



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
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Excellency,

I have been following the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the State of Qatar and welcome the constructive engagement of your Government during the 33rd session of the UPR Working Group in May 2019.

As the final outcome report on the review of Qatar has been recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 42nd session, I would like to take this opportunity to follow up on a number of areas raised in the two reports that my Office had prepared for the review of Qatar – the Compilation of United Nations information and the Summary of Stakeholders' submissions – which I consider in need of particular attention over the next four and a half years, until the next cycle of the UPR. In identifying those areas, I have considered the statements and/or recommendations made by 104 delegations and the presentation made and responses provided by the delegation of Qatar. I have also considered the actions taken by the Government to implement the 145 recommendations supported during the second cycle of the UPR. The aforementioned areas cover a range of issues, which appear in the annex to this letter.

I encourage Qatar to develop a comprehensive national human rights action plan in order to achieve concrete results in the areas highlighted in the annex to this letter and to facilitate the preparations for Qatar's fourth cycle of the UPR. My advice to all Member States is to develop and implement national action plans in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the National Human Rights Committee and all civil society organizations and, where necessary, with the support of international organizations, including my Office and other United Nations entities.

I also encourage Qatar to continue to strengthen its standing committee responsible for comprehensively reporting and follow-up in relation to recommendations received from all international and regional human rights mechanisms and to treaty obligations, linking this to the Sustainable Development Goals. I strongly recommend the use of the OHCHR practical guide on this topic, which is available at:

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_16_1_NMRF_PracticalGuide.pdf.

Please, kindly note that I am sharing my advice with all Member States as they go through the third cycle of the UPR with a view to assisting them with the implementation of the recommendations, following the review. An important measure that can contribute positively to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term reporting. Therefore, I strongly encourage all Member States to submit a voluntary mid-term report two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome report. In this regard, I encourage Qatar to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the third cycle of the review, by 2022.

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H.E. Mr. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs
Doha, State of Qatar



As stated by the Secretary-General in his 2017 report on the work of the Organization (A/72/1, paragraph 98): *“The Human Rights Council’s universal periodic review process is now entering a new cycle, with every Member State scheduled for a third round of scrutiny. We will work to strengthen the relevance, precision and impact of the Council’s recommendations, including by providing better support to Member States in implementation, stronger collaboration with United Nations country teams and the establishment of national mechanisms for human rights reporting and follow-up to link the universal periodic review to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.”*

I look forward to discussing with you ways in which my Office may assist Qatar in relation to the areas identified in this letter and its annex.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Michelle Bachelet
High Commissioner for Human Rights

cc: H.E. Mr. Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi
State Minister for Foreign Affairs
Doha, State of Qatar

Annex

Scope of international obligations and cooperation with international human rights mechanisms and bodies

- Strengthening the normative framework, by ratifying the human rights instruments to which Qatar is not yet a party, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness; the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide; the International Labour Organisation Domestic Workers Convention No. 189; and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

A. Cross-cutting issues

Equality and non-discrimination

- Initiating legislative reforms to prohibit and combat all forms of discrimination.
- Taking all necessary measures to repeal or amend laws that discriminate against women.
- Implementing effectively its laws and policies with regards to expatriate workers to better protect their rights.

Development, the environment, and business and human rights

- Continuing the implementation of the Qatar National Vision 2030 and promoting sustainable economic and social development.
- Increasing development assistance to reach the level of 0.7% of the GDP.

B. Civil and political rights

Right to life, liberty and security of person

- Establishing a formal moratorium on the use of the death penalty with a view to its complete abolition.
- Ensuring that all acts of torture and ill-treatment are punished by law and that the alleged perpetrators of such acts are brought to justice, found guilty and punished.

- Considering to declare inadmissible confessions obtained by means of torture or ill-treatment.

Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

- Taking necessary measures to demarcate the separation of legislative and executive powers, and taking steps to guarantee the independence of the judiciary.
- Guaranteeing a system of access to justice for all victims of violence and prosecuting perpetrators of these crimes.

Fundamental freedoms

- Taking measures to ensure that the Penal Code and the Cybercrime Prevention Law do not restrict the constitutional right to freedom of expression.
- Ensuring the protection of the right to freedoms of expression, of the press, as well as of religion and belief.
- Harmonizing the legislation governing the right to peaceful assembly with international standards, including by decriminalizing unlicensed public gatherings.

Prohibition of all forms of slavery

- Strengthening efforts to combat human trafficking, including by ensuring full implementation of the National Plan to Combat Human Trafficking 2017-2022, and by amending the legislation on human trafficking to ensure effective prosecution of perpetrators.

C. Economic, social and cultural rights

Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work

- Reforming the Labour Code to ensure protection of labour rights for all people in Qatar, including domestic workers and foreign workers, in line with international norms and standards.

Right to health

- Guaranteeing universal access to health services without any kind of discrimination through legislative reforms.

Right to education

- Pursuing efforts to guarantee equal access to education for boys and girls and to improve the quality of education.
- Advancing the National Development Strategy until 2022, including on expanding school enrolment.

- Supporting comprehensive and inclusive education policies for all children, including children with disabilities.

D. Rights of specific persons or groups

Women

- Taking measures to prevent and combat all forms of discrimination against women in law and practice.
- Combating violence against women and girls, including by criminalizing domestic violence, and ensuring effective accountability and providing adequate protection and assistance to victims.
- Continuing reforms aiming at bridging the gap between men and women, particularly on personal rights and transmission of nationality.

Children

- Explicitly prohibiting by law corporal punishment of children in all contexts, and ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable.

Persons with disabilities

- Implementing legislative measures to promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

- Ensuring full implementation of the measures aimed at reforming the sponsorship system and exit permits of migrant workers.
- Continuing efforts to tackle all forms of exploitation of migrant workers, including migrant domestic workers, and ensuring they are protected.
- Implementing the new law on political asylum and ensuring it integrates respect for the principle of non-refoulement.

Stateless persons

- Reviewing the legislation on nationality to ensure that nationality can be transmitted to children through both the maternal and paternal line without distinction.