

# NO EXTRA TIME:

HOW QATAR IS STILL FAILING ON WORKERS' RIGHTS AHEAD OF THE WORLD CUP



AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL



For over a year Qatar has been subjected to intense international scrutiny on workers' rights. The widespread exploitation of migrant workers in the country has been exposed through investigations by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Guardian, trade unions, and the United Nations, among others. The grim realities for migrant workers hired to construct infrastructure and provide services in one of the world's wealthiest countries were laid bare – and ultimately recognized by the Qatari government.

Qatar's hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup helped highlight the abuses, with the issue being discussed in the European parliament, FIFA executive committee meetings and International Labour Organization.

Since late 2013, the spotlight has been thrown onto the systems that facilitate and sustain abuses; most notably the sponsorship, or kafala, system that ties workers to their employers and puts them at risk of forced labour. The sponsorship system includes the notorious exit permit – a blatant human rights violation that can leave exploited migrants stranded and unable to leave the country – often for many months.

The pressure has been on Qatar's government and World Cup organizers – under fire already over corruption allegations – to show the world that the competition could be held without exploiting the hundreds of thousands of workers who would be needed to construct the infrastructure that will serve it.

## Qatar's reaction

In the face of this widespread criticism, Qatari officials have increasingly acknowledged the reality of abuses against migrant workers, and – crucially – that they need to address the issue.

In September 2014 the Emir said that he was “personally hurt about the situation”.<sup>1</sup> Qatari officials have made multiple promises of reform, and of tough measures against employers who break Qatari law and exploit workers.

These are undoubtedly welcome developments. However, recognising a problem is not the same as dealing with it. Close to four years since Qatar won the right to host the 2022 World Cup, it remains unclear whether the government is really prepared to take the decisive steps necessary to stop the dreadful abuse.

Time is running out fast. With the construction of World Cup stadiums, hotels and transportation systems underway, Qatar has little time to ensure that the tournament is not built on the back of labour exploitation and forced labour.

In May 2014, the government of Qatar promised limited reforms to the sponsorship system and the exit permit, among other things. In Amnesty International's view, a failure to implement serious reforms that ensure respect for workers' rights in the coming months, will call into question whether the Qatari authorities are serious about reform. The legacy of the FIFA 2022 World Cup would be the hundreds of thousands of workers who were exploited to make it happen. Amnesty International intends to reassess progress on reform in six months' time.

<sup>1</sup> Peter Kovessy, In *TV interview, Qatar Emir says poor labor conditions 'not acceptable'*, Doha News, 26 September 2014, available at <http://dohanews.co/tv-interview-qatar-emir-says-poor-labor-conditions-acceptable/> (accessed 20 October 2014)

<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International, *The Dark Side of Migration: Spotlight on Qatar's construction sector ahead of the World Cup* (MDE 22/010/2013)

<sup>3</sup> Amnesty International, *'My Sleep is my Break': Exploitation of migrant domestic workers in Qatar* (Index: MDE 22/004/2014)

<sup>4</sup> Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, François Crépeau, (A/HRC/26/35/Add.1)* 23 April 2014, available at [www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/SRMigrants/a-HRC-26-35-add1\\_en.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/SRMigrants/a-HRC-26-35-add1_en.pdf) (accessed 16 October 2014)

<sup>5</sup> *Human Rights Council, Comments by the Qatari Government on the report of the Special Rapporteur, (A/HRC/26/35/Add.2)*, 5 June 2014, available at [www.ohchr.org/en/Issues/Migration/SRMigrants/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/en/Issues/Migration/SRMigrants/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx) (accessed 24 October 2014)

<sup>6</sup> Chatham House, *Qatar's Foreign Policy*, 4 December 2013, available at [www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Meetings/Meeting%20Transcripts/041213QatarQA.pdf](http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Meetings/Meeting%20Transcripts/041213QatarQA.pdf) (accessed 24 October 2014)

