



International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Distr.: General
23 May 2024

Original: English

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

Concluding observations on the combined twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Qatar*

1. The Committee considered the combined twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of Qatar,¹ submitted in one document, at its 3063rd and 3064th meetings,² held on 17 and 18 April 2024. At its 3073rd meeting, held on 24 April 2024, it adopted the present concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of the combined twenty-second and twenty-third periodic reports of the State party. It also welcomes the constructive dialogue with the State party's delegation and thanks the delegation for the information provided during the consideration of the report.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the following legislative and institutional measures taken by the State party:

(a) Adoption of Decree Law No. 19 of 2020 amending certain provisions of Act No. 21 of 2015 on the entry, exit and residency of migrant workers;

(b) Adoption of Decree Law No. 18 of 2020 amending certain provisions of the Labour Code (Act No. 14 of 2004) to increase the penalties for violations of the wage protection system;

(c) Adoption of Act No. 17 of 2020 regarding a minimum wage for workers and domestic workers;

(d) Adoption of Ministerial Decree No. 95 of 2019, under which several categories of workers, including domestic workers, can leave the country without an exit permit;

(e) Adoption of Act No. 17 of 2018, establishing a support and insurance fund for migrant workers;

(f) Establishment of the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking, in 2017.

* Adopted by the Committee at its 112th session (8–26 April 2024).

¹ CERD/C/QAT/22-23.

² See CERD/C/SR.3063 and CERD/C/SR.3064.



C. Concerns and recommendations

Statistics

4. The Committee regrets the absence of comprehensive statistics on the ethnic composition of the population, in particular of Qatari nationals, and the national origin of migrant workers. It also regrets the lack of statistics and socioeconomic indicators, disaggregated by ethnic group and by national origin, required to properly assess the situation of different ethnic groups and non-nationals, including migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons, which limits its ability to comprehend the degree to which these groups enjoy the rights enshrined in the Convention and to note any progress achieved (arts. 1 and 2).

5. **Recalling its previous concluding observations,³ the Committee recommends that the State party produce statistics on the socioeconomic situation of ethnic groups and non-nationals, including migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons, in particular on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, disaggregated by sex and age, with a view to creating an empirical basis for assessing the enjoyment of the rights enshrined in the Convention, including by migrant workers, and notably domestic workers. It also recommends that the State party improve and diversify the collection of data on the ethnic composition and national origin of its population on the basis of self-identification and anonymity. The Committee draws the attention of the State party to its general recommendations No. 4 (1973) concerning reporting by States parties under article 1 of the Convention and No. 24 (1999) concerning article 1 of the Convention.**

Domestic application of the Convention

6. The Committee notes that, according to paragraph 1 of article 68 of the State party's Constitution, international treaties have the power of law after ratification and publication in the Official Gazette. However, it is concerned about the lack of information on how potential conflicts between domestic laws, including sharia, and the Convention would be resolved, in particular in the light of the reservations and statements made by the State party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It is also concerned about the absence of cases in which the Convention has been invoked before or directly applied by domestic courts (art. 2).

7. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Give full effect to the Convention in its domestic legal order and ensure that domestic laws are interpreted and applied in conformity with its obligations under the Convention;**

(b) **Strengthen its efforts to provide regular training on the Convention, in particular to judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials and lawyers, to enable them to invoke and apply its provisions in relevant cases;**

(c) **Conduct public campaigns, in particular among the groups most vulnerable to racial discrimination, including non-nationals, to raise awareness of the provisions of the Convention and available remedies;**

(d) **Take specific steps with the aim of withdrawing its reservations to and statements on provisions of international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.**

³ CERD/C/QAT/CO/17-21, para. 6.

Legal framework for combating racial discrimination

8. The Committee notes that the State party's Constitution proclaims the principle of equality in its article 18 and of non-discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, language or religion in its article 35. However, it remains concerned that the national legislative framework does not contain a definition of racial discrimination that is in full alignment with article 1 of the Convention and that expressly covers all prohibited grounds of racial discrimination and direct, indirect and structural racial discrimination in the public and private spheres (arts. 1 and 2).

