



JUBILEE CAMPAIGN
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regarding
The State of Qatar
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LIST OF ISSUES

Submission by
Jubilee Campaign

Jubilee Campaign is a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 2003. Our work focuses on promoting the rights of religious and ethnic minorities and raising the status of vulnerable women and children - to protect them from bodily harm and sexual exploitation.

I. Introduction

Jubilee Campaign, in special consultative status with ECOSOC, submits this analysis of religious freedom and human rights in the State of Qatar as a contribution to the List of Issues to be raised by the Human Rights Committee.

II. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Article 3-

The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present Covenant.

Article 7-

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. In particular, no one shall be subjected without his free consent to medical or scientific experimentation.

Article 9-

Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.

Article 12-

Everyone lawfully within the territory of a State shall, within that territory, have the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose his residence.

Article 18-

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.
2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.
4. The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

Article 19-

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.

Article 21-

The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (*ordre public*), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedom of others.

Article 23-

1. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.
2. The right of men and women of marriageable age to marry and to found a family shall be recognized
3. No marriage shall be entered into without the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
4. States Parties to the present Covenant shall take appropriate steps to ensure equality of rights and responsibilities of spouses as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. In the case of dissolution, provision shall be made for the necessary protection of any children.

Article 24-

1. Every child shall have, without any discrimination as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, national or social origin, property or birth, the right to such measures of protection as are required by his status as a minor, on the part of his family, society and the State.
2. Every child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have a name.
3. Every child has the right to acquire a nationality.

III. Disclaimer

Qatar has only recently acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and therefore its first State Report English translation has not been publicly made available yet, and there have been no Concluding Observations made by the Committee. This report will serve to inform the Committee on the most prevalent human rights violations in the State of Qatar by using reports from various human rights and religious freedom organizations.

IV. Freedom of Religion

The 2003 Constitution of Qatar states in Article 1:

“Qatar is an Arab State, sovereign and independent. Its religion is Islam, and the Islamic Law is the main source of its legislations. Its system is democratic, and its official language is the Arabic language. The people of Qatar are part of the Arab Nation.”

Additionally, Article 50 of the Constitution is extremely vague in its provision of religious freedom, stating “the freedom to worship is guaranteed to all, according to the law and the requirements to protect the public order and public morals.”

In Qatar’s Law 11 of 2004 Issuing the Penal Code 11/2004, Article 1 makes Islamic Shari’a law applicable when the plaintiff or defendant is a Muslim for the following prescribed offences: “theft, banditry, adultery, defamation, drinking alcohol; and apostasy.”¹ The broad application of the Shari’a law means it can be applicable to a non-Muslim when the plaintiff is a Muslim, which results in legal uncertainty. The punishments for individuals under Shari’a laws are also much harsher - Individuals who are accused and subsequently convicted of apostasy - ceasing to be a Muslim² - can be sentenced to death as the Islamic Shari’a Law prescribes the death penalty for apostasy; however, the death sentence for apostasy has not been carried out by the courts in Qatar. There are anecdotal stories however, as official figures are not recorded, of family or societal actors, taking the law into their own hands.³ In regards to defamation according to the United States Department of State’s 2018 International Religious Freedom Report on Qatar:

“The law provides for a prison sentence of up to seven years for defaming, desecrating, or committing blasphemy against Islam, Christianity, or Judaism. The law stipulates a seven-year prison term for producing or circulating material containing slogans, images, or symbols defaming these three religions. The law also prohibits publication of texts provoking social discord or religious strife, with punishment if convicted of up to six months in prison.”

Blasphemy laws, while appearing to protect religious individuals from hate speech, have often been misused in many other nations as a way to arrest religious minorities over false accusations of blasphemy, such as is the case in Pakistan, Iran, and more. Though there have been no major cases of this occurring in Qatar, we fear that such instances of misapplication of blasphemy laws could become increasingly common.