<sup>7</sup> DLA Piper, *Migrant Labour in the Construction Sector in the State of Qatar*, April 2014, available at <http://www.engineersagainstopoverty.org/documentdownload.axd?documentresourceid=58> (accessed 24 October 2014)

<sup>8</sup> See for example [www.engineersagainstopoverty.org/documentdownload.axd?documentresourceid=58](http://www.engineersagainstopoverty.org/documentdownload.axd?documentresourceid=58) (accessed 24 October 2014)

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of the Interior, *Qatar announces wide-ranging labour market reforms*, 14 May 2014, available at [www.moi.gov.qa/site/english/news/2014/05/14/32204.html](http://www.moi.gov.qa/site/english/news/2014/05/14/32204.html) (accessed 16 October 2014)

<sup>10</sup> Shabina S. Khatri, Official: *Qatar's kafala amendments to be made by year-end or 2015*, Doha News, 25 August 2014, available at <http://dohanews.co/official-qatars-kafala-amendments-made-year-end-2015/> (accessed 16 October 2014)

# What Qatar was urged to do

Amnesty International made a series of detailed recommendations to the government in two reports published in November 2013<sup>2</sup> and April 2014<sup>3</sup> to address abuses against migrant workers, particularly in the construction and domestic work sectors. In April 2014, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants also published a detailed report after visiting Qatar and made 51 recommendations to the government.<sup>4</sup>

Both Amnesty International and the UN Special Rapporteur pushed for fundamental reform of the sponsorship system and the abolition of the exit permit, and called for wide-ranging changes to improve health and safety, access to justice and the recruitment process. Both urged the government to ensure freedom of association for migrant workers, and to guarantee legal protection for domestic workers, who are currently excluded even from the limited protections of the Labour Law.

The Qatari government welcomed “the objectivity, professionalism, transparency and non-selectivity”<sup>5</sup> of the UN Special Rapporteur’s findings, and the Foreign Minister said in December 2013 that Amnesty International’s report was “helpful”.<sup>6</sup>

In late 2013, in an unusual step, the government commissioned an international law firm, DLA Piper, to review the migrant labour issue. The firm interviewed government officials and the business community, and studied reports by human rights organizations and trade unions. In May 2014 DLA Piper handed the government its final report,<sup>7</sup> which includes more than 60 recommendations.

The report is highly critical of several aspects of Qatar’s laws and policies, including most notably the sponsorship system, which it says is “no longer the appropriate tool for the effective control of migration in Qatar.” But while the DLA Piper report makes a number of good recommendations regarding health and safety, access to justice, accommodation and recruitment, in some cases the recommendations do not go as far as the analysis of the problem would justify. In particular, DLA Piper’s report evades the really crucial issues of fundamental reform of the exit permit and sponsorship system and the right of workers to form or join trade unions.

The government has not published the DLA Piper report, nor made any public response to its content. However, the report is publically available<sup>8</sup> and the government announced proposed reforms soon after DLA Piper concluded its report.

## “Qatar abolishes kafala”? The reality

Six months ago, in May 2014, the Ministry of Interior announced at a press conference that it would “replace” the sponsorship system and the exit permit as part of a package of reforms.<sup>9</sup> The statement that Qatar would “abolish” the system was carried on news wires around the world.

However, on closer inspection, the steps announced could not in any sense be described as an “abolition” of the sponsorship system.

The proposed reform would not remove an employer’s ability to block a worker from moving to another job. It would instead limit this power to the duration of a worker’s contract, which could be as long as five years. This is at best a minor improvement on the current system.

And rather than cancelling the exit permit, the government proposed instead to issue permits to migrant workers 72 hours after they apply to leave the country; within this period, employers would still have the chance to object to the government and stop the worker leaving. It remains unclear on what grounds an employer could object, and how the worker could challenge this objection.

