, teach their native language, and celebrate their religious occasions without interference from the authorities.

Qatar has established Doha International Center for Interfaith Dialogue to promote a culture of dialogue and peaceful coexistence. The National Human Rights Committee, an independent institution, has a specific mandate to address any human rights violations, including monitoring the overall human rights situation in Qatar, including minority rights.

Over the past four years, the National Human Rights Committee received a single complaint from individuals belonging to the Baha'i faith, alleging discrimination and harm resulting from administrative decisions, including their expulsion from Qatar.

In response, the Committee addressed the relevant government entities to inquire about the legal status of those deported. The response received emphasized that “Qatar had not taken any action against Baha’is based on their beliefs, but rather, any measures against individuals from this group were a result of legal violations and encroachment on the freedoms guaranteed by the state”.

The National Human Rights Committee recommended enabling the affected individuals to seek legal recourse. Furthermore, it advocates for increased dialogue on this issue to enhance human rights protection within society.

### **3- The Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression**

In September 2018, the Cabinet approved a draft law regulating printing, publishing, media activities, and arts. The draft law was subsequently referred for legislative procedures leading to its issuance.

The proposed law aligns with several relevant international standards. It explicitly guarantees freedom of the press and opinion, ensuring that newspapers and media outlets are not subject to prior censorship. The draft law emphasizes the independence of journalists, affirming their immunity from undue influence in carrying out their duties, in compliance with the law. It introduces substantial advancements compared to the previous legislation, particularly regarding the conditions, principles, and values of journalistic practices, as well as the criteria for appointing newspaper editors-in-chief.

The draft law treats Qatari and non-Qatari journalists equally in various provisions. It obliges journalists to adhere to principles that foster tolerance, fraternity, and reject all forms of bias, discrimination, and prejudice.

Among the prohibitions on publication outlined in the law is anything that may incite hatred or disseminate discord within society, affecting social cohesion.

The National Human Rights Committee recommended expediting the issuance of the draft law after revisiting specific articles in light of international standards for freedom of expression and the press. The committee also stressed the importance of establishing an independent mechanism for administrative grievances and providing the opportunity to appeal administrative decisions before the judiciary.

#### **4- The Right to Citizenship**

Discrimination in Qatari nationality law <sup>1</sup> remains a significant challenge affecting the exercise of this right. The provisions of the law differentiate between original citizens and those who acquire citizenship, including clauses allowing the revocation or withdrawal of citizenship without the right to appeal to the judiciary. If Qatari citizenship is revoked, an individual cannot nominate or be appointed to any legislative body for at least ten years from the date of citizenship revocation, leading to discrimination in some political, civil, and economic rights among citizens.

Gender discrimination is also evident in the grant of citizenship to spouses and children, where Qatari women do not have the right to confer Qatari citizenship to their children and husbands.

The National Human Rights Committee has documented cases of citizenship withdrawal <sup>1</sup> that had negative repercussions on various aspects of family life. The committee actively assists these cases by engaging with relevant authorities, and some cases are still under consideration by the competent authority.

The National Human Rights Committee recommends a review of certain provisions of Law No. (38) of 2005 concerning Qatari nationality to achieve equality before the law and eliminate any form of discrimination. This represents a fundamental and general principle for the protection and enhancement of human rights.

#### **5- The Right to Housing:**

The Housing Law in Qatar establishes equality between men and women regarding the benefits of the housing system. However, the National Human Rights Committee has received complaints about administrative obstacles faced by many women who applied for housing <sup>1</sup>.

Additionally, a ministerial decision outlining the regulations for benefiting from the housing system stipulates that a naturalized Qatari citizen is eligible for housing benefits after a period of fifteen years from the date of acquiring citizenship <sup>1</sup>. This has created another distinction between Qatari citizens and naturalized citizens.