9. **In the light of its general recommendation No. 14 (1993) on article 1 (1) of the Convention, and recalling its previous concluding observations,⁴ the Committee recommends that the State party adopt comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation that defines direct, indirect and structural discrimination in all areas of law and public and private life, includes a specific provision expressly and clearly prohibiting racial discrimination and covers all the grounds prohibited under article 1 (1) of the Convention.**

National human rights institution

10. The Committee welcomes the reaccreditation with A status of the National Human Rights Committee by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions in 2021. However, it is concerned about reports of the membership of government representatives in the decision-making body of the National Human Rights Committee and about the lack of adequate legal provisions for appointing and dismissing members and to guarantee the pluralism and diversity of the members and staff (art. 2).

11. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt the measures necessary to ensure that the National Human Rights Committee fully complies with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles) and is able to carry out its mandate fully, effectively and independently, including by promoting the pluralism and diversity of its members and staff and by ensuring the independence of its decision-making body from the Government. It also recommends that the State party allocate adequate human, financial and technical resources to the National Human Rights Committee to enable it to carry out its mandate effectively.**

National plans on human rights and against racial discrimination

12. While noting the information provided by the delegation of the State party that the Council of Ministers approved, in 2017, the establishment of a national committee entrusted with the preparation of the national action plan for human rights, the Committee regrets that this plan has not yet been adopted. It also regrets the lack of a national action plan to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance (arts. 2 and 5).

13. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Redouble its efforts to finalize the adoption of the national action plan for human rights;**

(b) **Adopt a national action plan to combat racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance and ensure that the plan includes measures to combat structural racial discrimination;**

(c) **Ensure that the groups most exposed to racial discrimination, including migrant workers, participate actively and fully in the development of the above-mentioned action plans, in the follow-up thereto and in the evaluation of progress made and the outcomes achieved;**

(d) **Establish monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the action plans and allocate adequate financial resources for the effective implementation thereof.**

⁴ Ibid., para. 8.

Implementation of article 4 of the Convention

14. While noting the information provided by the State party regarding the Cybercrime Act and the Printing and Publications Act, the Committee remains concerned about the fact that the domestic legislation of the State party does not include as criminal offences all conduct prohibited under article 4 of the Convention. It regrets the lack of comprehensive information as to whether racist motives constitute an aggravating circumstance for criminal offences and on the measures adopted to prevent and combat racist hate crimes and hate speech (art. 4).

15. In the light of its general recommendations No. 1 (1972) concerning States parties' obligations under article 4 of the Convention, No. 7 (1985) relating to the implementation of article 4 of the Convention, No. 8 (1990) concerning the interpretation and application of article 1 (1) and (4) of the Convention, No. 15 (1993) on article 4 of the Convention and No. 35 (2013) on combating racist hate speech, the Committee urges the State party to ensure that all actions described in article 4 of the Convention are prohibited and criminalized. It recommends that the State party:

(a) **Recognize racist motives as an aggravating circumstance for all acts classified as offences under the Criminal Code;**

(b) **Adopt the measures necessary to prevent and combat racist hate speech and hate crimes directed at the groups most exposed to racial discrimination, including on the Internet and social media;**

(c) **Facilitate the reporting of cases of racist hate speech and hate crimes and ensure that perpetrators are adequately prosecuted and punished and that victims have access to effective remedies and appropriate reparation.**

Structural discrimination and special measures to address inequalities

16. The Committee notes the adoption of the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Third National Development Strategy (2024–2030) as part of efforts to provide a high standard of living to the population of the State party. However, the Committee is concerned about reports of structural racial discrimination against non-nationals in Qatar, in particular persons from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, which adversely affects the extent to which they can enjoy their human rights. It is particularly concerned about reports that the combined effects of certain laws, policies and social norms reinforcing racial stereotypes have resulted in the stratification of quality of life based on nationality, by which persons of Western and Arab nationalities systematically enjoy greater human rights protections than persons with South Asian and sub-Saharan African nationalities, entrenching in effect “a quasi-caste system based on national origin”, as reported by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.⁵ The Committee is also concerned about the lack of information on special measures taken by the State party to address structural racial discrimination in the country (arts. 1, 2 and 5).