Any system that gives employers the right to object to someone leaving Qatar is inherently open to abuse. General restrictions on migrants’ ability to leave Qatar are a blatant breach of the right to freedom of movement.

The most significant reform proposed by the government in May was in fact the abolition of the “two year rule”, which currently prevents workers from coming back to Qatar for two years after they have ended a contract. The “two year rule” plays a significant role in creating the conditions for forced labour. Many migrant workers – needing to pay back loans they have taken out to fund their recruitment – feel unable to leave exploitative jobs when they know they will be blocked from finding a new job in Qatar.

The government has been consulting on this reform proposal, and a draft law has reportedly been prepared. Media reports suggest that a new sponsorship law may be passed late this year or early in 2015.<sup>10</sup>

Assuming that the new law is broadly similar to the law that was proposed in May, it will be a missed opportunity. Rather than redressing the extreme imbalance of power between the employer and the worker under the current system, the proposals seem likely to offer a marginal tinkering at best. It is a remarkable testament to the power of Qatar’s business lobby that with the hosting of the World Cup under threat, and with the reputation of the country at stake, the government has felt unable to commit to cancelling the exit permit, as it has been near universally urged to do.

# Real commitment to change?

As well as proposing changes to the sponsorship system, the labour ministry has made a range of other announcements, promising more rigorous inspection of labour regulations, stricter accommodation standards and new wage protection measures to ensure that workers receive their pay on time.

The table below illustrates what the government has said and done in response to the recommendations made by Amnesty International, the UN Special Rapporteur and DLA Piper. It finds that, with a few exceptions, the response has so far been limited to the drafting of new legislation. Few laws have come into force, let alone taken effect on the ground. In terms of actual progress, Amnesty International finds that of nine key areas the government must address, nothing has changed in five. Only limited or partial progress has been achieved in the other four areas.

Four years after winning the right to host the World Cup, and more than a year since the systemic abuse of migrant workers hit the headlines around the world, Qatar's government has not taken the credible steps required to tackle widespread labour exploitation.

Qatar must reform the sponsorship system and labour law to ensure respect for migrant workers' rights and address the structural problems that lead to exploitation and forced labour. Amnesty International's view is that, for any hope of a World Cup free of labour exploitation, these changes must be implemented as soon as possible. This is already too late for those workers who are already in exploitative situations – but offers the hope of some redress.

## WITH A VIEW TOWARDS FULL REFORM, AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS ON QATAR TO IMMEDIATELY TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

- unambiguously abolish the exit permit;
- launch an independent investigation into the causes of migrant workers' deaths;
- drop prohibitive fees for workers to raise court cases against employers;
- publish the names of exploitative recruiters and employers;
- grant domestic workers the legal protection of labour rights afforded to other workers.

Taking initial, tangible steps of this kind would signal a level of seriousness and commitment to real change. But as it stands, time has almost run out for Qatar to deliver a World Cup that is not built on exploitation of workers.

## WORLD CUP STADIUMS

Aside from discussions around government-led reform, some major players in Qatar's construction industry have been attempting to impose better standards for migrant workers, by insisting on these in the contracts they award. The Qatar Foundation has played a central role in driving this process. But most notably, the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy (SC), in charge of the construction of the World Cup stadiums, in February 2014 published its Worker Welfare Standards.<sup>11</sup>

If the standards – which require higher standards than Qatar's Labour Law mandates – can be implemented, workers on World Cup stadiums would enjoy better living and working conditions than is typical for Qatar. But there have been significant early

setbacks that raise questions about enforcement. In July 2014 reporters from The Guardian found that while workers on the al-Wakra stadium were living in high quality accommodation, they were being underpaid for working overtime and did not have their own passports.<sup>12</sup> The SC said that it was “actively looking into” the matter.<sup>13</sup>

As World Cup stadium construction – which only began this year – gets underway in earnest, the al-Wakra case should sound a major alarm for the World Cup organizers. Meanwhile, the onus remains on the government to stop exploitation on the wider infrastructure projects that will support the staging of the tournament.