## **Second Section - Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination for the most vulnerable groups:**

State of Qatar has achieved cumulative accomplishments in recent years in the protection of the rights of the most vulnerable groups and the prevention of discrimination, especially for the category of workers. This has been realized through legislative advancements and a qualitative shift in laws, procedures, practices, and public services. These changes have indeed contributed to safeguarding the civil, economic, and social rights of workers, eliminating challenges that existed in the fields of employment, mobility, and more. For example, the Ministry of Health, through Hamad Medical Corporation, provides high-level services to all residents in Qatar without discrimination. Everyone, including low-wage workers and domestic helpers, feels secure in terms of healthcare, benefiting from comprehensive and free medical care. The committee conducted interviews with several domestic workers undergoing breast cancer treatment at the National Center for Cancer Treatment and Research, affiliated with Hamad Medical Corporation. These workers expressed gratitude for being in Qatar and accessing the best available treatment methods worldwide.

However, challenges arise in the implementation of recent legislation related to the right to work, which we outline as follows:

### **a. Migrant Workers' Rights**

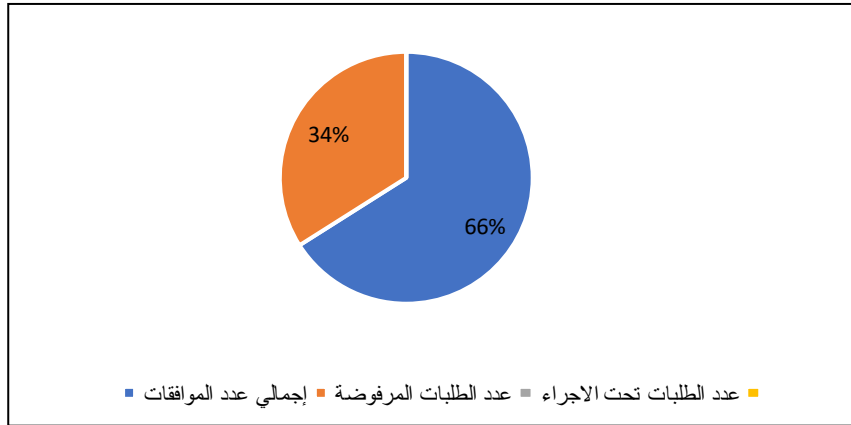
#### **1- The Right to Change Employment:**

In September 2020, Qatar announced the abolition of the sponsorship system, followed by the establishment of an independent Ministry of Labor with specified responsibilities in October 2021. As a result, both workers and employers gained the right to terminate employment contracts without stating reasons, provided that the notice period is respected. The notice period is one month during the first and second years of employment, and two months after the second year of employment<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, migrant workers can notify their employers of their intention to terminate the contract and move to a new job without waiting for the employer's approval or obtaining a "No Objection Certificate." Workers initiate the job change request through the electronic notification service on the Ministry of Labor's website, and the notice period begins from the date of electronic registration for the job change request.

To assess the recent developments, the National Human Rights Committee reviewed data from the Ministry of Labor. During the fifteen months from September 2020 to December 2020, 66% of workers, totaling 428,934 out of 649,125 who applied to change employment, successfully changed their workplaces. Comparatively, in 2019, approval was granted for the job change of 2,478 workers. This indicates that the right to change employment has become a reality for hundreds of thousands of migrant workers.

The following are statistics on changing employment from September 1, 2020, to December 30, 2022<sup>1</sup>:

**Figure (1) Change of employment according to the procedures taken.**



Despite the tangible progress in requests to change employment as illustrated in Figure 1, it is essential to examine the applications that were rejected during that period. This aims to understand and analyze the reasons for rejection, assess the possibility of addressing them, and ultimately achieve full implementation of the abolition of the sponsorship system.

According to the vision of the National Human Rights Committee and based on complaints and appeals received, some challenges hindering the complete implementation of abolishing the sponsorship system have been identified:

- The continued request by the competent department at the Ministry of Labor for a "no objection" certificate in some cases or the submission of a signed and stamped resignation letter by the employer, except in cases where a complaint is filed against the employer.
- The use of a condition prohibiting the worker from moving to a competing employer in an unrelated field.
- Resistance from the community, especially employers, to the new work values represented by updated legislation, particularly the abolition of the sponsorship system. The long-standing practice of allowing employers or managers the right to decide on the worker's transition to another job poses a cultural barrier.
- Lack of clarity in some procedures, such as the return of the expatriate to the country for work and the cases in which this is prohibited.
- Failure to specify mechanisms for compensating the employer for recruitment expenses, travel tickets, rehabilitation, and training.

