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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

## **Written statement\* submitted by Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights Association, a non- governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[03 June 2019]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



## **The migrant and refugee workers' rights violations**

### **Preamble**

Maat for Peace, Development and Human Rights (Egypt) strongly condemns the Qatari and Turkish violations against migrant and refugee workers' rights which form a great violation of human right and the international human law; Whereas migrant workers live in Qatar under an exclusion and isolation system that violate human rights, also they are forced to work for 14 hours a day under high temperature reaches 52 degrees Celsius.

The Qatari authorities practice all the slavery ways on them, in addition they are racially discriminated, exploited and abused by employers. They house in unsuitable for human habitation camps crowded with human beings in desert. 1800 of migrant workers have died in the structures of World Cup 2020 since 2014 and it is expected to increase to 7000 by the beginning of World Cup 2020.

Refugees in Turkey suffer from the lack of the adequate means of earning a living, having a housing, health care and education for their children. In addition, forced deportation to many refugees and asylum seekers. Whereas Turkey ignores refugee law forcing thousands refugees to face the scourge of war.

### **Deaths among migrant workers in Qatar**

Qatari violations are continued against the foreign workers. whereas workers are forced to work from 10 to 14 hours a day mostly under high temperature reaches 50 degrees Celsius in summer. Also, they work between 11:30 am and 3pm which is the same time that has been determined to be a raest time from June 15 to August 21; As it is hottest time in year. So that, it is considered a great violation of the international human law.

Qatari officials, in August 2018, stated that a nepalese worker has died while performing his work at the site of Education City Stadium project and another worker died at the same site in October 2016 after being hit by a truck. 1800 of workers in Qatar have died since 2014 and it is expected to increase to 7000 by the beginning of World Cup 2020.

### **Working under cruel conditions**

There are almost 2 millions of migrant man and women workers in Qatar constituting almost 95% of its total workforce. 40% work in the construction sector facing may violations; Whereas they work in inhumane conditions, usually they works under the heat of hot sun in return of no more than 6 USD a day and house in unsuitable for human habitation camps crowded with human beings in desert that do not enjoy any suitable or healthy living conditions where there are no water or electricity and many workers have caught diseases.

Qatar Sponsorship System "Kafala System" continues to restrict workers to employers for up to five years exposing them to forced labor danger and restrictions on their movement, also workers can not transfer to another job unless they have a permit from their employer. In case of work fleeing, workers become criminalized and their passports, sometimes, are confiscated. In addition, domestic workers are still being asked to get an "exit permit" to leave the country. A poor law relates to domestic workers was made in 2017, which means that violotions could be committed against domestic workers by employers.<sup>4</sup> According to the Qatari law, a sponsor may confine a worker for a period of renewable 30 days, also workers have not the right to report the authorities or transfer to another job in case of harm. And workers

## Testimonies of some affected cases by the Qatari labour system

Maat presents some of affected persons by such violations. For instance, Napien who is a worker such as hundreds of workers building Msheireb city to be a tourist city that has hotels, luxury dwellings and a Wall Street-style, in New York, financial street within a project estimated by about 5.5 billion USD. The Nepalese worker supposedly get 100 QAR monthly (300 USD), but he said that he has been forced to spend much less than that amount in one of the most expensive countries. Also Napien said “I have been promised to get 1100 QAR before leaving my home country, but I did not get my salary of the past two months”. The Neples worker, who has prefered to not mentioned his true name to avoid any ham, he is not capable of feeding himself.

Somon, a 24-year-old Bengali carpenter, said that the company he works at has refused to issue a residence card to him which facilitates his daily life, whereas it gives the right to open a bank account or to buy a SIM card. Also he said “I have sent seven thousand Riyals to issue my residence card, but the company has not done its obligation. However I had told them that I need it to travel, they have not issued it to me”. He also has mentioned that he filed a complaint to the court, but he is still waiting for the decision since filing the complaint 1 year ago. Some workers said that they face police harassment, and sometimes workers without residence card are asked to pay some money by policemen.

