



ماعت للسلام والتنمية وحقوق الإنسان
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Human rights situation in Qatar

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Submitted by: Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights (Egypt) (consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council)

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Preface

Maat for Peace, development and Human Rights (Egypt) presents this report to illustrate the most important observations on the human rights situation in the State of Qatar. This is in the context of Maat's interest of promoting respect for human rights in the Arab region. Hence, this report is based on a methodology based on the follow-up to the international obligations of the State of Qatar under its ratification of a number of international instruments for the protection of human rights.

Maat analyzed the documents and the results of Qatar's submission to the UPR at its second session in April 2014. It also collected and callified the available information about the human rights situation in Qatar. Furthermor, Maat communicated with a number of activists, actors, and local stakeholders for the preparation of this report.

International conventions

Qatar has not yet ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Moreover, Qatar has not ratified the First and Second Optional Protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as well as the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In addition, it has not yet ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

المنظمة حاصلة على المركز الاستشاري الخاص في المجلس الاقتصادي والاجتماعي منذ 2016

Organization in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 2016

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Although Qatar ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2009, it still reserved articles 2 (a), 9, 15, 16, 29. With regard to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, of which Qatar ratified in 2000, it has also made reservations to articles 1, 16. In addition to its reservation to articles 2 and 14 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified in 1995.

Supporting terrorist groups

Qatar is a first-class supporter of terrorism, whereas the Qatari system is providing supplies, training and other forms of support to non-state terrorist organizations. One of the largest forms of support provided by Qatar to terrorist groups is the provision of safe havens and financing. Qatar is also considered a home for many internationally wanted terrorists. In Libya, the Qatari regime has supported terrorist groups with money and weapons. Whereas, the approximate estimations indicated that Qatar has provided about €750 million to these terrorist groups, of which includes the Fighting Libyan group, and the outlawed Ansar al-Sharia group. Along with, the Shura Council of the revolutionaries of Benghazi, the Shura Council of the Mujahideen of Derna, and the Benghazi defense brigades¹.

Doha's support for these groups and militias was not only in terms of weapons and money, but also extended to the dispatch of mercenaries who were accompanying the leader of the Fighting Libyan group and the chairman of the military council in Tripoli "Abdul Hakim Belhadj". Of which took place, during the overthrow of the Qadhafi regime, until "Abdul Hakim Belhaj" entered Bab Al-Azizia under the cover of NATO planes.² A video of "Belhadj ", a member of al-Qaeda in Libya, has been leaked on the International information Network and some satellite channels, speaking of a Qatari delegation consisting of 30 intelligence officers who assisted him during the events. That, thereof confirms the full cooperation between Qatar and al-Qaeda in Libya. In the video, Belhadj talks with a number of individuals about the role of the Qatari delegation in managing operations on Libya's territory and asks them to submit their demands to the delegation for immediate response.³

Also, the Qatari support for the financing of terrorism in Libya has extended to a number of political and religious figures at home, with the aim of spreading terror and violence, such as Ali al-Salabi and Abdelbasset Guila, who are known as members of the terrorist group of the Muslim Brotherhood. Qatar also controlled the Dar Al-Ifta, headed by Grand Mufti ousted leader Sadek Al El-ghariani" who is known for inciting against the Libyan national army. Although the international community's arms embargo on Libya, Qatar has continued to arm extremist groups, such as the "Dawn of Libya" forces stationed in Misrata, where it has sent a large number of mercenaries to fight alongside. In 2015, a French media investigation revealed that Qatar, together with Turkey, was paying pilots to fight in the forces of the "dawn of Libya".⁴

Qatar's financial, military and media support to extremist and terrorist militias in Libya has not only sabotaged Libya, but has also used dismantled and militia-controlled Libya to fuel terrorism in Syria.