The following are statistics from the Ministry of Labor since the implementation of the sponsorship system's abolition until the end of September 2022:

**Table 8: Ministry of Labor Statistics during the National Human Rights Committee's study period for the implementation of the sponsorship system's abolition applications.**

Subject	Required Statistics	Period 1/9/2020 – 30/9/2022	
Change of Employer	Total Approvals	428934	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Upon the worker's request.</li> <li>- Came to a new company.</li> <li>- Failure to attach the required documents for the new company.</li> </ul>
	Rejected Requests	220191	
	Requests Under Process	611	
	Total Requests	649125	

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

- Instructing the relevant administration to cease requesting a no-objection certificate or a sealed and signed resignation from the employer.
- Issuing a ministerial decree to define the "non-competition" condition and specify the cases falling within the framework of competition within the regulations of the Ministry of Labor.
- Issuing a ministerial decree to establish mechanisms for compensating employers for the transfer of workers they brought in at their expense.
- Developing a targeted communication plan for employers to raise awareness of the negative effects of resisting changes related to workers' rights on the prosperity of their businesses, and the positive effects of compliance with the rule of law.
- Developing a targeted communication plan for the community to raise awareness of the importance of enhancing freedom of movement in the labor market.
- Promoting awareness of international labor standards through the dissemination of best practices and comparative studies.

## **2- Right to Receive Wages:**

This right is regulated by Labor Law No. 14 of 2004<sup>1</sup> and Minister of Labor and Social Affairs Resolution No. 4 of 2015, which establishes the guidelines for the Wage Protection System (WPS). The WPS is designed to monitor and document salary disbursement processes for workers in establishments governed by Labor Law No. 14 of 2004. Its purpose is to ensure that employers adhere to regular and timely payment of wages, following the rules and conditions stipulated in the labor law.

Under this system, employers are obliged to transfer workers' wages to financial institutions within seven days of their due date. Violations of the Wage Protection System can result in the following penalties for the offending party:

- 1- Suspension of issuing any new work permits.
- 2- Suspension of all transactions for the employer at the ministry. The suspension is lifted by a decision of the minister or his delegate after the employer provides evidence of complete payment of all outstanding wages.

Law No. 17 of 2020 was issued to determine the minimum wages for workers and domestic employees<sup>1</sup>, set at QAR 1000 upon contract signing. Additionally, employers are required to provide housing and food or allocate allowances if accommodation and meals are not provided. The minimum housing allowance is set at QAR 500, and the minimum food allowance is QAR 300. Employers are mandated to adjust employment contracts accordingly. The law grants employers a transitional period of six months to implement the minimum wage, and it establishes a committee called the "Minimum Wage Committee" tasked with determining minimum wage levels based on economic conditions.

