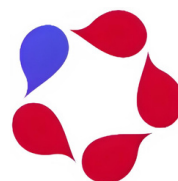


**2024**

# **HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT**

## **Qatar**

**Prepared By:**



**Washington Center  
For Human Rights**

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# Executive Summary

In 2024, human rights issues in Qatar remain deeply concerning, despite some progress following the 2022 FIFA World Cup. The most severe violations continue to revolve around freedom of expression, labor rights for migrant workers, women's rights, and the treatment of LGBTQ+ individuals. The Qatari government maintains strict controls on freedom of expression, leading to arbitrary detentions of critics and activists. High-profile cases, such as the life imprisonment of lawyers Hazza and Rashed al-Marri for opposing government policies, underscore the severe risks faced by dissenters.

Migrant workers, who form the backbone of Qatar's labor force, continue to experience wage theft, forced labor, and exploitation. Despite reforms like the introduction of a minimum wage and wage protection system, the implementation has been inadequate, and legal mechanisms to address grievances remain weak. Many migrant workers still face delayed payments and unsafe working conditions, while deaths attributed to "natural causes" during the World Cup period remain uninvestigated.

Women in Qatar face systemic discrimination under the male guardianship system, limiting their autonomy in marriage, travel, and access to justice. Domestic violence protections are also insufficient, leaving women vulnerable. Furthermore, LGBTQ+ individuals face harassment and legal persecution, as same-sex relationships are criminalized, and the government's stance remains overtly hostile, with little progress toward reform.

While there have been efforts to improve labor conditions, such as allowing workers more flexibility in changing jobs, enforcement remains inconsistent. Women's rights, too, have seen little movement, and discriminatory practices under the guardianship system persist. The Ghufraan clan, stripped of their citizenship and left stateless, continues to face severe deprivation of basic rights, highlighting Qatar's citizenship and statelessness issues.

Recommendations for the Qatari government include expanding protections for freedom of expression, enhancing labor law enforcement to safeguard migrant workers, and reforming laws that discriminate against women and LGBTQ+ individuals. International bodies should push Qatar to adhere to global human rights standards, particularly on labor and expression rights, and monitor the country's compliance. Civil society organizations are encouraged to advocate for the rights of marginalized communities and collaborate with international groups to support victims of human rights violations. While some progress has been made, Qatar must undertake significant reforms to address ongoing abuses and uphold international human rights norms.

# Methodology

The methodology for collecting data for the human rights report on Qatar typically involves multiple approaches to ensure a comprehensive and accurate depiction of the situation. The main methods often include:

## **1. Interviews:**

Researchers conduct interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including victims of human rights abuses, witnesses, human rights defenders, lawyers, and sometimes government officials. These interviews are often conducted in-person, via phone, or through secure digital communication platforms to ensure safety and confidentiality. Special care is taken to ensure that the participants are not subjected to reprisals [1].

## **2. Field Research:**

In some instances, field research is carried out by visiting key areas of concern, such as labor camps or workplaces, particularly for migrant workers. This allows the researchers to collect firsthand information about working and living conditions. However, such field research may face limitations due to restrictions on movement or access to certain areas [2].

## **3. Reports from Local NGOs and International Organizations:**

Researchers often rely on reports from local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the United Nations. These organizations monitor and document human rights abuses, offering valuable insights into patterns of violations, legal frameworks, and government responses [3].

## **4. Government and Legal Documents:**

Government reports, legislation, court documents, and official statements are also used to analyze the legal framework and policies regarding human rights in Qatar. This helps in assessing whether the country's laws align with international human rights standards [4].

## **5. Media and Press Reports:**

Media outlets, both local and international, serve as an important source of information. Researchers analyze news articles, investigative journalism, and press releases to identify human rights violations and the government's handling of such cases [5].

## **Challenges and Limitations:**

### **Limited Access to Information:**

Qatar's restrictive environment, particularly regarding freedom of expression and press, makes it difficult to access independent and reliable information. Local NGOs and media often operate under constraints, limiting their ability to report freely on human rights issues [6].

### **Fear of Reprisal:**

Victims and witnesses may be reluctant to speak openly due to fear of retaliation from authorities, which can limit the scope of interviews and firsthand accounts [7] .