Further, Qatar's Law 11 of 2004, their Penal Code, delineates a handful of other unjust offences relating to religion or worship, which include restrictions on professing a religion other than Islam and exhibit the nation’s preference of protecting Islam over other religions:

¹ Library of Congress, *Laws Criminalizing Apostasy*, available at: <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/apostasy/index.php#qatar> [accessed 29 May 2020].

² The definition of “Muslim” is not always the plaintiff’s subjective view - it can also be perceived apostasy according to the Islamic laws definition, it can include criticising any Islamic laws or teachings.

³ World Watch Research, Qatar: Country Dossier, February 2020. available at: <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Qatar-WWL-2020-Country-Dossier-February-update.pdf> [accessed 29 May 2020], p. 20; “A Day in the Life of a Qatari Christian.” Open Doors USA, 13 June 2017, www.opendoorsusa.org/take-action/pray/a-day-in-the-life-of-a-qatari-christian/. [accessed 29 May 2020].

Article 256: Whoever commits the following acts shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven years:

1. Insulting Allah through writing, drawing, gesturing or in any other way or through any other means.
2. Offending, misinterpreting or violating the Holy Quran.
3. Offending the Islamic religion or any of its rite and dictates.
4. Cursing any of the divine religions according to the regulations of Islamic law.
5. Insulting any of the prophets through writing, drawing, gesturing or in any other way or through any other means.
6. Sabotaging, breaking, damaging or violating sites or their contents if they are made to perform religious rites for one of the diving religions according to the regulations of Islamic law.

Article 257: Whoever establishes, organizes or runs an assembly, association, organization, or a branch aimed at opposing or challenging the basics and tenets of Islam, or calls upon, or favors or promotes another religion; cult or concept shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding ten years.

Article 259: “Whoever opposes or doubts any of the basics or tenants of Islam, or calls upon, or favors or promotes another religion, cult or concept shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years.”

Article 261: “Whoever possesses documents, printed publications or recorded tapes or any other materials favoring or promoting the stipulations of Articles 256 and 259 with the intention of distributing them or revealing them to others, shall be punished with an imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years and/or a fine not exceeding ten thousand Qatari Riyals.”

The above legislation essentially makes public worship of minority religions illegal and violates Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. However, the discrimination of religious minorities in Qatar extends beyond legislation into regular society. Interestingly, according to the United States Department of State, only 12 per cent of individuals living in Qatar are actually Qatari citizens.⁴ Non-Qatari religious minorities, while able to enjoy considerable freedom in Qatar, have their activities are restricted to designated compounds and, in particular, their interactions with Muslims have to be limited as they can be charged with proselytism. Several expatriate Christians have been deported in recent years on the assumed reason of proselytising. The only officially recognised churches in the State of Qatar are mainly found in the ‘Religious Complex,’ which is not large enough to house the services of a range of churches and congregations of various nationalities and languages. In addition, there are “robust security arrangements” at the Religious Complex to implement the strict entry ban on Muslims, except where prior permission has been granted.⁵

⁴ United States Department of State, *2018 Report on International Religious Freedom- Qatar*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/QATAR-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf> [accessed 29 May 2020].

⁵ “Qatar.” *Middle East Concern*, www.meconcern.org/countries/qatar/ [accessed 29 May 2020].

Furthermore, the government of Qatar prohibits the dissemination of non-Muslim religious material and prevents the display of any symbol in non-Muslim places of worship to extent that no crosses or steeples may be visible and even Real Madrid branded clothes had to remove the cross off their logo.⁶

Qatari religious minority citizens who converted from Islam face a great amount of discrimination from family and friends. According to Open Doors, “in general, families put strong social pressure on converts to make them return to Islam, leave the religion or to be silent about their new faith.”⁷ Such pressure and coercion to renounce one’s chosen faith also falls into direct violation with Article 18 Paragraph 2 of the ICCPR.

Open Doors reveals that in comparison to the period November 1, 2017 to October 31, 2018 in which 18 Christians were attacked in Qatar, the number of attacked Christians rose to 1,100 during the period from November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2019.