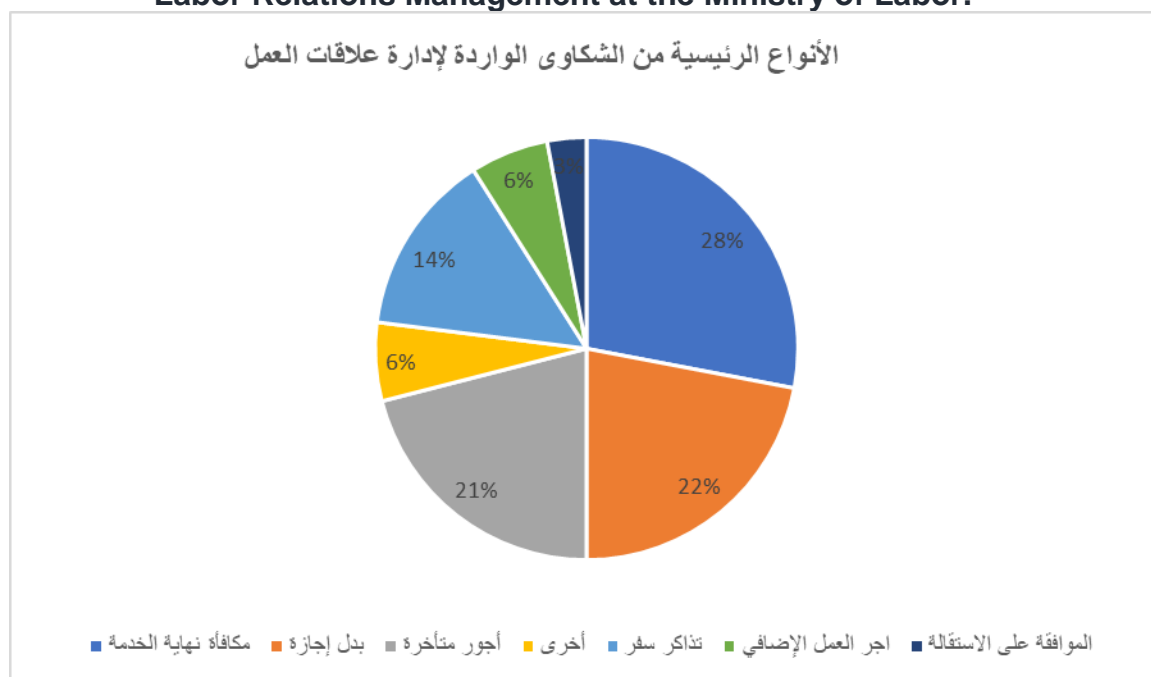
Over 1.6 million workers, constituting 96% of eligible employees<sup>1</sup>, are registered in the Wage Protection System. However, during the period from January 1, 2022, to September 30, 2022, 5,889 companies were found in violation of wage-related regulations, leading to 10,962 complaints about delayed wages.

The following table presents statistics on labor complaints related to financial entitlements<sup>1</sup>:

**Table No. (9): Statistics on Complaints and Labor Disputes Issued by the Labor Relations Management at the Ministry of Labor During the Period from January to September 2022**

Subject	Complaint Type	Number of Complaints
Labor Relations Management Disputes	End-of-Service Gratuity	14624
	Leave Allowance	11586
	Delayed Wages	10962
	Others	3095
	Travel Tickets	7251
	Overtime Pay	2939
	Approval of Resignation	1766

**Figure No. (2) illustrates the main types of complaints received by the Labor Relations Management at the Ministry of Labor.**



The National Human Rights Committee commends the efforts of the Ministry of Labor in safeguarding wages and the endeavors of the Labor Dispute Settlement Committees. Additionally, the Committee acknowledges the issuance of Law No. 18 of 2018, establishing a fund to support and secure workers. The significant and vital role played by the fund in settling delayed wages and providing humanitarian, social, health, and food support to vulnerable workers under certain conditions<sup>1</sup> is highly appreciated. However, Figure No. (2) illustrates the persistent challenges related to the wages of migrant workers. It is imperative to analyze the underlying reasons for the continuation of such violations, assess the feasibility of addressing them, and work towards achieving full wage protection.



From the perspective of the National Human Rights Committee, and based on the complaints and petitions received, several challenges facing the full implementation of wage protection have been identified as follows:

- Companies' failure to make payments within what is known as subcontracting and the widespread practice of "payment upon receipt," despite the clarity of Labor Law No. 14 of 2004 regarding the timely payment of wages according to employment contracts and the applicable regulations in the country, rather than at the company's discretion when receiving financial entitlements from another source.
- Existence of a number of small enterprises that are either not registered within the wage protection system or, if registered, lack the necessary competence and integrity in the internal management of their employees and activities.
- Existence of workers under the so-called "free visa" working for others or for their own account, not registered in the wage protection system. This also applies to employees in households, agriculture, and pastoral work.

**The National Human Rights Committee recommends:**

- Prioritizing the responsibility of paying wages to subcontracted workers.
- Adding a procedure to the national minimum wage program by establishing a company deposit system, including a deposit equivalent to at least two months' salary for the establishment's workers. This deposit cannot be withdrawn as long as the company's business activities continue.

**3- Rights of Domestic Workers**

The law governing domestic workers includes provisions that set a minimum age for employment, maximum working hours, paid weekly leave, prohibition of work during sick leave, regulation of annual leave, and end-of-service benefits. These provisions, along with others, aim to protect domestic workers from violence and preserve their dignity. The law also ensures dispute resolution mechanisms in accordance with labor law.