<sup>11</sup> Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, *Workers Welfare Standards, edition 1*, available at [www.sc.qa/en/delivery-and-legacy/workers-welfare](http://www.sc.qa/en/delivery-and-legacy/workers-welfare) (accessed 20 October 2014)

<sup>12</sup> Robert Booth and Pete Pattison, *Qatar World Cup stadium workers earn as little as 45p an hour*, The Guardian, 29 July 2014, available at [www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jul/29/qatar-world-cup-stadium-workers-earn-45p-hour](http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/jul/29/qatar-world-cup-stadium-workers-earn-45p-hour) (accessed 16 October 2014)

<sup>13</sup> Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, *Statement in Response to the Guardian*, 31 July 2014, available at [www.sc.qa/en/media/press-releases](http://www.sc.qa/en/media/press-releases) (accessed 16 October 2014)

**ISSUE:**

# Migrant workers are prevented from leaving the country by their employers, who deny them exit permits and confiscate their passports.

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAYS:**

- Abolish the exit permit.
- Proactively enforce the law requiring employers to return passports; and investigate and hold accountable any sponsor who is withholding his or her employee's passports.

**THE UNITED NATIONS SAYS:**

- Abolish the exit permit requirement.
- Conduct systematic checks to make sure that employers do not confiscate their employees' passports.

**DLA PIPER SAYS:**

- There should be a comprehensive review of the requirement for an exit visa... We recommend that the exit visa is phased out over time.
- In our view the only justifiable reason for denying a migrant worker permission to leave the country would be in situations which involve significant criminality or threats to national security.
- The Sponsorship Law should be amended to allow migrant workers the right to apply to the Ministry of Interior for an exit visa prior to their departure. In the transitional period while the exit visa requirement is being reviewed, the default position should be that exit visas are granted as of right within a period of 48 to 72 hours.
- Any employers / sponsors retaining passports in violation of Qatari law should be subject to penalties, including significant fines and the revocation of sponsorship licences for material breaches and repeat offenders. This should be enforced vigorously. We recommend that employers be required to make secure and lockable storage for personal items available to all migrant workers.

**WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE**

In May 2014 the government stated that the exit permit system would be replaced with an automated system through the Ministry of Interior, automatically granting an exit permit to an employee after a 72-hour grace period prior to departure; it appears that employers would have the right to object to their departure during this period. To date, no changes have been implemented or legislation published.

In May 2014, the government said that the penalty for passport confiscation would be increased from QAR 10,000 to up to QAR 50,000. To date, no changes have been implemented or legislation published.

**ACTUAL PROGRESS:** None

**ISSUE:**

# The restrictive sponsorship or “kafala” system gives rise to abuse including forced labour.

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAYS:**

- Remove the “No objection certificate” requirement in the Sponsorship Law that migrant workers are required to obtain the permission of their current employer before moving jobs.

**THE UNITED NATIONS SAYS:**

- Abolish the kafala system and replace it with a regulated open labour market, where the work permit allows the worker to change employer. This would include abolishing the “no objection” certificate.
- In the meantime, the provisions of the Sponsorship Law should be strictly enforced and there should be clear criteria for when a sponsor can refuse to give a “no objection” certificate or an exit permit and abused migrants should always be allowed to change sponsor.

**DLA PIPER SAYS:**

- We recommend that the State of Qatar conducts a wide-ranging and comprehensive review of the kafala sponsorship system with a view to implementing reforms which strengthen and protect the rights of free movement of migrant workers in line with Qatar’s international obligations.
- In the event of a significant breach of Sponsorship Law by the employer or relevant labour law, the default position should be that the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs should order the transfer.

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**WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE**

In May 2014, the government announced a plan to reform the sponsorship system by replacing the “No Objection Certificate”, with an “employment contract system”. “If the employment contract is for a fixed term, the employee may transfer to another employer at the end of that term. If the

employment contract is of an indefinite duration, the employee may transfer to another employer after five years from the date of the contract.” To date, no changes have been implemented or legislation published.