### **Government Censorship:**

Strict controls over media and civil society mean that researchers often have to rely on external sources, which may not always provide real-time information or detailed accounts [2].

### **Access to Migrant Worker Populations:**

Many of Qatar's human rights issues are related to its treatment of migrant workers. Gaining access to workers, especially in labor camps, can be difficult due to government restrictions, employers' control, and fear of consequences for the workers [8].

This multi-faceted methodology allows for a broader understanding of the human rights situation in Qatar, though it remains subject to various constraints [1].



**Citations:**

- [1] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde22/4966/2021/en/>
- [2] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/11/qatar-inaction-by-qatar-and-fifa-a-year-on-from-the-world-cup-puts-legacy-for-workers-in-peril/>
- [3] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2019/02/reality-check-migrant-workers-rights-with-two-years-to-qatar-2022-world-cup/>
- [4] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/06/qatar-hundreds-of-migrant-workers-employed-as-security-guards-at-fifa-world-cup-denied-justice-for-abuses/>
- [5] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/05/fifa-must-publish-its-review-into-compensation-for-world-cup-workers-in-qatar/>
- [6] <https://www.newindianexpress.com/sport/football/2024/May/09/amnesty-international-calls-on-fifa-to-publish-review-of-qatar-migrant-workers-compensation>
- [7] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/qatar/>
- [8] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Galloway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Galloway)

# Human Rights Overview

The human rights situation in Qatar for 2024 remains complex, shaped by political, economic, and social factors, as well as significant events that have influenced the landscape.

## Political Context

Qatar has made strides in enhancing its human rights legislation, particularly in light of its commitments under the Qatar National Vision 2030. This vision emphasizes the importance of human rights as integral to the country's social and economic development. Recent legislative reforms include amendments to labor laws, property ownership rights for non-Qataris, and the establishment of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking[1][2]. However, the political environment continues to restrict freedom of expression, with reports of arbitrary detentions for dissenting voices, particularly among activists and critics of the government[3].

## Economic Context

The economy of Qatar is heavily reliant on its natural gas and oil sectors, which has led to a significant influx of migrant workers. While the government has implemented reforms aimed at improving labor rights, many migrant workers still face severe exploitation, including wage theft and inadequate access to grievance mechanisms. The aftermath of the 2022 FIFA World Cup has drawn attention to these issues, with calls for accountability and compensation for workers who suffered abuses during the event's preparations[4][5].

## Social Context

Socially, Qatar has made commitments to improve the status of women and combat discrimination. The appointment of women to the Shura Council reflects a growing recognition of women's roles in governance. However, systemic discrimination persists, particularly under the guardianship laws that limit women's rights in various aspects of life, including marriage and travel[2][3]. Furthermore, LGBTI individuals continue to face legal and societal discrimination, with laws that criminalize same-sex relationships and a lack of protections against discrimination[3].

## Significant Events

In 2024, Qatar's participation in international human rights discussions, including its periodic reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, highlights its ongoing efforts to address human rights concerns. However, the country faces criticism for not fully implementing promised reforms and for the continued abuse of migrant workers' rights. The legacy of the World Cup continues to loom large, with FIFA under pressure to address the human rights abuses associated with the event[4][5].

In conclusion, while Qatar has made some progress in improving its human rights framework, significant challenges remain, particularly regarding the treatment of migrant

workers and the protection of civil liberties. The interplay of political, economic, and social factors continues to shape the human rights landscape in the country.

**Citation:**

[1] <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/foreign-policy/human-rights/human-rights-in-qatar>

[2]

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-04/18/0052-qatar-affirms-commitment-to-enhancing-human-rights-legislation>

[3]

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/qatar/report-qatar/>

[4]

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/05/fifa-must-publish-its-review-into-compensation-for-world-cup-workers-in-qatar/>

[5]

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2019/02/reality-check-migrant-workers-rights-with-two-years-to-qatar-2022-world-cup/>

# Civil and Political Rights

## Freedom of Expression and Assembly

In 2024, Qatari authorities continued to restrict freedom of expression, often targeting individuals critical of the government. Activists Hazza and Rashed al-Marri, both prominent lawyers, were convicted on charges that included criticism of the country's electoral law and "threatening" the emir on social media. Both were sentenced to life imprisonment<sup>[^1]</sup>. The penal code criminalizes actions such as criticizing the emir, defaming religion, and inciting unrest, while a 2014 cybercrimes law further limits free expression by penalizing "false news" and content deemed offensive to social values<sup>[^2]</sup>.