Recent procedural developments in this regard include the launch of the Ministry of Labor's "Unified Platform for Complaints and Reports," available electronically to all workers. Domestic workers can resort to the Ministry of Labor to settle disputes, and if the administration is unable to resolve disputes amicably, they can be referred to dispute resolution committees.

Cooperative initiatives between the Ministry of Labor and the Qatar Chamber have led to the proposal of "Domestic Workers' Insurance Policy." This proposal allows employers to obtain an optional insurance policy covering cases such as the worker's unwillingness to work, the worker's escape, work-related injuries, and death. The insurance compensates the employer based on the extent of the damage.

The National Human Rights Committee has reviewed the standard employment contract adopted by the Ministry. The contract specifies an 8-hour daily working period, with the possibility of employing domestic workers for an additional two hours daily as overtime, compensating them according to labor law provisions. The model contract also includes conditions for terminating employment, allowing domestic workers to terminate the contract at any time, provided they respect notice periods and have the opportunity to transition to new employment. The Ministry of Labor has announced a change in the employer for 20,027 domestic workers and those in similar roles during the period from January 1, 2022, to September 30, 2022.

Despite the Ministry of Labor's efforts to raise awareness about the rights and responsibilities of domestic workers and to support decent work for this category by providing more avenues for access, justice, and redress, as well as announcing the possibility of securing shelter for those in need through "Comprehensive Shelter" and "Humanitarian Care," domestic workers continue to face negative and inhumane practices. Some are compelled to work for extended hours without weekly breaks, encountering challenges related to receiving their financial entitlements. Some employers resort to reducing their salaries under psychological pressure, threatening imprisonment or deportation. Additionally, some employers deny domestic workers the right to leave the residence during their weekly rest day.

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

- Develop more awareness programs regarding the rights of domestic workers, addressing concerns with both employers and workers collaboratively, emphasizing a serious legal discourse on this matter.
- Establish a mechanism to monitor wages for domestic workers.
- Provide additional means of protection against abuse, exploitation, and assault, such as developing a hotline system in collaboration with the police and the public prosecutor's office.

**4- The Right to Form Associations and Labor Unions**

Qatar's labor law, as outlined in the twelfth chapter, regulates labor organizations, while the thirteenth chapter addresses the provisions of joint committees, collective bargaining, and joint agreements. The fourteenth chapter deals with collective disputes.

Although the labor law acknowledges the right to labor organization, legislative restrictions hinder the exercise of this right. The law stipulates that a facility must employ at least 100 Qatari workers for the formation of labor unions. However, it permits the establishment of "joint committees" in any facility employing thirty or more workers, representing both employers and workers, without the requirement of Qatari workers. Half of the committee members represent the employer, and the other half represents the workers.

The Ministry of Labor has formed joint committees on several occasions, allowing workers to elect their representatives through direct elections. As of now, joint committees have been established in 30 facilities. However, this does not replace the need for labor unions.

The labor law also recognizes the right to strike, but it imposes restrictions and controls that deviate from the essence of this right, making it practically impossible to carry out a strike under the specified conditions.

In practical terms, workers resort to striking when their rights, particularly related to wages and working hours, are violated in various sectors, such as strikes by facility workers. This is done without waiting for official approval.

The National Human Rights Committee has observed that strikes have been handled calmly by relevant authorities, with no reported cases of violence or attacks during such events. However, instances of deportations of workers from the country following these strikes were noted, authorized by administrative decisions issued by the Ministry of Interior. Qatari law allows for administrative deportation.

When the National Human Rights Committee inquired about the deportation of workers, the response received was that they violated legal provisions related to maintaining public order.

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

Reconsideration of the immunity of administrative decisions related to deportation from the oversight of the judiciary, with the necessity of granting workers the right to appeal against these decisions to a specialized judicial authority, aiming for justice and fairness.

### B- Women's Rights:

The committee highly appreciates the achievements made by the state in recent years in the field of promoting and protecting women's rights.