¹ See: <https://goo.gl/tMkmbh>

² See: <https://goo.gl/vsH1i4>

³ See: <https://goo.gl/A2aJcB>

⁴See <https://www.menadefense.net/2015/12/09/qui-est-le-contractor-blanc-qui-pilote-des-mirages-en-libye/>

Libya has become a transit point for money, arms and mercenary fighters to Syria with country-based support and funding through Turkey. Whereas, Qatar was able to establish a "Brigade of the nation" in the Syrian province of Idlib by its men in Libya, Abdelhakim Belhadj, and Mahdi al-Haarti. Al-Haarti appeared in a video, giving the fighters of the "Nation Brigade" new SUVs as a gift, topped by al-Qaeda flags. Belhadj and Al-Haarti, through Qatari support, have been able to lure hundreds of terrorists to move from Libya to Syria to fight there.⁵

Qatar has contributed to the escalation of the conflict from the beginning and throughout the Syrian crisis by supporting and arming terrorist groups, especially Ahrar al-Sham, which is close to al-Qaeda, and most of its fighters with the "Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist". Qatari Foreign Minister Khaled al-Attiyah then praised Ahrar al-Sham, saying: "It is a pure Syrian group".⁶ Security experts were quoted by the British newspaper "Telegraph" that Ahrar al-Sham has transformed Syria's uprising against Assad into an "Islamist" uprising. Whereas, the organization "Ahrar al-Sham" fought alongside al-Qaeda affiliate "Jabhat al-Nusra" during the Battle of Aleppo. Instead of fighting "Ahrar al-Sham" against ISIS, the organization of "Ahrar al-Sham" helped the hardliners control the city of Raqqa, which was declared by "ISIS" as the capital of their country.

Advocacy of hate speech

Qatari media, especially "Aljazeera" channel, play a role in favor of certain countries and organizations to spread inciting speech. The most dangerous role played by Al-Jazeera channel is to provide information material aimed at attracting sympathy for terrorists, and spreading extremist ideas to terrorists, whether through its programmes, or hosting a list of terrorists, and providing them with a safe haven by giving them long broadcast hours on their screen, to spread their ideas that incite hatred and violence. During the past period, the Qatari network hosted "Abu Mohammed Joulani" Leader of the organization "Jabhat al-Nusra", affiliated to al-Qaida. Furthermore, in 2013, Al-Jazeera aired an audio recording of al-Qaeda's new leader, Ayman al-Zawahiri, of which included continuing work under ISIS ruling, as well as a number of directives to the terrorist leader, "Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi" and "Abu Muhammad Joulani", the leader of Jabhat al-Nusra, in which he called on them to cooperate and to abandon their disagreement⁷.

In the same vein, the channel "Aljazeera" hosted one of the most prominent defenders of the terrorist organization ISIS, namely, "Hussein Mohammed Hussein" in a debate in a talk show called "Al-Itjah Almoa'kes" with a Kurdish writer called "Shirzad al Yazidi". The presenter's strong bias to "Hussein Mohammed Hussein" was obvious to viewers of the program, in accordance with the channel's policy of attacking the Kurds. According to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), the presenter of the program "Faisal Al Qassim" deliberately shows ISIS in a way that is far different from reality and represented the organization as that, of which implements the desires of the people in the region, not the hostile to them. The Qatari channel also hosted Tariq al-Zomor and Aboud al-Zumar despite their involvement in many acts of violence, including their participation in the assassination of the late President Anwar Sadat. In addition, Tariq al-Zomor is one of the most prominent leaders of the extremist

⁵ See :<https://goo.gl/uC3Jh1>

⁶ See: <https://arabic.cnn.com/middleeast/2015/10/20/me-201015-qatari-fm-intv-0>

⁷ See: <http://www.vetogate.com/1652806>

organization "Jihad".⁸ Al Jazeera broadcasted a video during its communication with a terrorist in Syria, where he was celebrating trapping a car, and bombing it in front of an institution in Syria.⁹

Al Jazeera also refuses to name ISIS as terrorist, along with other terrorist movements such as Jabhat al-Nusra and al-Qaeda. When Al-Jazeera mentions ISIS, it says the Islamic State organization instead of the word ISIS, while refrain even from mentioning the word terrorist, and they use that term in an attempt to legitimize ISIS's terrorist organization to the Arab viewer and reader.