In another case, Abdul Ibhais, the former communications director for the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, was sentenced to three years in prison following an unfair trial based on coerced confessions. His conviction is widely believed to be linked to his criticism of the government's handling of a migrant workers' strike in 2019<sup>[^3]</sup>.

## Arbitrary Arrests and Ill-Treatment

Qatar has faced accusations of arbitrary arrests, particularly targeting marginalized groups such as the LGBT community. Human Rights Watch reported incidents of LGBT people being detained and subjected to verbal abuse, beatings, forced confessions, and conversion therapy sessions<sup>[^4]</sup>. These individuals were arrested based on their online activity and faced legal discrimination, with the penal code criminalizing same-sex relationships, carrying penalties from one year to life imprisonment<sup>[^5]</sup>.

Moreover, the Ghufuran clan, a historically marginalized group, continued to face arbitrary revocation of citizenship, leaving many stateless. Stateless individuals are deprived of basic rights such as work, healthcare, education, and property ownership<sup>[^6]</sup>.

## Impact on Population

The restrictions on civil liberties in Qatar disproportionately affect its population, most of whom are non-citizens. Non-citizens, including migrant workers, lack political rights and access to basic services. The restrictive policies also exacerbate the plight of stateless individuals, leaving them vulnerable to arbitrary detention and exploitation<sup>[^7]</sup>.

## Conclusion

Qatar's restrictions on civil and political rights, particularly on freedom of expression and assembly, alongside the arbitrary arrest and mistreatment of activists and marginalized groups, raise serious human rights concerns. The situation remains dire for non-citizens and stateless individuals, and there is an urgent need for reform in accordance with international human rights standards<sup>[^8]</sup>.

**Citations:**

[^1]: [Amnesty International Report on Qatar](<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/qatar/report-qatar/>)

[^2]: [Amnesty International Report on Qatar](<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/qatar/report-qatar/>)

[^3]: [Human Rights Watch: World Report 2024](<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/qatar>)

[^4]: [Human Rights Watch: World Report 2024](<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/qatar>)

[^5]: [Human Rights Watch: World Report 2024](<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/qatar>)

[^6]: [Freedom House Country Report: Qatar](<https://freedomhouse.org/country/qatar>)

[^7]: [Freedom House Country Report: Qatar](<https://freedomhouse.org/country/qatar>)

[^8]: [CCPR Centre Country Overview: Qatar](<https://ccprcentre.org/country/qatar>)

# International Relations and Human Rights

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**Citations:**

1. [Amnesty International Report on Qatar](<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/qatar/report-qatar/> )
2. [Human Rights Watch: World Report 2024](<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/qatar> )
3. [Freedom House Country Report: Qatar](<https://freedomhouse.org/country/qatar> )
4. [CCPR Centre Country Overview: Qatar](<https://ccprcentre.org/country/qatar> )

# Rights of Specific Groups

The human rights situation in Qatar for 2024 continues to raise concerns, particularly regarding women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and ethnic or religious minorities. These groups face legal, social, and cultural obstacles that hinder their rights, though some incremental progress has been made.

## Women's Rights

Women in Qatar still experience systemic discrimination, especially under the guardianship system. This legal framework mandates that women seek permission from a male guardian for activities such as marriage, travel, and accessing healthcare. Though domestic violence laws exist, enforcement remains weak, leaving many women without adequate protection or legal recourse against abuse. For example, many cases of domestic violence go unreported due to societal stigma and the perception that the justice system will not offer sufficient support .

## Children's Rights

Children, particularly those from migrant families, face significant human rights challenges. Access to healthcare and education remains difficult for many migrant children, exacerbated by their families' precarious legal status. Child labor is also a concern, particularly in industries where migrant labor is prevalent. Legal protections for children are insufficient, and enforcement is inconsistent, contributing to the exploitation of vulnerable children in various sectors .