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**ACTUAL PROGRESS:** None

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**ISSUE:**

# Domestic workers have no protection for their labour rights under the law, and can suffer physical and sexual violence at the hands of their employers.

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAYS:**

- Change the law to ensure that domestic workers have their labour rights protected by law, equally.
- Remove the prohibition on consenting sexual relations outside marriage and stop the practice of detaining women with their children on charges of “illicit relations.”
- Specifically criminalize domestic violence, ensuring that the definition is not limited to relatives living in the same residence but also includes all persons, thereby protecting domestic workers.

**THE UNITED NATIONS SAYS:**

- Adopt legislation on domestic workers that includes protection of labour rights, including in relation to working hours, overtime, a minimum wage, working conditions and annual leave, and effective compliance mechanisms.
- Undertake labour inspections in private homes to inspect the working conditions of domestic workers.

**DLA PIPER SAYS:**

- The report does not extend to conditions of domestic workers.

**WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE**

In September 2014 the government told the UN that it would change its law to protect the labour rights of domestic workers, and that it would criminalize domestic violence and ensure that

a broad definition of the crime is applied so as to ensure the protection of all persons concerned, including domestic workers. No new laws have been passed.

**ACTUAL PROGRESS:** None**ISSUE:**

# Migrant workers are paid late or not paid at all.

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAYS:**

- Explore, with the business community, financial mechanisms to ensure that payment of workers’ salaries is not affected by delays in payment in the chain of contracting.
- Consider establishing a cross-government, integrated unit to deal with companies in crisis and assist workers to rapidly collect unpaid wages and – if they wish – leave the country or change employers.

**THE UNITED NATIONS SAYS:**

- Find a way to guarantee the payment of salaries and plane tickets for migrants, inter alia by ensuring that all migrants have a bank account to which their salary is transferred every month and that bank records are regularly checked.
- Revise the Labour Law in order to impose penalties on employers who do not pay workers their full salary on time.

**DLA PIPER SAYS:**

- We recommend that the State of Qatar considers funding a minimum guaranteed level of end-of-service gratuity which it then in turn recoups from the employer in the event of the employer’s non-payment.
- We recommend introducing appropriate sanctions for late payment throughout the chain of contracting.
- We recommend that the State of Qatar should give consideration to implement a scheme whereby payment of migrant worker wages is monitored electronically by or in conjunction with the Qatar Central Bank.

**WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE**

In July 2014, the cabinet approved a decision to introduce a wage protection system, which will require that companies pay all wages electronically via bank transfers and within seven days

of the due date or else face punitive action. However, to date no changes have been implemented nor changes to the Labour Law published.

**ACTUAL PROGRESS:** None

## ISSUE:

# Workers pay large recruitment fees to migrate to Qatar and /or are made false promises about their salaries or type of work. The abuse can amount to human trafficking.

### AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAYS:

- Work closely with governments of migrant workers' countries of origin to prevent instances of contract substitution.
- Increase the monitoring of the arrival of workers in Qatar so that when workers arrive their contract is checked by Government officials in the presence of their employer and the worker, to confirm that the terms and conditions are what the worker has been promised prior to leaving his or her home country.
- Assess recruitment agencies in Qatar for their compliance with international human rights standards, publish these assessments, and cancel the recruitment licences of agencies who do not comply.
- Hold accountable recruitment agencies in Qatar found to have deceived workers over the terms and conditions of their work, or who have failed to take action when alerted to employers who are not honouring contracts or respecting rights of workers.

### THE UNITED NATIONS SAYS:

- Ensure that illegal recruitment fees are not charged and that contracts signed in the sending countries are not altered in Qatar without the informed consent of the migrant concerned.
- Work with certified recruitment agencies in sending countries and refrain from providing visas to workers who have gone through an uncertified agency.
- Work together with countries of origin to ensure that migrants arrive in Qatar free of debt.
- Consider opening offices of the Ministry of Labour in sending countries.

