



**Coalition
on Labor Justice
for Migrants
in the Gulf**

Statement by Coalition on Labor Justice for Migrants in the Gulf: Qatar UPR Pre- Session

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Equidem & GCC Coalition

- Equidem is a rightsholder-led, Global Majority-first, human rights organization.
- We are part of the **Coalition on Labor Justice for Migrants in the Gulf**, demanding fundamental labor and human rights for migrant workers in the Gulf region.

Qatar: Background

- Over 2.1 million migrant workers (90% of Qatar's labor force).
- Majority from Asia and Africa, on temporary employer-tied visas.
- Post-2019: Introduction of labor reforms following the third review cycle.
- Coalition engaged with 200+ migrant workers in Qatar.

Qatar's Progress and Reservations

- Qatar takes a step forward by acceding to international human rights covenants (2018)
- But introduces reservations that undermine protections for:
 - ❖ Women's rights in marriage, divorce, and child custody
 - ❖ Migrant workers' rights to form unions and collectively bargain

Call to Action: Ratify and Implement ILO and UN Conventions

Key conventions to focus on:

- **C087:** Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise
- **C098:** Right to Organize and Collective Bargaining
- **C100:** Equal Remuneration
- **C155:** Occupational Safety and Health
- **C187:** Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health
- **P029:** Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention



Labor Recruitment: Progress and Challenges

Qatar's Labor Law Prohibits Worker-Paid Fees

- Worker-paid recruitment fees are illegal (Art.33, Law No. (14) of 2004)
- Qatar establishes labor recruitment bureaus and Visa Centers to promote responsible recruitment

Failure to Tackle Worker-Paid Fees

- Research shows workers still pay illegal fees (USD 99-USD 4,500)
- Fees lead to significant debt, affecting workers' lives in Qatar and beyond
- Workers take on additional loans or struggle to support themselves and families

Inadequate Response to Fraudulent Recruiters

- Qatar fails to monitor, investigate, and prosecute fraudulent recruiters and companies
- First labor trafficking case conviction in 2023, but more action is needed
- Call to Action: Strengthen Recruitment Regulations

Recommendations

- Improve visa monitoring and impose strict penalties on recruiters and sponsor who charge recruitment fees/ deceive workers about jobs and subject them to forced labor
- Raise awareness among migrant workers about legally permissible contracts / labor law amendments

Wages and Benefits: Unpaid, Late, and Low

A) Wage Protection System Falls Short

- Act No. 1 of 2015 introduces wage protection system but:
 - ❖ Non-payment, late payment, and underpayment persist
 - ❖ Construction workers particularly affected
 - ❖ Workers receive no wages, less than owed, or no overtime payment

B) Minimum Wage Introduced but Low Salaries Remain

- March 2021 Minimum wage of QAR 1,000 introduced but:
 - ❖ Migrant workers earn salaries below minimum wage
 - ❖ Construction workers' monthly wages: QAR 600 – 3,500 [USD 165-960]
 - ❖ Most earn QAR 910-1,800 [USD 250-500]

C) Call to Action: Enforce Timely, Fair & Living Wage Payments

- Require employers to prove full and timely wage payments through WPS
- Transparent salary grades based on objective criteria
- Contractors must demonstrate compliance with international labor standards



Barriers to Changing Employers: Unresolved Issues

Reforms Fall Short

- Workers still face restrictions

Unaware and Trapped

- Workers' Rights Ignored; Continued obstacles when attempting to switch jobs

Frequent wage theft, especially among low-wage earners

Occupational Health and Safety: Progress and Pitfalls

Qatar strengthens heat stress protections, but violate midday outdoor work ban

Denied sick leave – workers forced to work through illness under threat of termination

Freedom of Association: Barriers and Threats

Culture of fear: workplace intimidation and violence

Forced to work long hours under threat of job loss

Verbal abuse, threats, and intimidation for making complaints

Face discrimination and workplace violence

Call to Action: Protect Workers' Rights

- Ratify and implement ILO and UN conventions related to migrant workers.
- Pass laws recognizing workers' rights to freely associate, organize, and bargain.
- Conduct regular labor inspections to address violations such as worker deaths, discrimination, and abuse.



Thank you for your attention

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