## LGBTQ+ Rights

LGBTQ+ individuals in Qatar face some of the most severe legal and social discrimination. Homosexuality remains criminalized, with penalties including imprisonment of up to seven years. Under Sharia law, the death penalty is a theoretical risk, although it has not been enforced in recent times. However, LGBTQ+ individuals face harassment, arbitrary detention, and societal violence. In February 2024, a dual British-Mexican citizen was arrested under questionable circumstances, highlighting the dangers faced by LGBTQ+ people .

There are no legal protections against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, and societal attitudes remain overwhelmingly hostile. Conversion therapy and police brutality targeting LGBTQ+ individuals have been reported, and these practices continue despite international condemnation .

## Ethnic and Religious Minorities

Migrant workers, who make up a significant portion of Qatar's workforce, face exploitative conditions despite some legal reforms. The Kafala system, while officially reformed, continues to function in practice, keeping many workers tied to abusive employers. Wage

theft, poor living conditions, and lack of access to legal recourse remain common complaints. Religious minorities, while generally allowed to practice their faith, do so under restrictions that curtail public expressions of religion .

## **Conclusion**

While international pressure has spurred some improvements in Qatar's human rights framework, significant challenges remain for women, children, LGBTQ+ individuals, and ethnic or religious minorities. Systemic discrimination, weak legal enforcement, and hostile societal attitudes create a difficult environment for these groups to assert their rights. Continued advocacy and global attention are crucial for driving further progress in Qatar.

**Citations:**

[1] <https://www.equaldex.com/region/qatar>

[2]

<https://sportandrightsalliance.org/qatar-and-lgbtq-human-rights-an-overview-ahead-of-the-world-cup/>

[3] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT\\_rights\\_in\\_Qatar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_Qatar)

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[5]

<https://timep.org/2024/06/04/2023-was-a-bad-year-for-lgbtq-rights-in-the-mena-region-2024-is-set-to-be-even-worse/>

# Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

Qatar's economic, social, and cultural rights landscape in 2024 reflects ongoing challenges and some notable improvements, particularly concerning the right to health, education, and adequate housing. This analysis will delve into these areas, highlighting access, barriers, and recent developments.

## Right to Health

Access to healthcare in Qatar has seen significant advancements, particularly since the country hosted the FIFA World Cup in 2022, which brought international scrutiny to its labor practices and public services. The Qatari government has invested heavily in healthcare infrastructure, aiming to provide high-quality medical services to its citizens and residents. The healthcare system is largely funded by the government, ensuring that citizens receive medical care without direct charges at the point of service.

However, disparities remain, particularly for migrant workers, who often face barriers in accessing healthcare. Despite reforms to improve workers' rights, many still encounter challenges such as language barriers, lack of awareness about available services, and fear of employer retaliation when seeking medical assistance. Reports indicate that while the government has made strides in healthcare access, the situation for migrant workers remains precarious, highlighting the need for further reforms to ensure equitable access for all<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>.

## Right to Education

Education in Qatar is a priority, with significant investments made to enhance educational opportunities. The government provides free education at all levels for Qatari citizens, and there are various programs aimed at improving educational outcomes. The education system has undergone reforms to align with international standards, and there is a growing emphasis on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields.

However, challenges persist, particularly regarding the educational rights of expatriate children. While there are international schools available, the costs can be prohibitive for many migrant families. Additionally, the curriculum in some schools has faced criticism for not being inclusive enough, particularly regarding the representation of diverse cultures and histories. The ongoing efforts to reform educational content and improve access for all children in Qatar are essential for fostering a more inclusive environment<sup>[1][2][3]</sup>.

## Right to Adequate Housing

Housing conditions in Qatar have improved, particularly in light of the infrastructure developments associated with the World Cup. The government has initiated various housing projects aimed at providing affordable housing options for citizens. However, the housing situation for migrant workers remains a significant concern. Many workers live in overcrowded accommodations with inadequate facilities, which raises questions about their right to adequate housing as outlined in international human rights frameworks.

Barriers to adequate housing for migrant workers include high rental costs, limited access to housing services, and the ongoing impact of the kafala system, which can restrict workers' movements and choices regarding housing. Although reforms have been introduced, including the abolition of the exit permit requirement, the overall housing conditions for many expatriates continue to be substandard, necessitating further action from the government to ensure compliance with international standards[1][2][3][4].

