



Labour factsheet

| TOP | <p>Qatar leads the region on labour rights and has taken immediate action to protect workers during the current health crisis.</p> | | |
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| KEY MESSAGES | <p>A fair employment system in line with international standards</p> | <p>Safeguarding the health and wellbeing of all workers during the health crisis</p> | <p>Protecting workers through strict enforcement</p> |
| SUPPORTING MESSAGES | <p>Qatar values the indispensable role of workers in our economy and society – and is committed to a fair and effective labour system which protects all who work in our country.</p> <p>It is the beginning of a new era for Qatar’s labour market – we have abolished exit visas, introduced a non-discriminatory minimum wage and removed the No-Objection Certificate requirement to terminate contracts.</p> <p>Qatar is proud to be leading the region on labour standards. Our advancements are comprehensive, genuine and long-lasting – and we are committed to further progress.</p> | <p>The State of Qatar has taken wide-ranging action to protect over 1.5 million workers in our country including providing high-quality, free testing and healthcare.</p> <p>Protection for workers, and their rights, remains paramount. The government continues to facilitate the distribution of masks, sanitiser and other important materials to keep workers safe during the pandemic.</p> | <p>Qatar has a zero-tolerance approach to enforcing our labour laws and we are committed to holding unscrupulous employers to account.</p> <p>Through major awareness campaigns, we are making sure workers understand their rights and the help available to enforce them.</p> |
| FACTS | <p>September 2020 reforms: non-discriminatory minimum wage and the removal of the No-Objection Certificate requirement</p> <p>January 2020 reforms: removed exit permits for workers (only exceptions: members of the armed forces; 5% of an employer’s workforce in special circumstances)</p> <p>Reforms praised by human rights NGOs, the International Trade Union Confederation and the ILO</p> | <p>Increase of work site checks and daily monitoring of companies through the Wage Protection System (WPS)</p> <p>National multimedia campaign targeting expatriates and their employers to spread awareness of COVID-19 and the government’s preventive measures</p> <p>The government has guaranteed that migrant workers who are in quarantine or undergoing treatment will receive full salaries</p> | <p>Increased penalties for non-payment of wages with maximum prison sentence of one year, and a maximum fine of QAR 10,000</p> <p>Labour Dispute Settlement Committees to improve workers’ access to justice</p> <p>Strengthening the capacity of inspectors to investigate accommodation and working conditions, and crackdown on violators</p> |



Supporting facts and details

A fair employment system in line with international standards

- Qatar has undertaken comprehensive reforms to its labour market to benefit employees and employers alike. Current laws include:
 - **Minimum wage of QAR 1,000 (September 2020):** A new minimum wage of QAR 1,000 per month will apply to all employees across all sectors in Qatar, including domestic workers. In the event that the employer does not provide adequate accommodation or food for the worker or the employee, the minimum accommodation allowance shall be 500 Riyals, and the minimum for the food allowance shall be 300 Riyals. The new minimum wage comes into force in March 2021.
 - The minimum wage was decided following extensive consultations with a specialised national committee composed of relevant authorities in Qatar.
 - The Minimum Wage Committee was also established and tasked with periodically reviewing the impact and application of the minimum wage of workers and domestic workers.
 - The non-discriminatory minimum wage is the first law of its kind in the region.
 - **The removal of No-Objection Certificates (September 2020):** Qatar has removed the No-Objection Certificate requirement with immediate effect, allowing employees in Qatar to terminate their contract once they have provided at least one month's written notice if they have worked with the employer for two years or less, or two months' notice if they have worked with the employer for over two years.
 - **Full removal of exit permits for expatriates (2018-2020):** Exit permits were removed in 2018 and expanded to include all workers in 2020. The only exceptions include members of the armed forces and a maximum of 5% of a company's workforce in special roles. The law states that expatriates have the right to leave the country temporarily, or to depart from the country permanently during the validity of the labour contract and without first obtaining permission from their employers.
 - The employer also has the right to submit a prior reasoned request to ADLSA including the names of those whom they deem necessary to obtain prior approval before leaving the country due to the nature of their work, provided that it does not exceed 5% of employees.
 - **Preventing passport confiscation:** Qatar has implemented strict measures to prevent passport confiscation, including fines of up to QAR 25,000.
 - **Restriction on summer working hours between 15th June and August (2007):** Work done under the sun or in open workplaces between 11:30 and 15:00 has been banned and morning working hours have been restricted to a maximum of five hours. The sanction against violating the summer working hours law is the closure of the work site for a period of up to a month through a ministerial decision. The closure period depends on the severity of the violation, while further legal action can also be taken.