Government entities provide various free services for women, including free legal assistance in family disputes through the Wafaq Center, psychological rehabilitation through the Psychiatric Hospital, shelters for women victims of violence at the Aman Center, and social assistance and salaries for divorced and widowed women.

المحور الرابع: الصحة العامة والصحة الإنجابية	
الغاية: الارتقاء بالصحة العامة للسكان وتحسين واقع الصحة الإنجابية وتوفير خدماتها بما يتماشى مع زيادة عدد السكان وتوزيعهم الجغرافي	
الاهداف الفرعية	الإجراءات
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>التوسع في البنية التحتية للخدمات الصحية، ولاسيما خدمات الرعاية الصحية الأولية وتوزيعها جغرافياً، بما يتناسب مع التزايد المستمر لعدد السكان</li> <li>تشجيع القطاع الخاص ودعمه للقيام بالمزيد من الاستثمار في القطاع الصحي بما يخدم الاهداف الاستراتيجية لهذا القطاع</li> <li>تمويل قانون العمل القاصي بإنشاء عيادة يعمل بها طبيب وممرض على الأقل في المنشآت التي يزيد عدد عمالها عن 500</li> <li>توفير وزيادة عدد مراكز الخدمات الصحية والمراكز المتخصصة للعمال، وإقامة مراكز صحية داخل المجمعات العمالية</li> <li>التوسع في تهيئة وتأهيل متخصصين في طب الأسرة والمجتمع والارتقاء بمستوى خدماته</li> <li>التوعية بطرق التعامل مع الحالات المرضية البسيطة في المنزل، وتوفير خط ساخن لمساعدة الجمهور على التعامل مع هذه الحالات</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>التوسع في البنية التحتية للخدمات الصحية، ولاسيما خدمات الرعاية الصحية الأولية وتوزيعها جغرافياً، بما يتناسب مع التزايد المستمر لعدد السكان</li> <li>تشجيع القطاع الخاص ودعمه للقيام بالمزيد من الاستثمار في القطاع الصحي بما يخدم الاهداف الاستراتيجية لهذا القطاع</li> <li>تمويل قانون العمل القاصي بإنشاء عيادة يعمل بها طبيب وممرض على الأقل في المنشآت التي يزيد عدد عمالها عن 500</li> <li>توفير وزيادة عدد مراكز الخدمات الصحية والمراكز المتخصصة للعمال، وإقامة مراكز صحية داخل المجمعات العمالية</li> <li>التوسع في تهيئة وتأهيل متخصصين في طب الأسرة والمجتمع والارتقاء بمستوى خدماته</li> <li>التوعية بطرق التعامل مع الحالات المرضية البسيطة في المنزل، وتوفير خط ساخن لمساعدة الجمهور على التعامل مع هذه الحالات</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>منح إجازة أمومة لا تقل عن سبعة أشهر بكامل الراتب</li> <li>منح مخصصات مالية للمواليد ووضع برنامج صحي متخصص لمرحلة الميولد إلى 5 سنوات</li> <li>توفير دور حضانه في أماكن العمل أو بالقرب منها</li> <li>إنشاء مراكز مقدمة للأمراض الحساسية وأبحاثها</li> <li>العمل على زيادة الكوادر المتخصصة بالصحة الإنجابية ودعم تدريبها في الداخل والخارج</li> <li>التأكد من التزام المشغلين على الزواج بنتائج الفحص الطبي قبل الزواج</li> <li>إنشاء قاعدة بيانات خاصة بالحساسية</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>منح إجازة أمومة لا تقل عن سبعة أشهر بكامل الراتب</li> <li>منح مخصصات مالية للمواليد ووضع برنامج صحي متخصص لمرحلة الميولد إلى 5 سنوات</li> <li>توفير دور حضانه في أماكن العمل أو بالقرب منها</li> <li>إنشاء مراكز مقدمة للأمراض الحساسية وأبحاثها</li> <li>العمل على زيادة الكوادر المتخصصة بالصحة الإنجابية ودعم تدريبها في الداخل والخارج</li> <li>التأكد من التزام المشغلين على الزواج بنتائج الفحص الطبي قبل الزواج</li> <li>إنشاء قاعدة بيانات خاصة بالحساسية</li> </ul>

Within the Hamad Medical Corporation, a system is in place to respond to cases of violence against women and children, including:

- Hamad Medical Corporation Procedures for sexual harassment,
- Hamad Medical Corporation Procedures for sexual assault,
- Hamad Medical Corporation Procedures for illegitimate pregnancy,
- Hamad Medical Corporation Procedures for violence against vulnerable groups,
- Hamad Medical Corporation Procedures for domestic workers' violence,
- Hamad Medical Corporation Procedures for violence against pregnant women.