## **Conclusion**

In summary, while Qatar has made notable progress in enhancing economic, social, and cultural rights, particularly in healthcare and education, significant challenges remain, especially for migrant workers. The government's commitment to reforming these rights is evident, but the implementation and enforcement of these rights must be strengthened to ensure that all residents, regardless of their nationality, can enjoy their rights fully. Continued monitoring and advocacy from international organizations will be crucial in holding the Qatari government accountable and promoting further improvements in the rights landscape[1][2][3].

**Citations:**

[1] <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/QAT>

[2] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/economic-social-and-cultural-rights/>

[3]

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International\\_Covenant\\_on\\_Economic,\\_Social\\_and\\_Cultural\\_Rights](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Covenant_on_Economic,_Social_and_Cultural_Rights)

[4] <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cescr>

# Refugees and Migrants

The situation of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers in Qatar during 2024 remains complex and challenging, characterized by ongoing issues related to labor rights, living conditions, and systemic exploitation.

## Living Conditions and Treatment

Migrant workers, who constitute a significant portion of Qatar's labor force, particularly in construction and service sectors, continue to face harsh living conditions. Despite some legal reforms aimed at improving their situation, many workers report inadequate housing, lack of access to basic services, and poor living standards. The aftermath of the 2022 FIFA World Cup has not alleviated these issues; instead, the economic slowdown has exacerbated vulnerabilities, with many workers experiencing delayed or unpaid wages .

The Qatari government has made some strides in reforming the controversial Kafala system, which previously tied workers to their employers and restricted their rights. Changes announced in 2020 allowed workers to change jobs without employer consent and established a minimum wage. However, enforcement of these reforms has been inconsistent, and many workers still face barriers in changing employers or leaving the country, leading to situations where they remain trapped in exploitative conditions .

## Access to Asylum Procedures

Access to asylum procedures for refugees and asylum seekers in Qatar is limited. The country has not established a comprehensive legal framework for asylum seekers, and those who do seek refuge often encounter bureaucratic hurdles and a lack of support services. The absence of a formal asylum process means that many individuals remain in precarious situations without legal protection or the ability to secure stable employment .

## Instances of Exploitation and Abuse

Reports of exploitation and abuse of migrant workers persist. Instances of wage theft, illegal recruitment fees, and unsafe working conditions are common. Human Rights Watch has documented cases of workers being unpaid for months and facing physical and psychological abuse. The lack of accountability for employers who violate labor laws contributes to a culture of impunity, further endangering the rights and well-being of migrant workers .

Moreover, the Qatari authorities have faced criticism for their failure to address the high number of unexplained deaths among migrant workers, with many attributed to "natural causes." There is a significant lack of transparency regarding these deaths, and investigations into the circumstances surrounding them are often inadequate .



## **International and Domestic Responses**

Internationally, Qatar has been under scrutiny for its human rights record, particularly following the FIFA World Cup. Various human rights organizations have called for stronger protections for migrant workers and accountability for abuses. In response to this pressure, the Qatari government has initiated some reforms, but critics argue that these measures are insufficient and poorly enforced .

Domestically, while there have been calls for improvement and a more robust legal framework to protect workers' rights, progress has been slow. The Qatari government continues to assert that existing mechanisms are adequate, often dismissing international criticism as biased or unfounded .

In summary, while there have been some reforms aimed at improving the conditions for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrant workers in Qatar, significant challenges remain. The treatment of these groups continues to reflect systemic issues within the labor market and a lack of comprehensive legal protections. The international community's response has been critical, but tangible changes on the ground are still needed.

**Citations:**

[1] <https://bti-project.org/en/reports/country-report/QAT>

[2] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/qatar>

[3]

[https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/pub2023-047-l-world-migration-report-2024\\_1.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/pub2023-047-l-world-migration-report-2024_1.pdf)

# Legal Framework and Accountability

The legal framework and accountability mechanisms related to human rights in Qatar have undergone various reforms and developments in 2024. This examination will cover recent legislative changes, the role of the judiciary, and issues of impunity regarding human rights violations.