Importantly, the United States Department of State explains exactly why and how the State of Qatar decided to accept the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights despite its national legislation which inherently violates Article 18 of the ICCPR:

“The government submitted documents to the United Nations on May 21, following cabinet approval on March 14, to accede to the ICCPR, with a formal statement in its treaty accession document that the government shall interpret Article 18, paragraph 2 of the ICCPR ‘based on the understanding that it does not contravene the Islamic Sharia’ and that the government would reserve the right to implement paragraph 2 in accordance with its understanding of sharia.”

V. *Freedom of Opinion and Expression*

The government of Qatar has several legal restrictions on political expression. As a result, many individuals and organizations tend to practice self-censorship both online and off-line, although some individuals feel more comfortable posting their opinions on their private social media profiles rather than public forums.

In January 2020, the government of Qatar drafted a new law that criminalizes posting and publishing articles or statements that are considered biased or ‘fake news’ and imposes a corresponding punishment of up to five years in prison if formally convicted.⁸ Such legislation both violates Article 19 of the ICCPR with regards to freedom of expression by silencing criticism and dissent, and also demonstrates the closing space for public dialogue and debate in Qatar.

Similarly, it is uncommon to see newspapers publish critical articles, as the government can use its authority to shut down operations of newspapers it deems to be offensive to the regime. The Doha Center for Media

⁶ 28/12/2016 | Oasis. “The Invisible Christians of Qatar.” *Fondazione Internazionale Oasis*, www.oasiscenter.eu/en/christians-in-qatar. [accessed 29 May 2020].; Reuters. “Real Madrid Logo Won't Feature Christian Cross in Middle East Clothing Deal.” *MARCA in English*, 24 Jan. 2017, www.marca.com/en/football/real-madrid/2017/01/24/5887be87268e3e9c3e8b46a3.html. [accessed 29 May 2020].

⁷ Open Doors World Watch Research Unit, *Qatar: Country Dossier*, February 2020, available at: <http://opendoorsanalytical.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Qatar-WWL-2020-Country-Dossier-February-update.pdf> [accessed 29 May 2020].

⁸ Amnesty International, “Qatar: Repressive new law further curbs freedom of expression,” 20 January 2020, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/01/qatar-repressive-new-law-further-curbs-freedom-of-expression/>

Freedom, a government-subsidized agency that focuses on newspaper and media freedom of expression, was shut down for the first time in 2019, as reported by the US State Department. In addition to the far-reaching legislative authority to shut down newspapers that do not comply with government's narrative, the ownership of both private and public media outlets is increasingly being taken up by relatives of the ruling family or by individuals who are personally known and trusted by government officials. Qatar's al-Jazeera network former employees have claimed that government ownership and control has had a great impact on the outlet's released content.

In addition to media produced within the nation, the government also strictly controls all foreign media that is disseminated in Qatar, and it has repeatedly banned and censored content that has sexual, religious, or political themes that come into contrast with the ideals of the nation. According to the US State Department:

“Journalists and publishers continued to self-censor due to political and economic pressures when reporting on government policies or material deemed denigrating to Islam, the ruling family, and relations with neighboring states.”

VI. Arbitrary Detention

In early November of 2019, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention visited Qatar to observe the conditions of various detention centers as well as visit “12 places of deprivation of liberty in and outside the capital, including police stations; pre-trial detention facilities; the Doha central prison; the Doha deportation centre; the Doha psychiatric hospital; and a social care centre for children in conflict with the law.”⁹

While the Working Group commended the State of Qatar for their invitation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for facilitating the trip, they were disappointed that the authorities' promises prior to the trip, of providing unimpeded access, were unfulfilled. The requested meeting with the State Security Bureau was delayed and the meeting with the Ministry of Defense never took place. In addition, the request from the Working Group to visit one of the State Security detention centers, was rejected. The Working Group's visits to locations where reports of deprivation of liberty were reported, were found barren. The Working Group received credible reports that detainees had been transferred to other facilities prior to their visit. Such a secretive action constitutes “unwanted interferences with the freedom of inquiry of the Working Group which have no place in any democratic country governed by the rule of law.”