### DLA PIPER SAYS:

- Bilateral Treaties should provide for a new standard employment contract which will include express provisions prohibiting the payment of recruitment fees by migrant workers.
- We recommend the implementation of a targeted verification requirement in the State of Origin. This verification process should be repeated when migrant workers arrive in Qatar.
- We propose that there should be a point of contact within the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs specifically for complaints relating to recruitment agents.
- We recommend that there should be a review of the process of licensing of recruitment agents in Qatar, and a comprehensive vetting process.

## WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE

In October 2013 the government informed Amnesty International that it was "in the process of implementing a programme for electronic connection with labour exporting countries. Cooperation between the Ministries of Labour will be in the form of establishing an electronic information base for those seeking jobs in Qatar. The website will allow employers in Qatar to choose their workforce from the available applications. This project will ensure there will no longer be any discrepancy between the job the worker has signed up for in his country from that signed in Qatar."

Amnesty International has no further information about progress on this initiative.

In July 2014 the Ministry of Labour stated that any recruitment firms which are found to have violated labour standards three times would be named in local newspapers.

## ACTUAL PROGRESS: Partial

### No Extra Time:

How Qatar is still failing on workers' rights ahead of the World Cup

# Conditions on-site for construction workers are harsh and dangerous. Workers face barriers to accessing health care. Many workers die of heart attacks.

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAYS:**

- Carry out a multi-agency review of the adequacy of health provision for migrant workers, including a thorough and independent investigation into the leading causes of death among migrant construction workers, identifying key measures to address this.
- Compile and publish detailed data on workplace injuries and fatalities.
- Allow workers to obtain health cards without requiring them to produce residence permits.

**THE UNITED NATIONS SAYS:**

- Establish health and safety committees with worker representation on all worksites.
- Collect disaggregated data on workplace accidents, injuries and illnesses.

**DLA PIPER SAYS:**

- Regular publication of the names of Contractors and employers that have breached the relevant health and safety standards.
- We recommend the introduction of electronic ID cards, incorporating migrant workers' health card for all migrant workers upon arrival into Qatar.
- We would strongly recommend imposing joint and several civil and criminal liability for health and safety breaches on Lead Contractors and their sub-contractor.
- We would strongly recommend the regular collection and reporting / dissemination of national statistics and data in relation to work-related injuries and deaths, and the causes and the extent to which these are attributable to breaches of health and safety rules.
- We would also strongly recommend the State of Qatar commissions an independent study into migrant worker deaths from cardiac arrest, over the next three years in Qatar.

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**WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE**

In February 2014 the government stated that there were plans for all workers in Qatar to be phased into a new national health insurance scheme, which was already underway, and that new hospital facilities for workers were being built close to their place of work.

With respect to the deaths of migrant workers, the government stated that it would be "working with the Supreme Council of Health to understand the true picture."

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**ACTUAL PROGRESS:** Limited

**ISSUE:**

# Access to justice for victims of labour exploitation is difficult, time-consuming and expensive.

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAYS:**

- Improve access to the Labour complaints system, including by ensuring translation is available.
- Significantly reduce the time taken to deal with Labour Court cases.
- Cancel the imposition of fees on workers at the Labour Court.
- Provide relief funds to workers pursuing legal cases they are not receiving their salaries.
- Establish a system of state-funded legal aid.

**UN**

- Ensure that migrants are not required to pay fees to file a case with the labour court and ensure easy access without fear of reprisals and speedy processing of court cases filed by migrants.

**DLA PIPER SAYS:**

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs' general accessibility to migrant workers should be reviewed.
- A specialist fast track procedure should be set up for the major categories of complaints.
- We strongly recommend that all fees (or expert charges) for claimants should be abolished.
- We believe that there should be free legal representation for migrant workers to bring complaints to the Labour Relations Department and free representation in relation all detention proceedings.