## Legal Framework and Recent Reforms

Qatar has implemented significant legislative reforms aimed at enhancing human rights, particularly in the context of labor rights and protections for migrant workers. Notable changes include amendments to laws governing the rights of migrant labor, property ownership for non-Qataris, and the introduction of a domestic workers law. Furthermore, the establishment of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking aims to coordinate national efforts to address human trafficking and related abuses .

In addition to these reforms, Qatar has reaffirmed its commitment to human rights through its participation in international human rights mechanisms, including the Human Rights Council. The country has also prepared a National Plan for Human Rights, reflecting its strategic vision for human rights as part of its broader development goals outlined in Qatar National Vision 2030 .

## Role of the Judiciary

The judiciary in Qatar plays a crucial role in the enforcement of human rights laws; however, it faces challenges related to independence and accountability. While the Qatari Constitution provides for the protection of rights, many of these protections are conditional and subject to existing laws, which can facilitate abuses. For instance, the judiciary has been criticized for upholding convictions against activists who challenged government policies, indicating a lack of judicial independence in politically sensitive cases .

## Impunity for Human Rights Violations

Despite the legislative advancements, issues of impunity for human rights violations persist. Reports indicate that migrant workers continue to face serious abuses, including wage theft and forced labor, with inadequate mechanisms for grievance and redress. The authorities have been criticized for failing to effectively investigate and hold accountable those responsible for the deaths of migrant workers, which often remain unexplained and unaddressed .

## Case Examples

### 1. Hazza and Rashed al-Marri:

These brothers, both lawyers, were sentenced to life imprisonment for their online activism against discriminatory laws. Their case exemplifies the severe repercussions faced by

individuals who challenge the state, highlighting the judiciary's role in suppressing dissent rather than protecting rights .

## **2. Abdullah al-Mohannadi:**

An activist involved in the National Campaign for Travel-Banned Citizens, he was released after serving an eight-month sentence for his online posts. However, he remains subject to a travel ban, indicating ongoing restrictions on freedom of movement and expression .

## **3. Migrant Workers:**

Numerous reports have documented the plight of migrant workers in Qatar, who often encounter barriers to justice. For instance, even when legal victories are achieved, workers frequently face delays and non-payment of dues, reflecting systemic issues within the legal and labor frameworks .

## **Conclusion**

In summary, while Qatar has made strides in enhancing its legal framework for human rights, significant challenges remain regarding the implementation of these laws and the accountability of violators. The judiciary's role is critical but often compromised by political considerations, leading to a culture of impunity for human rights violations. Continued monitoring and advocacy are essential to ensure that reforms translate into tangible improvements in the human rights landscape in Qatar.

**Citations:**

[1] <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/foreign-policy/human-rights/human-rights-in-qatar>

[2]

<https://upr-info.org/sites/default/files/country-document/2024-08/GulfCentreforHumanRightsStatement.pdf>

[3]

<https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-04/18/0052-qatar-affirms-commitment-to-enhancing-human-rights-legislation>

[4]

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/qatar/report-qatar/>

[5] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/qatar>

# International Relations and Human Rights

## Engagement with UN Bodies and International Organizations

In 2024, Qatar actively engaged with international organizations and UN bodies on human rights issues. As a member of the UN Human Rights Council, Qatar played a significant role in promoting the Council's mission to achieve universal respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The country also demonstrated its commitment to human rights by making voluntary contributions to various UN funds and programs. Additionally, Qatar emphasized the need for the international community to show "courage and political will" in upholding human rights, particularly in contexts such as protecting education facilities during armed conflicts .

## International Pressure and Criticism

Despite its international engagements, Qatar faced considerable criticism over its domestic human rights record. The government has been criticized for its restrictive laws on freedom of expression and civil rights, which include penalizing criticism of the Emir and criminalizing actions deemed as threats to national security. Such restrictions have led to wrongful imprisonments, arbitrary travel bans, and deportations of critics . The treatment of LGBTQI+ individuals also remained a contentious issue, with the government maintaining a stance that LGBTQI+ rights are inconsistent with local religious beliefs . The international spotlight was further intensified by controversies surrounding the 2022 FIFA World Cup, with accusations of corruption and severe labor rights violations related to the event's infrastructure .