The Working Group notes a few positive changes that have been seen in Qatar over the past few years. For example, Qatar's accession to the ICCPR in 2018 exhibits the nation's dedication to improving the quality of civil and political rights for its citizens. However, Qatar's accession was not without reservations and conditions, such that Qatar stated that it would protect freedom of religion and conscience on its own terms based on its interpretation. Certain entities such as the Public Prosecution is permitted to visit detention facilities and ensure that no individuals have been illegally detained, and the Ministry of Interior Human Rights Department is similarly permitted to visit prisons to observe the status of human rights in these locations.

⁹ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, “Working Group on Arbitrary Detention: Preliminary Findings from its visit to Qatar (3-14 November 2019),” available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25296&LangID=E>

Contrastingly, the Working Group also took notice of many instances of deprivation of liberty and extraneous punishment. According to the Working Group's report,

“The Working Group is seriously concerned over the range of non-violent acts that are currently criminalised in Qatar. These include adultery, intimate relations outside wedlock, debt, absconding from the employer, sorcery, disobedience to parents, begging, consumption of alcohol and substance abuse. The Working Group observed numerous detainees who are currently detained under provisions of the Penal Code criminalising these acts and reminds the Government of Qatar that detention should be an exceptional measure in accordance with article 9(3) of the ICCPR.”

Moreover, the Criminal Procedure Code of Qatar provides that any individual who is arrested should be transported to Public Prosecution within 24 hours of his or her arrest; however, article 117 of the Criminal Procedure Code states that Public Prosecution may hold the arrested individual for up to 9 days maximum before being brought before a judge. This provision, according to the Working Group, violates article 9(3) of the ICCPR which states that arrested individuals must be brought before a judge “promptly” within 48 hours of the initial arrest. “The Working Group further notes that the Public Prosecutor is both the investigating body and as well as the detaining authority which is a conflict of interest.”

Reputable sources informed the Working Group that in many cases the arrested individual's right to a lawyer does not apply until 24 hours following the initial arrest. Moreover, the arrested individual is only permitted to contact his or her lawyer or be issued a lawyer appointed by the state after the individual is transferred to Public Prosecution. The Working Group finds this to be of great concern, as “all persons deprived of their liberty have the right to legal assistance by counsel of their choice, at any time during their detention, including immediately after apprehension.”

The Working Group has expressed its concern that there exists a legal provision that prohibits certain aspects of freedom of expression:

“According to Article 134 of the Penal Code (Law No. 11 of 2004), a person who ‘challenges by any public means the exercising by the Emir of his rights or authorities, or criticizes his person’ is liable to imprisonment for up to five years. The same penalty applies to any person who commits these offences in relation to the Deputy Emir or the Crown Prince. Article 134 of the Penal Code was considered by the Working Group in its Opinion No. 48/2016, in which it found that detention pursuant to this *lèse-majesté* provision was arbitrary because it involved the criminalisation of the right to freedom of expression.”

The Working Group was informed that despite that women and men are to receive the same punishment upon being charged with adultery. For example, the stipulated punishment for adultery is up to 7 years in prison. However, despite this equality being present in legal documentation, the Working Group was told that adultery laws have been applied more widely to arrest women than their male counterparts. At Qatar's Central Prison, of the 26 individuals who were imprisoned for adultery, all were women, and many “were serving lengthy prison sentences accompanied in detention by very young children.” Three fundamental problems exist: (1) individuals should not be imprisoned for engaging in consensual intimacy outside of marriage; (2) the charges for women and men are equal on paper but are unequal in practice; and (3) children should under no circumstances be detained for prolonged periods of time.

There were a few instances in which men were imprisoned for sodomy, or same-sex intimacy between two men, for which the punishment is up to three years in prison. According to the Working Group, “the detention of individuals based on discriminatory grounds, such as gender or sexual orientation, is arbitrary under international law. In the view of the Working Group, the criminalisation of sexual relations between adults is also an interference with the privacy of the individuals concerned.”

