



General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 June 2022

English only

Human Rights Council

Fiftieth session

13 June–8 July 2022

Agenda item 3

**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.

[22 May 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



Human Rights Situation in Qatar

First: Women's Political and General Participation

Qatari women have the right to run and vote according to the constitution and election laws (1). However, no woman won the legislative elections whose results were announced on October 3, 2021(2). Women were not sufficiently represented in the Shura Council, while the Emir of the State of Qatar appointed only two women out of 15 members. He has the right to appoint them according to Emiri Resolution No. 56 of 2021 (3). This very small presence contradicts Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified by the State of Qatar. General Recommendation No. 23 of CEDAW, which recommended the inclusion of quotas for women as effective measures ensure their political participation(4).

At the level of ministerial representation, women in Qatar represented only three ministerial portfolios out of 21 ministerial portfolios included in the formation of the Council of Ministers in October 2021. Which constitutes about 14.3 of the total cabinet formations to make Qatar one of the least represented countries for women at the ministerial level internationally and regionally(5).

Despite Qatar's pledge in its national report to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action to allocate a quota for women to promote women's political participation (6). Such participation remains very low, which also undermines the achievement of SDG 5, which aims to ensure women's equal participation at all levels of decision-making in political and public life. Despite the general orientation of women's empowerment in Qatar. She remained little represented in the judiciary, accounting for only 6% of the total number of judges, while at the same time being excluded from access to security posts and decision-making institutions in the State of Qatar (7).

Second: Human Rights Defenders

Qatar has not provided an environment conducive to the work of human rights defenders, particularly women's rights defenders, and women who have claimed their rights have exercised their work in an atmosphere of intimidation and terrorism contrary to the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. In mid-December 2021, reports shared with Maat claimed that (N. al-M.), a 23-year-old human rights defender, was killed upon her return to Qatar from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland(8). A few weeks later the latter appeared in a video broadcast on Twitter to confirm that she was alive(9).

After being subjected to forced arrest, (N. al-M.) was criticized on return of the human rights situation in Qatar and the restrictions imposed on women(10). On October 13, 2021, she wrote on social media that she was in danger. Then she stopped writing anything on social media before she came back to write, allegedly driven by pressure from Qatar's Ministry of Interior. The Qatari government did not respond to the allegations of forced detention of N. al-M., and the latter travelled to Britain seeking asylum after using her father's government application "Mettrash" without his knowledge, granted herself a travel permit to leave Qatar. In September she returned to Qatar after being promised by the Qatari government that she would be protected and not prosecuted, apparently the promises weren't real.

Third: Undermining lawyers' independence

Qatar's legislative environment has been replete with numerous guarantees of the free and independent exercise of the legal profession. According to article 2 of Act No. 23 of 2006. "The legal profession is a free profession that aims to achieve justice, lawyers enjoy the rights and guarantees provided for by law and comply with the duties imposed on them." In spite of the aforementioned constitutional guarantees, there has been a range of arbitrary practices against lawyers in Qatar in practice. For example, lawyers have been subjected to arbitrary

detention, enforced disappearance and unfair and politicized judicial decisions. Among these lawyers are (H. A. S. Al-M.) and his brother, the lawyer (R. A. S. Al-M.), who were arrested by the Criminal Security Agency in Qatar(11).

Before the criminal court in Qatar sentenced them on May 10, 2022 to life imprisonment on charges related to spreading false, misleading and malicious news at home and abroad, with the intent of harming national interests, stirring public opinion and compromising the social order of the state. Gathering for the purpose of disturbing public security and publishing what would offend the ruling authority in the state(12). Maat has seen reports confirming that the lawyers' trial did not meet the minimum standards for a fair and equitable trial contained in Articles No. 9.14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (13). Maat has seen reports confirming that the lawyers' trial did not meet the minimum standards for a fair and equitable trial contained in Articles No. 9.14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The (Al M.) brothers were arrested in Qatar's Court of Cassation in the State of Qatar, (H. A. S. Al-M.), and the poet and lawyer (R. A. S. Al-M.), who are members of the Qatar Bar Association's rolls, on August 10 and 11, respectively, for their legitimate objection to the deprivation of a huge number of women's rights. Residents of the State of Qatar are prevented from running in or voting in legislative elections, or both, as a result of unfair nationality laws (14) that frame discrimination on the basis of national origin in contravention of Article 2 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 1 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. During their detention, the two defendants were deprived of their right to an adequate defence, as they were not allowed to communicate with a lawyer, in contravention of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, and had contact with their family only a few times, and their family was unaware of their place of detention. This contradicts the United Nations body of principles relating to the protection of all persons under any form of detention or imprisonment. There were also reports of their being held in solitary confinement for more than 30 days, in contravention of Rules 44 and 45 of the United Nations Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners "the Nelson Mandela Rules". These are the rules that the State of Qatar has committed to circulating in all Qatari prisons.

While lawyers and former Minister of Justice (N. M. Al-N.), who voluntarily defended prisoners of conscience in Qatar and whose funds were confiscated by the Qatari Public Prosecution, are still prohibited from returning to Qatar. Where he lives abroad in an environment surrounded by intimidation and terrorism. He receives death threats from persons affiliated with Qatar's ruling family. Notwithstanding an order from a country court, the travel ban was lifted due to the lack of justification for the ban. Qatari executive authorities continue to prevent (N. M. Al-N.) from returning to Qatar in arbitrary executive action without any legal basis, indicating that this decision was punishable for his political positions in clear violation of his right to freedom of opinion and expression or to exercise his work as a human rights defender.

Qatar's executive authority has also made interventions that undermine the independence of lawyers. Maat noted the intervention of the Fatwa and Contracts Department in the Qatari Ministry of Justice. In disciplinary proceedings against lawyers and their removal from lawyers' schedules, where they receive and investigate complaints against lawyers and if misconduct is established, the lawyer can be expelled. This is a procedure within the competence of the Bar Association rather than the Ministry of Justice, while lawyers in Qatar found obstacles in accessing information during the investigation phase of criminal cases and did not have access to documents held by the Qatari authorities.

Recommendations:

- Allocating quotas for Qatari women in the Shura Council and their adequate representation in decision-making institutions and in the judiciary;
- Repealing unfair sentences against lawyers (H. and R. A. S. al-M.) and allow them to carry out their work without intimidation or intimidation;

- Ending the house arrest of women's rights defender (N. Al-M.) and allow her to express her views without restrictions
- Abolishing the confiscation of lawyer (N. M. Al-N.)'s funds and open an investigation into the threats he continues to receive in his current place;
- Stopping arbitrary interventions by the executive branch and specifically the Ministry of Justice in the work of lawyers in a manner that does not undermine their independence.

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1. <https://bit.ly/3wnKT8L>
 2. <https://bit.ly/38ogX4u> P.173
 3. <https://bit.ly/39eOrm2>
 4. <https://bit.ly/3sv7cIm>
 5. <https://bit.ly/3yxmdgF>
 6. <https://bit.ly/3suOWz6> P.16
 7. <https://bit.ly/38hphmF> p.128
 8. <https://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/2903>
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 11. <https://www.gc4hr.org/news/view/2998>
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 14. <https://bit.ly/3FE2M7r>