In September 2024, the EU held a human rights dialogue with Qatar, although no significant outcomes were reported from these discussions . Moreover, there was growing concern over recent proposals in the Shura Council that could undermine previous labor reforms, further exacerbating the exploitation and abuse of domestic workers . The criminalization of dissent and restrictive laws continued to attract international scrutiny, reflecting ongoing tensions between Qatar's domestic policies and global human rights standards .

## Impact on Domestic Human Rights Situation

The impact of international pressure on Qatar's domestic human rights situation appeared limited. The government continued to impose significant restrictions on freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, leading to arbitrary detentions of individuals exercising their rights . Migrant workers faced ongoing serious abuses, including wage theft, forced labor, and inadequate access to grievance mechanisms . Women remained subject to a guardianship system, which required male approval for basic rights, perpetuating gender discrimination . Additionally, discriminatory laws put LGBTQI+ people at risk of detention, with the Prime Minister reiterating that LGBTQI+ rights are "not acceptable in our faith" .

Overall, while Qatar's international diplomatic efforts suggest a commitment to global human rights issues, substantial challenges remain within the country. International criticism and pressure have yet to lead to significant improvements in Qatar's human rights landscape, particularly in areas such as freedom of expression, migrant rights, and gender equality.

**Citations:**

- [1] <https://mofa.gov.qa/en/foreign-policy/human-rights/human-rights-in-qatar>
- [2] <https://hrf.org/reports/qatars-human-rights-record-in-the-worlds-spotlight/>
- [3] <https://www.amnesty.org/en/location/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east/qatar/report-qatar/>
- [4] <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/qatar>
- [5] <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/04/qatar-risks-backsliding-critical-labor-reforms>
- [6] <https://freedomhouse.org/country/qatar/freedom-world/2024>
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- [8] <https://www.qna.org.qa/en/News-Area/News/2024-09/10/0089-qatar-calls-on-international-community-to-protect-education-facilities>



# Recommendations

## Recommendations for the Government of Qatar

### 1. Strengthen Labor Rights Protections:

#### **Implement and Enforce Labor Reforms:**

Ensure the effective implementation of labor reforms introduced in 2020, including the removal of exit permits for all migrant workers and the enforcement of wage protection measures. Address loopholes that permit exploitation, such as wage theft and illegal recruitment fees, and enforce strict penalties for violations.

#### **Establish an Independent Oversight Body:**

Create an independent body to monitor labor conditions and investigate worker complaints, ensuring transparency and accountability in the labor market.

### 2. Enhance Freedom of Expression:

#### **Amend Repressive Laws:**

Repeal or amend laws that criminalize free speech, such as those that punish criticism of the emir and the cybercrimes law that penalizes the dissemination of "false news." This would foster a more open environment for public discourse and dissent.

#### **Protect Human Rights Defenders:**

Ensure the safety and freedom of human rights activists and lawyers, preventing arbitrary detentions and harassment based on their advocacy work.

### 3. Promote Gender Equality:

#### **Reform Guardianship Laws:**

Abolish the male guardianship system that restricts women's rights to marry, travel, and work without male permission. Implement laws that promote gender equality and protect women from domestic violence.

#### **Support Women's Empowerment Initiatives:**

Invest in programs that empower women economically and socially, ensuring access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities.

## **4. Protect LGBTI Rights:**

### **Decriminalize Same-Sex Relations:**

Amend the penal code to decriminalize consensual same-sex relationships and protect individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Establish anti-discrimination laws that safeguard the rights of LGBTI individuals.

## **Recommendations for International Bodies**

### **1. Increase Diplomatic Pressure:**

#### **Leverage Bilateral Relations:**

Use diplomatic channels to pressure the Qatari government to improve its human rights record, particularly concerning labor rights and freedom of expression. Engage in regular dialogues that emphasize the importance of human rights in international relations.

### **2. Monitor Compliance with International Standards:**

#### **Conduct Regular Assessments:**

International organizations should conduct regular assessments of Qatar's compliance with international human rights standards, providing public reports that highlight progress and areas needing improvement.