Safeguarding the health and wellbeing of all workers during the health crisis

- The State of Qatar has implemented extensive measures to support the health and wellbeing of all expatriates in Qatar. Measures include:



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- **Accessible healthcare:** Individuals requiring medical consultations are seen by doctors and medical personnel when needed. Regular COVID-19 testing and monitoring is available for all citizens and residents in Qatar. Those testing positive receive immediate medical treatment in line with Qatar's national response plan.
 - Coronavirus testing is free for all Qatari residents and citizens, and anyone who tests positive immediately receives high-quality medical treatment at no cost.
- **Wage Protection:** The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (ADLSA) is working with companies to ensure the daily needs of workers are met, and wages are paid on schedule.
 - The government has guaranteed that migrant workers who are in quarantine or undergoing treatment will receive full salaries and has allocated QAR 5 billion (USD 1.37 billion) to pay the salaries of workers and rents of the employers, which can be accessed via banks.
 - Through the electronic Wage Protection System, the ADLSA is working 24/7 to monitor compliance and follow-up with companies found to be delaying payments.
 - Online exchange services to exchange and send money abroad without local fees have been made available.
- **Accessible Communication:** The government is conducting large-scale, multi-language efforts to educate citizens and residents about what they can do to prevent the spread of coronavirus, inform them of the government's response, and provide accurate and up to date information on the COVID-19 vaccine.
 - A series of roundtable discussions have been held with labour attachés and expatriate community leaders. The government asked the leaders to help raise awareness around health and safety measures, assist in monitoring the on-the-ground situation in their community, and alert officials to any concerns.
 - A national multimedia campaign has been launched via SMS, social media and radio targeting expatriates, including domestic workers and their employers to spread awareness of COVID-19, the government's preventive measures and the vaccine.
 - The ADLSA launched a 24/7 hotline service in several languages to receive workers' grievances.
 - Videos with infection control tips have been distributed in English, Hindi, Malayalam, Nepali, Urdu and Tagalog.
 - Interviews with medical officials on local Asian language radios stations have been conducted to further distribute accurate information.
 - Qatar has worked with companies to raise awareness for workers around preventive actions, including hygiene, sterilisation and cleaning of sites and buses, as well as controlled entry and exit to workplaces.
 - Qatar's 16000 hotline call centre can support in multiple languages to ensure everyone has access to accurate information.



Protecting workers through strict enforcement

- In April 2019, HE the Minister of Administrative Development Labour and Social Affairs signed a decree regulating the conditions and procedures for the election of worker representatives in **Joint Committees**.
 - In each facility employing 30 or more workers, a “joint committee” shall be formed, comprising representatives of the employer and workers.
 - All facility workers will elect their representatives to the Joint Committee, while the employer chooses his representatives on the committee from among his employees who legally represent him or to whom he delegates some of his management powers.
- In October 2018, the **Workers’ Support and Insurance Fund** was established with the aim of securing workers’ financial payments awarded by Labour Dispute Settlement Committees when a company becomes insolvent and is unable to pay workers.
- In 2017, Qatar introduced **Labour Dispute Settlement Committees** to improve workers’ access to justice. When a dispute arises, workers and employers first present the dispute to the ADLSA, which will take the necessary measures to resolve the issue amicably (within a period not exceeding seven days).
 - In June 2020, the ADLSA and the Supreme Judiciary Council (SJC) opened an office to facilitate the implementation of judgements made by Labour Dispute Settlement Committees against companies violating Qatar’s Labour Law No (14) of 2004. The office aims to speed up the registration of rulings and appeals and implementing judgements, which can include the seizure of property and assets electronically from companies in violation of the law.
 - Foreign workers can also submit their complaints online via the “Amerni” application. This procedure enables workers, who would not be able to go directly to the Ministry, to submit their complaints while ensuring that the confidentiality of those complaints is maintained.
- In November 2014, Qatar established a **Wage Protection System** for workers subject to the labour law to ensure wages are paid in full and on time. The system compels companies in Qatar to open bank accounts for employees and to transfer wages electronically without delay. Companies who are found in violation of the WPS are punished by imprisonment for a maximum period of one year and fined up to QAR 10,000. The fine for violators was recently increased from the previous amount of QAR 6,000.
- Qatar has so far established **Qatar Visa Centres (QVCs)** in six countries, creating a unified visa system that expedites the recruitment process and protects the rights of workers by eliminating exploitative practices in their home countries. QVCs have been opened in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and the Philippines.
 - The services provided by QVCs abroad to expatriate workers include biometric data capture, vital data registration, medical examinations and contract signing.
- Qatar is in regular contact with the world’s leading human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, to continuously improve our practices.