A large proportion of individuals in the prison centers and detention facilities were individuals who were detained for being financially unable to pay back small debts. The Working Group was informed that, often, when requesting a loan, individuals are forced to write a check of the total amount borrowed as a guarantee that the amount will be paid back in full. However, in writing these checks that the individuals do not have the funds for, they are forced to violate Article 357 and 358 which criminalizes writing a check for more money than one has. Thus, these individuals are conned into committing a crime for which they can be punished by three months in prison. The Working Group explains “international human rights law prohibits the deprivation of liberty due to debt as stipulated in article 11 of the ICCPR. This prohibition is non-derogable and in fact constitutes part of customary international law.” Moreover, the Working Group finds that imprisonment for inability to repay a debt constitutes detention based on economic class and is thus arbitrary.

Lastly, rights to a fair trial are often violated. Individuals who do not speak Arabic are not provided with lawyers speaking their language or interpreters. Many detained individuals have reported that their court hearings are extremely brief and do not offer the defendant the ability to address the court. And in some instances, “judgements had been handed down without the knowledge of the defendant as a result of proceedings which had been initiated and carried out without a proper attempt to summon the individual concerned to attend the hearing.”

VII. Women’s rights

Women in Qatar experience a relatively high status of political and economic freedom: in addition to being granted the right to vote at the same time as men, women are allowed to serve in multiple political positions, and the first female judge of the high court was chosen in 2010. Moreover, Qatari men and women are employed in relatively equal proportions.

While women in Qatar are generally experiencing more freedom than their counterparts in other Arab nations, they face a few fundamental violations in regards to their personal freedoms. Perhaps the greatest violation of personal freedoms is that women face many more obstacles in filing for a divorce from their husband than vice versa; moreover, if a woman divorces from their husband, they often fall into economic hardship as a result of the separation.

According to the US State Department,

“Under the Nationality Law, female citizens face legal discrimination, since they, unlike men, are not permitted to transmit citizenship to their noncitizen spouses or to children born from marriage to a noncitizen. Citizen women are unable to pass on citizenship to their offspring... Citizens must gain government permission to marry foreigners, which is sometimes not granted for female citizens. Male citizens may apply for residency permits and citizenship for their foreign wives, but

female citizens may only apply for residency for their foreign husbands and children, not citizenship.”¹⁰

Such provisions, while not directly restricting women’s right to marry, does present obstacles and non-incentives as a method of indirectly discouraging women from exercising their freedom to marry and indirectly violating Article 23 of the ICCPR.

Female religious converts similarly face restrictions on their rights to divorce, specifically, non-Muslim women are not allowed to automatically inherit their Muslim husbands’ assets unless their husband specifically designate in their will that his wife shall inherit his assets. Even in such cases in which Muslim husbands designate their non-Muslim wives to receive their inheritance, these women are legally only eligible to receive 1/3 of the inheritance. In the case of multiple children, a daughter is only able to inherit half of what the son inherits. Moreover, “in cases of divorce, children generally remain with the mother until age 13 for boys and 15 for girls at which time custody reverts to the husband’s family, regardless of her religion.” Such provisions which require custody to be transferred to the husband’s family after the ages of 13 and 15 are reached have the ability to violate Article 23 if such a custody transferal places the children in any danger with the husband’s family; therefore, it is necessary that custody transferals must be made with utmost attention paid to the safety of the children.

Another reprehensible violation of women’s rights is that women are legally required to present marriage credentials in order to receive prenatal and maternal care; although, it should be noted that many hospitals have provided care in cases where such credentials are not provided, as it is their duty. There were a few cases in 2019 in which, though hospitals provided maternal care to unmarried women, they reported these women to authorities.