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**WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE**

In July 2014, the government said that it had introduced an electronic labour complaint system in English, Arabic, Urdu, Hindi, Tamil, Bengali and Nepali for expatriate workers in Qatar.

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**ACTUAL PROGRESS:** Limited

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**ISSUE:**

# Migrant workers are forbidden from forming or joining trade unions.

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAYS:**

- Allow migrant workers to form and join trade unions.

**UN SAYS:**

- Recognize the rights of association and self-organization for all workers, including migrants.

**DLA PIPER SAYS:**

- The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs should publish proposals allowing migrant workers the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

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**WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE**

In September 2014 Qatar told the UN it would not adopt legal provisions that guarantee migrant workers the right to join trade unions.

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**ACTUAL PROGRESS:** None

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# Labour standards, including accommodation, are not enforced properly. There are not enough inspectors and inspection is not stringent.

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SAYS:

- Significantly increase the number of competent Labour inspectors as a matter of urgency, ensuring that either a significant proportion of Labour inspectors are able to speak the languages used by workers or are accompanied by competent translators.
- Ensure criminal investigation, and where sufficient admissible evidence exists, prosecution of employers suspected of exploitation, and prevent companies – and the individuals involved at a senior level in the management of these companies – from recruiting workers in future.
- Review the penalties applicable under law for serious exploitation of workers, including the crime of Forced Labour as specified in the Penal Code, and violations of the Labour Law, to ensure that they are adequate and in line with Qatar's international obligations.

## THE UNITED NATIONS SAYS:

- Create a strong and effective labour inspection system, with a sufficient number of labour inspectors, who should be well trained in international human rights and labour standards. Labour inspectors should undertake thorough and regular unannounced inspections in all worksites.
- Make the blacklisting and ranking of companies based on their compliance with labour standards public and accessible to migrants.
- Revise the Labour Law in order to impose penalties on employers who do not pay workers their full salary on time and who do not grant them annual leave, as well as adequate penalties for employers who do not comply with accommodation standards for their employees.

## DLA PIPER SAYS:

- We recommend further increasing the number of inspectors and heightened training of Inspectors in conjunction with the ILO. We consider more comprehensive, unannounced inspections including regular interviews with migrant workers are required.
- We recommend giving inspectors the power to impose sanctions for the failure to adhere to improvement notices, such as financial penalties and the power to suspend the activities of the employer. Inspectors should receive comprehensive training.
- Monitoring and enforcement of accommodation standards should be heightened and the capacity of labour accommodation available should be increased.

## WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DONE

In July 2014 the cabinet approved a draft decision governing workers' living conditions, including an increase in the space allocated per worker. This has not yet been passed into law. The government said in May 2014 that legal amendments have been introduced to strengthen the penalties for labour violations, including penalties for late payment of wages and violations of the new accommodation standards. This has not yet been passed into law.

In July 2014 the government also said it had increased the number of labour inspectors from 200 to 243 with a target of 300 by the end of the year. The inspectors would have judicial powers to issue penalties for violations related to workers' accommodation, work sites and occupational health and safety. The government stated in July 2014 that additional accommodation for 150,000 workers was under construction.

## ACTUAL PROGRESS: Partial

## ABOUT THIS TABLE

Amnesty International has identified and summarised nine key issues and the recommendations relating to them without input from the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants or DLA Piper. The recommendations have been edited from their original sources by Amnesty International. A number of recommendations have not been included, in the interests of space and readability. The table captures the significant announcements and decisions made by the Qatari government known to Amnesty International.