The medical institution is committed to reporting suspected cases of violence.

The National Committee for Women, Children, the Elderly, and Persons with Disabilities was established according to Cabinet Decision No. 26 of 2019.<sup>1</sup>

The National Human Rights Committee commends the second population policy plan (2017-2022) of the Permanent Population Committee, which has implemented various qualitative plans and programs.

The graphical representation (Figure 1) illustrates the fourth axis related to public health and reproductive health, aiming to improve the overall health of the population and enhance reproductive health<sup>1</sup>.

Figure 2, related to the fifth axis concerning women and childhood, aims to support women's societal participation, provide conditions for increasing their participation in the workforce while preserving family cohesion, and ensuring a safe environment for children.<sup>1</sup>

Despite efforts to raise awareness of women's rights in Qatari society, challenges persist, especially in achieving genuine equality between women and men and the availability of redress mechanisms. The National Human Rights Committee notes that there is insufficient awareness, particularly regarding the concept of actual equality and available avenues for redress.

المحور الخامس: المرأة والطفولة	
الغاية: دعم المشاركة المجتمعية للمرأة، وتوفير الظروف اللازمة لزيادة مشاركتها في قوة العمل مع المحافظة على تماسك الأسرة وضمان بيئة سليمة للأطفال	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• توسيع مجالات مشاركة المرأة، ولاسيما المشاركة في قوة العمل</li> <li>• التوسع في المبادرات والبرامج الداعمة لمشاركة المرأة في مجالات الحياة العامة</li> <li>• توفير بيئة تساهم في تحقيق الملاءمة بين عمل المرأة ومسؤولياتها الأسرية (عمل جزئي، عمل عن بعد...)</li> </ul>	<p><b>الهدف الأول</b> دعم المشاركة المجتمعية للمرأة</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• إنشاء مستشفيات خاص بالأطفال وزيادة عدد الوحدات والأقسام داخل المستشفيات القائمة في البلديات</li> <li>• تعزيز إجراءات حماية الأطفال من التعرض لأنواع العنف المختلفة، وتعزيز الخدمات الصحية المدرسية</li> </ul>	<p><b>الهدف الثاني</b> ضمان بيئة سليمة في مختلف مراحل نمو الطفل</p>

Specifically, challenges include the lack of progress in criminalizing domestic violence explicitly in national legislation, the absence of comprehensive data on violence, low reporting levels due to cultural and social stigma, unclear procedures involving protection, investigations, prosecutions, and compensation. Additionally, victims lack awareness of their rights and available avenues for redress.

In the same context, despite the issuance of Law No. (10) of 2018, which allows the children of Qatari women married to non-Qataris to obtain permanent residency in the country, enabling them to access education, healthcare, and property, Law No. (38) of 2005 prevents Qatari women from granting their nationality equally to their children and non-Qatari husbands.

Despite the state's efforts to eliminate discrimination against women and promote gender equality, especially in increasing the participation of women in political and public life and holding public positions, women do not receive adequate representation in the Shura Council and municipal councils. This is despite their presence in ministerial positions, the diplomatic corps, and the judiciary. This is attributed to entrenched cultural stereotypes that still hinder their full participation.

Regarding land grants and housing loans, gender inequality persists, hindering Qatari women due to eligibility conditions imposed by Housing Law No. (2) of the year. The law stipulates that women must be single and over 35 years old, divorced, or widowed for at least five years.

As for social security, although there is no explicit provision in Law No. 38 of 1995 regarding social security preventing the disbursement of benefits to Qatari women married to non-Qataris unable to work if they meet eligibility conditions, practical reality indicates the administration's refusal to consider their cases upon presenting evidence of marriage to a non-Qatari.