VIII. Forced Labor and Trafficking

While the criminal code of Qatar strictly prohibits forced or coerced labor, numerous human rights organizations received and wrote reports about migrant and foreign workers being subjected not only to forced labor but also other human rights violations including refusal by employers to pay workers, unhealthy and unsafe working conditions, unacceptable living accommodation's, employers taking and holding on to employee passports, and more. According to the United States 2019 Trafficking in Persons report,

“The government did not meet the minimum standards in several key areas. It did not report investigating or prosecuting any Qatari employers or recruitment agencies for forced labor. The government did not investigate for trafficking indicators among other related crimes such as passport retention, withholding of wages, labor violations, and complaints of abuse; and authorities reportedly arrested, detained, and deported potential trafficking victims for immigration violations, prostitution, or for fleeing their employers or sponsors.”¹¹

Such reluctance to take action to prosecute employers who are violating both forced labor laws and other human rights such as the right of movement shows that the government does not take into consideration the

¹⁰ United States Department of State, *2019 Human Rights Report- Qatar*, available at: <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/QATAR-2019-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf>

¹¹ United States Department of State, *2019 Trafficking in Persons Report*, June 2019, available at: <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/2019-Trafficking-in-Persons-Report.pdf>

safety of foreign workers and preferentially favors inaction in response to the numerous cases of trafficking and coerced labor reported to the Public Prosecution Office (PPO). In fact, 109 cases of alleged forced labor were reported to the PPO in 2019, and all of these cases were converted into cases regarding withheld wages.

“Prosecutors almost universally used the Qatari penal code to address trafficking crimes rather than the anti-trafficking law due to higher likelihood of successful prosecution under charges that were easier to prove. Consequently, authorities rarely punished trafficking offenders with dissuasive penalties and instead prosecuted victims regularly for immigration and prostitution, rather than identifying them as trafficking victims and referring them to care.”

This lack of protection for victims of trafficking and forced labor not only prevented these individuals from receiving care or reparations, but many times it has emboldened employers to direct counter-charges against the employees/victims, which in many cases led to the ultimate deportation of the employee. Qatar needs to (1) stop the practice of favoring the traffickers and employers over the victims, (2) properly and comprehensively investigate all claims of forced labor rather than converting the accusations to withheld wage cases, (3) stop using deportation as a blanket solution to problematic and difficult cases, and (4) eliminate the practice of using labor laws rather than anti-trafficking laws as a shortcut to prosecute perpetrators; this often leads to traffickers and convicted employers from receiving sentences lesser than they would if they were convicted of trafficking.

IX. Violence Against Women and Children

Qatar still has no law against domestic violence, despite that in 2014 there was a law on domestic violence drafted and forwarded to the Council of Ministers. The United States Department of State and the United Nations Development Programme report that domestic violence remains prominent social problem in Qatar, and it seems that the lack of legislation criminalizing domestic violence emboldens perpetrators.¹² To make matters worse, police officials and government authorities have remained disinclined to investigate reported cases of domestic violence, as this is as more of a private matter between families and spouses.

While rape is criminalized in the “Adultery and Honour Crimes” section of the Penal Code, rape between married couples is not criminalized and, according to the UNDP, “due to the existence of the obedience requirement in the Family Law, cases of marital rape do not come before the courts. There is no provision prohibiting the wife from filing a complaint against her husband for beating or raping her, but Qatari courts have never had cause to consider marital rape cases.”

In terms of honor crimes perpetrated against women, the government and judicial system is quite lenient on perpetrators, as is reflected in the Adultery and Honour Crimes section of the Penal Code, which states “nothing is an offence which is done in good faith, in exercising the right justified by the Law or Islamic Sharia and within the limits thereof.” Moreover, fear of becoming the victim of an honor crime has reportedly discouraged women from reporting cases of rape outside of their marriages, as they can quickly accused of bringing dishonor to their husbands or families and become victims once again.

¹² United Nations Development Programme, *Qatar Gender Justice & The Law*, 2018, available at: <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/rbas/doc/Gender%20Justice/English/Full%20reports/Qatar%20Country%20Assessment%20-%20English.pdf>

While there are no laws in Qatari criminal coding that criminalizes sexual harassment, women do experience some form of protection and legal routes through the Penal Code provision that states that individuals who make “offensive remarks, sounds, or gestures directed at a woman or intrude upon a woman’s privacy” can be sentenced to one year in prison and a corresponding fine.