The 2022 FIFA World Cup™

- After winning the right to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) developed a set of Workers' Welfare Standards to keep workers safe and healthy.



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- All SC workers are protected by the **Workers' Welfare Standards** – a contractually binding document that ensures all individuals contributing to the delivery of SC projects are treated with dignity and respect, in accordance with universally accepted principles of human rights.
- These standards cover each worker's entire employment journey – from recruitment to repatriation – and are enforced by a robust, four-tier audit system that includes a third-party independent monitor, Impactt Ltd.
- The SC is dedicated to making the lives of workers better. Whether through training programmes to improve workplace skills, or awareness sessions to educate them about the importance of better diets, the SC oversees the entire journey of workers during their time on World Cup projects.
- The SC works with recognised partners both locally and internationally to deliver sustainable, long-term solutions for workers.
 - The SC works with experts such as BWI, Impactt Ltd, the ILO, Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar, Deloitte, PWC, TechNiche and ADLSA to ensure the health and safety of workers.
 - This demonstrates the SC's commitment to improve the lives of all workers involved in the 2022 FIFA World Cup™.
- The SC has delivered a range of health and safety measures, including medical checks, heat stress management systems, training and up-skilling to ensure workers stay safe.
 - Innovative, ground-breaking initiatives are used to enhance safety and leave a lasting legacy in Qatar and across the region.
 - The SC utilised its existing Workers' Welfare (WW) skill-set and infrastructure to tackle and contain COVID-19 through a series of pro-active measures. The SC continues to monitor the situation daily.
- The SC has taken the opportunity of the FIFA World Cup™ to tackle a complex, global issue such as the payment of illegal recruitment fees.
- The SC's WW mandate has evolved into a wider scope to include tournament-centric services associated with hosting a mega-event.
 - The SC has a responsibility to ensure the well-being of all workers involved in Host Country operations, including manpower and professional services in areas of security, accommodation, transport, and workforce management.
 - Almost 60 projects have been assessed to ensure a holistic approach to protecting workers linked to 2022.



Difficult questions

1. **According to the Qatar government's records, how many foreign nationals have died in Qatar between 2011 and 2020?**

The health and wellbeing of everyone living in Qatar is of the utmost importance to the government. Over the last two decades, we have transformed our healthcare system to meet the medical needs of our diverse population. All citizens and foreign nationals have access to free first-class healthcare, and we will continue to implement evidence-based policies to further improve the health of the population.

More than 1.4 million expatriates from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal currently live in Qatar. This includes men and women employed across a range of blue, white and pink-collar jobs, as well as children, students and senior residents. Millions more have lived in Qatar during the last 10 years and returned home.

Qatar takes the health and safety of its population very seriously. Unfortunately, of the millions of residents from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal who have lived in Qatar from 2011 to 2019, a small number have sadly passed away while in Qatar.

The mortality rate among these communities is within the expected range for the size and demographics of the population. However, every lost life is a tragedy, and no effort is spared in trying to prevent every death in our country.

Regarding workers specifically, during the past decade there has been a steady decline in the mortality rate due to the extensive health and safety reforms we have introduced to our labour system. We expect this downward trend to continue in the future.

2. **What measures has the Qatar government taken to reduce the number of deaths among foreign nationals, in particular so-called natural deaths?**

Qatar registers a natural cause of death in cases where a person has died from age, illness or disease as opposed to accidents or violence.

As part of all employment contracts, foreign nationals have access to free first-class healthcare. The scope of Qatar's health services has been expanded in recent years to support a wider range of medical conditions, and Qatar invests more per capita in healthcare than any other GCC country.

As part of the government's efforts to further reduce the mortality rate, Qatar has raised awareness of health risks such as smoking and an unhealthy diet, strengthened health and safety laws, launched mental health initiatives including a mental health hotline in multiple languages, imposed strict penalties for dangerous driving, and encouraged an active lifestyle.