The National Human Rights Committee reiterates its previous recommendations on this matter, as follows:

- 1- Reconsidering reservations to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, particularly Article 9 concerning granting women equal rights with men to confer nationality on their children.
- 2- Conducting a systematic and regular awareness campaign to educate the society and raise awareness about the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.
- 3- Establishing civil society organizations focused on promoting women's rights.
- 4- Taking temporary special measures, including affirmative action, to achieve genuine equality between women and men in areas where women are not adequately represented or are deprived of representation.
- 5- Enacting legislation criminalizing all forms of domestic violence against women and providing care and rehabilitation for victims.
- 6- Adopting a national action plan to combat all forms of violence against women.
- 7- Reviewing Housing Law No. (2) of 2007 to ensure that all widows and divorced women have equal opportunities to obtain land grants and housing loans.

- 8- Enforcing more the provisions of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination by the judiciary, requiring training for law enforcement officials as needed.

### **C- Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

State of Qatar has taken measures in various economic, social, and cultural fields over the past years to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Despite the state's acknowledgment of its interest in individuals with disabilities, combating stereotypes about them, ensuring the majority of their health, rehabilitation, educational, and service requirements, exempting them from taxes, and working on developing the right to access and integration in education, employment, and cultural life, the Persons with Disabilities Bill is still missing in the daily lives of people with disabilities, amid the absence of civil society institutions concerned with them.

#### **The National Human Rights Committee recommends:**

- Harmonizing legislation regulating the rights of persons with disabilities with the provisions of the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and expediting the approval of the draft legislation protecting the rights of persons with disabilities.
- Encouraging the establishment of civil society institutions concerned with protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and raising awareness about them.

### **Third Section - Role of the National Human Rights Committee and its General Recommendations for Further Compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination:**

#### **A- Independence:**

The National Human Rights Committee was established in 2002 in accordance with the Paris Principles adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993. The Committee obtained accreditation at the (A) level from the accreditation subcommittee of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) in Geneva in 2010, and the same accreditation level was reiterated in 2015 and 2021.

The National Human Rights Committee annually submits proposals to the relevant authority to amend the law establishing the National Human Rights Committee to achieve greater alignment with the Paris Principles and to implement the recommendations of the accreditation subcommittee of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) regarding the selection and appointment of members to achieve more independence.

#### **B- Continuing to Improve and Enhance Human Rights in the Country:**

The Committee has "quasi-judicial" functions, receiving complaints and petitions and attempting to resolve them in coordination with relevant authorities. It can independently intervene in any matter within its jurisdiction. The Committee has developed new mechanisms to reach the targeted category of migrant workers by opening community offices within its headquarters for Nepalese, Filipino, Indian, and several African communities. This aims to assist individuals in filing complaints, with an annual reception of over 3000 complaints, mostly related to the right to work. Cases are verified, and free legal consultations are provided to the affected individuals, along with support services to access avenues of redress and justice in collaboration with relevant authorities. The Committee has a program for collaboration with law offices in Qatar and conducts field visits to residences, workplaces, and places of detention either spontaneously or based on complaints. Reports on the human rights situation in Qatar are regularly published on its official website.

In addition to providing advisory services to the government regarding proposals and recommendations to enhance legislation, procedures, and practices to improve the human rights situation, the Committee undertakes awareness and human rights culture dissemination tasks. It is also involved in independent visits and monitoring of detention facilities<sup>1</sup>, collaborating with civil society and engaging with regional and international human rights mechanisms.

**- Recommendations of the National Human Rights Committee for Enhanced Compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination:**

In addition to the subsidiary recommendations provided within the sections of this report, the National Human Rights Committee puts forth the following general recommendations:

- Continue in amending national legislation in alignment with international human rights standards, and eliminate all provisions containing discriminatory language.
- Establish a national body or committee specializing in matters of racial discrimination, in accordance with the provisions of the agreement to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination.
- Approve the convention on the protection of migrant workers and their families, along with the protocol to the convention against torture and ill-treatment. Also, ratify the agreements of the labor organization related to trade union organization and collective bargaining.
- Allow more space for civil society.
- Formulate a national strategy for human rights in the State of Qatar.