### **3. Support Human Rights Initiatives:**

#### **Fund Human Rights Projects:**

Provide financial and technical support to local NGOs and civil society organizations working on human rights issues in Qatar, focusing on labor rights, women's rights, and LGBTI advocacy.

## **Recommendations for Civil Society Organizations**

### **1. Raise Awareness and Advocate for Change:**

#### **Campaign for Human Rights:**

Launch awareness campaigns to inform both the local and international communities about the human rights situation in Qatar, focusing on the plight of migrant workers and marginalized groups.

**Support Victims of Abuse:**

Establish support networks for victims of human rights abuses, providing legal assistance and resources to help them navigate available grievance mechanisms.

**2. Collaborate with International Partner\*:****Build Coalitions:**

Form coalitions with international human rights organizations to amplify advocacy efforts and increase pressure on the Qatari government for reforms.

**3. Document and Report Violations:****Conduct Research and Reporting:**

Regularly document human rights violations and publish findings to hold the government accountable and inform the global community about the situation in Qatar.

By implementing these actionable recommendations, stakeholders can work towards improving the human rights landscape in Qatar, ensuring that the rights and dignity of all individuals are respected and upheld.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the 2024 human rights report on Qatar underscores the ongoing challenges faced by individuals, particularly migrant workers, women, and those seeking freedom of expression. Despite some legislative progress, deep-rooted issues such as wage theft, forced labor, the lack of investigation into migrant worker deaths, and systemic gender inequality persist. The guardianship system continues to limit women's autonomy, and the suppression of dissent remains a serious concern.

It is imperative that both the Qatari government and the international community maintain a focus on these critical areas. Continued monitoring, transparency, and sustained pressure are necessary to push for comprehensive reforms. Only through a concerted effort can Qatar improve its human rights situation, ensuring dignity, equality, and freedom for all its citizens and residents.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Statistical Data on Human Rights Issues

### 1. Migrant Workers' Rights

- **Death Toll:** Approximately 6,500 migrant workers have died since Qatar was awarded the FIFA World Cup in 2010, largely attributed to unsafe working conditions .
- **Labor Exploitation:** Widespread issues such as wage theft, long working hours, poor living conditions, and unsafe environments are reported, particularly in World Cup-related construction projects.
- **Reforms:** Qatar has introduced some labor reforms under international pressure, such as abolishing the kafala system, but gaps remain in enforcement.

### 2. Women's Rights

- **Labor Force Participation:** Women in Qatar constitute approximately 45% of the labor force .
- **Gender Discrimination:** Despite advancements, women still face legal and social discrimination, especially in areas like inheritance, family law, and nationality .
- **Global Ranking:** According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2023, Qatar ranks low in terms of gender equality .

### 3. LGBTQ+ Rights

- **Legal Status:** Same-sex relations are illegal under Qatar's penal code, with penalties of up to seven years in prison.
- **Abuse Reports:** Documented cases of arbitrary arrests, forced confessions, and mistreatment of LGBTQ+ individuals in custody .

### 4. Freedom of Expression

- **Cybercrimes Law:** The 2014 Cybercrimes Law criminalizes the dissemination of "false news" and imposes penalties of up to five years in prison.
- **Speech Restrictions:** Criticism of the government or emir can result in imprisonment .

## 5. Statelessness

- **Ghufran Clan:** Members of the Ghufran clan, many of whom have been stripped of their Qatari citizenship since 1996, remain stateless and deprived of basic rights, including access to healthcare, education, and employment .

## Appendix B: Glossary of Legal and Human Rights Terms

### Human Rights:

Rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of nationality, gender, race, religion, or other statuses.

### Statelessness:

The condition of being without nationality, preventing individuals from accessing many basic rights like education, healthcare, and employment.

### LGBTQ+ Rights:

Rights relating to individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or other sexual minorities, including protections from discrimination and violence.

### Freedom of Expression:

The right to hold opinions and express them freely without interference from the government or fear of retaliation.

### Kafala System:

A labor sponsorship system historically used in Qatar that binds migrant workers to their employers, restricting their mobility and freedom.

### Cybercrimes Law:

A law enacted to regulate online activities, but often criticized for being used to suppress free speech and dissent.

### Gender Discrimination:

Unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on gender, affecting access to opportunities, resources, and legal protections.