## SOURCES:

- Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, François Crépeau, (A/HRC/26/35/Add.1)* 23 April 2014
- Amnesty International, *The Dark Side of Migration: Spotlight on Qatar's construction sector ahead of the World Cup* (Index: MDE 22/010/2013)
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, *Qatar Minister of Labour details progress on labour law reforms*, 20 July 2014, available at [www.molsa.gov.qa/arabic/AboutMinistry/NewsCenter/pages/Qatar-Minister-of-Labour-Details-Progress-on-Labour-Law-Reforms.aspx](http://www.molsa.gov.qa/arabic/AboutMinistry/NewsCenter/pages/Qatar-Minister-of-Labour-Details-Progress-on-Labour-Law-Reforms.aspx) (accessed 20 October 2014)
- *Guardian* newspaper
- Amnesty International, *'My Sleep is my Break': Exploitation of migrant domestic workers in Qatar* (Index: MDE 22/004/2014)
- Ministry of Interior, *Qatar announces wide-ranging labour market reforms*, 14 May 2014, available at [www.moi.gov.qa/site/english/news/2014/05/14/32204.html](http://www.moi.gov.qa/site/english/news/2014/05/14/32204.html) (accessed 20 October 2014)
- *Qatar's response to the UN's Universal Period Review recommendations in September 2014*, available at [www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/qatar/session\\_19\\_-\\_april\\_2014/recommendations\\_and\\_pledges\\_qatar\\_2014.pdf](http://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/qatar/session_19_-_april_2014/recommendations_and_pledges_qatar_2014.pdf) (accessed 20 October 2014)
- *Dohanews* website

# TIMELINE

## 25 SEPTEMBER 2013:

The Guardian publishes damning revelations of the abuse of workers on construction projects in Lusail City, and reveals that 44 Nepalese workers died in a two month period.

## 3 OCTOBER 2013:

The Qatari government commissions international law firm DLA Piper to investigate the abuse of migrant workers.

## 18 NOVEMBER 2013:

Amnesty International publishes 'The Dark Side of Migration: Spotlight on Qatar's construction sector ahead of the World Cup.' The government asks DLA Piper to consider the report as part of its work.

## 20 NOVEMBER 2013:

At a meeting with the International Trade Union Confederation, FIFA President Sepp Blatter says the situation for workers in Qatar is unacceptable and must change.

## 21 NOVEMBER 2013:

The European Parliament submits a resolution on Qatar and the situation of migrant workers.

## 11 FEBRUARY 2014:

Qatar's Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy releases the 'Workers Welfare Standards' which bind contractors on its projects, including World Cup stadiums, to mandatory standards which are more stringent than Qatari labour law.

## 23 APRIL 2014:

Amnesty International releases 'My Sleep is my Break': Exploitation of migrant domestic workers in Qatar' detailing forced labour, human trafficking and physical and sexual abuse experienced by migrant domestic workers in Qatar.

## 23 APRIL 2014:

UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of migrants publishes his report on his visit to Qatar, calling for the abolition of the sponsorship system.

## 1 MAY 2014:

Qatar government confirms it has received DLA Piper's report. The report has not been published by the government to date.

## 8 MAY 2014:

Qatar faces intense questioning on migrant rights during the UN's "UPR" review of the country's human rights record.

## 14 MAY 2014:

The government announces proposed reforms to the sponsorship system. No timeline is given for implementation.

## 20 JUNE 2014:

The US State department downgrades Qatar to its Tier 2 watchlist in its 2014 Trafficking in Persons report.

## 13 JULY 2014:

The Qatar Foundation, a major player in the construction industry, publishes a report into exploitation in the recruitment and employment of migrant workers in Qatar.

## 16 JULY 2014:

The Cabinet approves a draft decision on a wage protection system. It has not yet entered into force.

## 31 AUGUST 2014:

Two British human rights researchers looking into conditions for migrant workers are arrested in Qatar and held for more than a week, before being released and eventually allowed to leave the country.

## 26 SEPTEMBER 2014:

Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani tells CNN that he is 'personally hurt' by abuses toward migrants in Qatar.

**Amnesty International** is a global movement of more than 7 million people who campaign for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all.

Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards.

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