Migrant workers

The Qatari government continues not to abide by its international commitments to protect and preserve workers' rights. Where the situation of foreign workers continued as in terms of violations, discrimination, and abuse. One such violation is the failure to pay the salaries of more than 1,000 expatriate workers for at least three months. These workers, mostly from India, Nepal, and Pakistan, live on donations and without a basic supply of water and electricity.¹⁰ Despite the promulgation of Act No. 21 of 2015, which included minor improvements, such as the repeal of the provision prohibiting a foreign worker who leaves Qatar to return before the expiry of two years. Nevertheless, the new law has retained fundamental elements of the old law that facilitate gross violations of human rights, including forced labor. Where the worker must obtain permission to leave the country. It also authorizes the employer to prevent the worker from moving to another job for up to five years, as well as to keep his passport. Of which, legally establishes the idea of labor exploitation by business owners.

Torture

Despite Qatar's accession to the International Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or punishment, Qatari authorities continue to be accused of torture and ill-treatment committed by law enforcement, security personnel, and prisons. Law No. 17 of 2002 on the Protection of society, as well as Law No. 3 of 2004, on combating Terrorism, and Act No. 5 of 2003 on the establishment of the state security apparatus. These laws are used to detain individuals for long periods without charge or trial, without basic safeguards, including access to a lawyer, an independent doctor, notification of a family member, or an objection to the lawfulness of their detention before a judge.

Under these laws, individuals are often subjected to solitary confinement or isolation, along with the use of torture methods involving beatings and electrocution. As what happened with the Filipino citizen "Ronaldo López olep" who, on 2 May 2016, the Court of Cassation in Qatar, upheld sentencing him to 15 years' imprisonment. On charges of espionage, and his allegations of torture were not investigated¹¹.

Torture by law enforcement and security personnel in Qatari prisons may amount to a crime against humanity. Where the Qatari authorities use violent and intimidating methods within their prisons to

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See: <https://bit.ly/2xr446e>

¹⁰ See :<https://bit.ly/2vYxTap>

¹¹ See: <https://www.amnesty.org/ar/documents/mde22/3977/2016/ar/>

silence dissent. Which also happened with the 55-year-old citizen "Abdallah Boumatar", who was arrested and tortured by Qatari authorities for objecting to the emirate's policy.¹²

Discrimination against Women

Women continued to face discrimination in law and in actual reality. Personal status laws continued to discriminate against women with regard to marriage, divorce, inheritance, custody of children, nationality and freedom of movement. Moreover, women remained vulnerable to abuse within the family as a result of the lack of a specific law criminalizing domestic violence.

Freedom of opinion, expression and association

The authorities continued to restrict the right to freedom of expression, and the right to establish association, or join it. The authorities did not allow the existence of independent political parties, nor did they allow the formation of labor associations except for Qatari nationals in the event of strict standards. Laws criminalizing the expression considered by the authorities to be offensive to the Prince of the country have also continued to operate. In January 2018, the government imposed a ban on travel, arbitrary arrest, and compulsory residence on Najib al-Nuaimi, a human rights lawyer and former Qatari minister of Justice, for his political opinions.¹³

Recommendations

- Qatar's accession to the remaining international instruments that it has not yet ratified, and the harmonization of national legislation and policies with the Constitution and the International Covenants to which the State is committed.
- Pressure on the Qatari regime to stop its support for terrorist organizations and entities, and to end interference in the internal affairs of States, which has led to the spread of chaos and terror in the region.
- The need to prevent the Qatari government from using its media platforms to incite violence and hatred, and to host terrorists.
- Work to improve the situation of migrant workers and abolish the restrictions imposed on them .

¹² see: <https://goo.gl/UFpeYk>

¹³ See: <https://bit.ly/2MCbgji>