

National Human Rights Committee of Qatar (NHRC)



Report on the Committee's Activities from 7/2010 to 7/2011

Challenges and Opportunities

NHRC in Brief:

NHRC was established in 2002 to be a legal institution aiming at human rights protection and enhancement to every individual under the legal commitment of the State of Qatar.

NHRC has specialties related to observation, documentation and issuance of annual reports that are published on the committee's web site including the committee's recommendations.

During the observation of human rights situations, the committee takes into account all the criteria provided for in the international conventions including those that the State of Qatar has joined and those it has not.

Furthermore, **NHRC** plays an important role in spreading the conceptions and principles of human rights in the Qatari community. **NHRC** holds annually tens of conferences, workshops, seminars and training courses targeting several segments of community including housewives, low wage workers, employees and professionals, and governmental agencies including police officers, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Labor's employees as well as judges, employers and managers of companies. The committee managed to publish its educational printed matters in several languages due to the existence of a mixture of multi nationalities in the Qatari community and other groups.

NHRC pays regular visits to the detainment places in Qatar, workers residence, places of employment and the institutions that care with disabled, old aged, orphans and hospitals particularly psychiatric health hospital to become aware of the situations of those groups and to show the officials in charge of those institutions that the **NHRC** is concerned with monitoring their activities for public welfare and with including all that in its reports.

QNHRC Activities from 7/2010 to 7/2011

Challenges and Opportunities

In addition to the tasks that **NHRC** routinely undertakes, it gives special attention to specific issues which it prioritizes. These concerns are summed up in three main issues, during the last twelve months:

- 1- Women's Rights
- 2- Political Rights (Voting and running for elections).
- 3- Continues to support Workers' Rights

1- Women Rights

Challenges and opportunities

Despite the great improvement of the women's situations and providing equality in several legislations and opening the way to enter the labor fields, undertake public life affairs, **NHRC** has witnessed several cases of women still suffering from distinction in society which impedes completion of their development. Thus, **NHRC** has observed the following:

- Gaps in the Family Qatari Act which are exploited to inflict damages on women.
- Nationality Act doesn't grant nationality to the Qatari women children's.
- Violence against women when they still hesitate to resort to the institution that may provide protection.
- Operating Qatari females are more educated than their male counterparts but their shares of leadership positions are less.
- Some individuals and institutions undertake distinction practices against women in labor.
- Labor Act does not include a provision that governs harassment at employment place.
- Female domestic workers many of whom are subject to violence and harassment cases.

NHRC activity

- Joint Action Project Inaugurated by NHRC and the OHCHR

(I) The **NHRC** places the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination at the top of its priorities. The **NHRC** spares no effort to disseminate public awareness of the said convention and to monitor its implementation. Therefore, an agreement has been recently concluded concerning a joint project in cooperation with the UN Human Rights Training and Documentation Center for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, aiming at the dissemination

of counter discrimination culture in the State of Qatar. The said project shall be carried out on a number of stages as follows:

- Conducting a questionnaire on the rights of women to survey a sample of 1000 persons.
- Data from the questionnaire will be analyzed and the results thereof will be announced.
- Training courses and workshops will be specially designed to be conducted in Qatar on the elimination of discrimination against women according to the requirements of the country.

It is worth mentioning that the Committee had participated in a team work with the government to prepare the national report on the Convention of prevention discrimination against women. Also the Committee participated in a team work with the government to prepare a draft of Human trafficking law,

The Commission held the second meeting with (the working group on women's rights and gender equality), with the Euro-Arab dialogue, the meeting discussed the strengthening of the role of national institutions at gender equality

2- Political Rights (Voting and running for election).

The Committee noted weakness of the election of women and reliance on direct recruitment to access to the public position.

Thus the commission adopted this issue with a program; it has played a vital role in raising awareness on the concept of "public work", and encouraged the participation to the political process of Voting and Nomination.

NHRC activity

Many courses, seminars and workshops, and media campaigns were held and focused on the role of women and persons with disabilities in public work.

3- Continue to support Workers Rights

The State of Qatar attracts workers to immigrate thereto as a state rich of oil and natural gas and this has led to the multiplication of residence triple times during the last ten years. According to the last official census of 2010, the percentage of foreign workers and their families in the State of Qatar amounts 85% of population.

Qatar has joined the Protocol of Prevention, Suppression and Punishment for Human Trafficking particularly women and children, which is supplementary to the UN Convention for fighting transnational organized crime.

NHRC continued to undertake the protection of workers' rights through observation of the violations to which they are subject and highlights their problems, especially construction worker, low wage and domestic workers, the commission received from the government a draft of a new law for domestic workers, it is now on a process of approval, it will be the first kind of law in the Middle East.

NHRC activity

-In 2009, a manual was prepared and printed on the workers' rights and duties called "**Worker's Rights Book**" which includes introduction of the worker's rights and duties in view of Labor Act N014 of 2004 and the laws governing the foreigners' entry and residence in a simplified manner that includes answers for most of the common inquiries about labor and residence in nine languages: English, Urdu, Indonesian, Philippines, Persian, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. Many editions have been sent to governmental agencies and embassies in addition to editions to the labor exporting countries including governments and NGOs.

- During the last twelve months two training courses have been held under the name of "Training of trainers" for the Egyptian, Srilankan communities. The idea of such courses depends on meeting the cultivated class of foreign communities (engineers, lawyers, physicians and journalists concerned with human rights) and then acquainting them with the legal framework of labor and residence as well as workers rights in the State of Qatar and training them on how to tackle the dilemmas labor force faces and then asking every attendant of the course to train other workers who speak only their local language.

NHRC continues visits comprising workers residence and places of employment in order to observe their situations .

- **For farther information, www.nhrc-qa.org**