## The Syrian refugees are exposed to forced labor and harassment

In Turkey, the Syrian refugees are facing an illegal exploitation and all their basic rights are ignored such as: annual leave, weekend, overtime, end of service benefits and bonuses. The average of a Syrian worker’s wage is estimated to be half of a Turkish worker’s wage, in addition to late payment of wages or they are not paid at all. the condition of refugee women workers is the worst; Whereas those who have not been registered, are exposed to harm, unsafe labour conditions and all kinds of exploitations, also they feel that they can not report any case of exploitation or sexual harassment to any oficila authority due to illegal labour. Furthermore, they are, opposite to labor laws, forced to work before and after giving birth, also some of employers keep the passports of refugee women workers.<sup>1</sup>

According to Ministry of Interior, there are 1.55 Syrian refugee children under 18 working for 2 to 4 USD a day and most of them are exposed to violation and exploitation. In addition, unprotected and orphan refugee children are exposed to regular violence by employers. The small and medium sized companies prefer to hire refugees in labor-intensive jobs; Because of the capability of operation, low wages and termination as per companies’ desire. An owner of a tire company in Ankara, as a part of a related testimony, said “they never mind working excessively, whereas they work till 7 pm or 8 pm and they do not claim any demands such as vacation days, they say “it is enough that we have a work”. I have hired three refugees for a wage of one turkish worker. We get benefits of them and they get the benefit of earning a living”.

## Forced deportation

According to press reports, the Turkish Police has intensified the checkpoints in the past time and arrested large numbers of refugees who do not have documents or permits to travel outside the city the have been registered in, which disable the opportunity of legal working or even visit hospitals and they are expected to be detained at anytime. The reports states, according to the testimony of many Syrians, that a lot of Syrians have been taken to “Ozali” as it is a presone. The figures of Ministry of Interior of Turkey show that, 50,000 Syrians have been arrested as “illegal refugees”. However a detainee has the right to ask for legal help, they have not; Because the are under administrative detention, so that lawyers

<sup>1</sup> Ekrem Onaran, Labour is cheap, refugee labour is dirt cheap in Turkey, Ahvalnews, 9Sep2018, To Read more: <http://cutt.us/qYZSW>.

can only appeal to transfer the case to an open court. Furthermore, an accused may not be capable of bearing a lawyer's charge, thus they voluntarily give up the case and sign a voluntary departure form. UNHCR spokeswoman said "The United Nations agency knows that there are more than 100 detainees in Ozaly who were supposed to be forcibly deported".<sup>2</sup>

The Turkish judiciary interfaces in the refugees cases when the danger of "forced deportation" is there, but once a deportation order is issued by Directorate of Immigration then it is determined. And the authorities of Turkey claim that 250,000 of Syrians have voluntarily returned to their country. The UNHCR states that its officers have observed only 19,311 of Syrian refugees and submitted the applications for asylum to the Turkish authorities.<sup>3</sup> even if a Syrian refugee has all required documents of residency, it does not guarantee to be protected of detention. Maat presents the case of a 24-year-old Syrian lawyer named Samer Tlass who was working legally in a Syrian non-governmental organization located in Gaziantep, Turkey till June 2017, but suddenly he has been detained in Ozali Center by the Turkish police and has told him, and other Syrians, that they will be deported unless they sign a voluntary departure form, but Tlass has refused to do and has been detained for 45 days, then he has received a deportation order; Because of working without a work permit.

## Recommendations

The need to intensify the international efforts to ensure the rights of foreigner, migrants and refugee workers in Qatar and Turkey.

Open an independent international investigation into the causes of death among migrant workers in Qatar.

Urging Qatari authorities by Parties and relevant international bodies to make drastic and effective amendments to the Law of Labor and the Qatari Sponsorship System.

The need to register Syrian refugees to work legally in Turkey, and to pressure Turkey to ensure that refugees enjoy all their human rights.

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<sup>2</sup> الباب المفتوح "تركيا المتفاخرة بسياسة 24 أكتوبر 2018، 16، <http://cutt.us/tTsiR>. تُعيد اللاجئين قسرياً إلى إدلب، موقع ..

<sup>3</sup> ترحيل اللاجئين السوريين من تركيا باتجاه مناطق الحرب، موقع الحل، 20 أكتوبر 2018 <http://cutt.us/3JhEq>.