17. The Committee recommends that the State party take, as a matter of priority, adequate measures to combat the structural discrimination and inequalities faced by non-nationals in the State party, in particular persons from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and to eliminate all obstacles preventing these groups from fully enjoying their rights on an equal footing, including through the adoption of special or affirmative action measures, at all levels of government, in accordance with articles 1 (4), 2 (2) and 5 of the Convention. It recalls that, in accordance with its general recommendation No. 32 (2009) on the meaning and scope of special measures in the Convention, States parties are responsible for ensuring that such special measures are designed and implemented following consultation with the communities concerned and with their active participation. The Committee recommends that the State party continue to implement the recommendations made by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁶ and by the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of

⁵ [A/HRC/44/57/Add.1](#), paras. 17 and 24.

⁶ See [E/C.12/QAT/CO/1](#).

racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, following her visit to Qatar in 2019.⁷

Migrant workers

18. The Committee notes the adoption of recent legislative measures to protect the rights of migrant workers, such as Act No. 17 of 2020 regarding a minimum wage for workers and domestic workers, and Decree-Law No. 19 of 2020 amending certain provisions of Act No. 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit and residency of migrant workers, supplemented by Ministerial Decision No. 51 of 2020, which removed the legal requirement for migrant workers to obtain a no-objection certificate from employers to change jobs. However, the Committee is concerned that, despite the legislative measures to abolish the *kafala*, or sponsorship, system, certain legal provisions and social attitudes allow it to persist in practice. In this regard, the Committee is concerned about:

- (a) The lack of effective monitoring and enforcement of the legal reforms;
- (b) The fact that some migrant workers are still required to have an employer's exit permit in order to leave the country, as the law allows employers to request that up to 5 per cent of their workforce seek prior consent before leaving the country;
- (c) Reports that the relevant department at the Ministry of Labour continues to request a no-objection certificate from migrant workers;
- (d) Reports that migrant workers, in particular low-wage earners in the construction, private security, service and domestic work sectors, continue to experience delayed payment or non-payment of wages;
- (e) The exclusion of some migrant workers, including domestic workers, from the wage protection system, the limited accessibility of migrant workers to the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund, and the lack of timely and effective enforcement of wage recovery actions against employers;
- (f) The persistent violation by employers of the prohibition of confiscating identity documents and passports;
- (g) Reports that many migrant workers, in particular low-wage earners in the construction, private security, service and domestic work sectors, do not seek justice for labour or other violations, as they fear or are exposed to retaliatory measures by employers such as terminating their contracts or being falsely accused of "absconding" (leaving a job without the employer's permission), which is punishable by imprisonment;
- (h) The strict and restrictive conditions regarding the right to family reunification for migrant workers (arts. 5–7).

19. **Recalling its previous concluding observations,⁸ the Committee urges the State party to:**

- (a) Ensure that all measures to protect migrant workers are fully enforced and transgressors punished, including by reinforcing the capacities of labour inspectors and other enforcement authorities to prevent, identify and effectively address violations of the labour rights of migrant workers;**
- (b) Fully abolish, in law and in practice, the requirement to have an employer's exit permit in order to leave the country;**
- (c) Ensure that all relevant administrative authorities cease requesting a no-objection certificate from migrant workers;**
- (d) Ensure that employers pay workers' wages on time and in full, and impose adequate and effective sanctions against non-compliant employers;**

⁷ See [A/HRC/44/57/Add.1](#).

⁸ [CERD/C/QAT/CO/17-21](#), para. 16.

(e) **Ensure that all migrant workers are covered by the wage protection system or by a similar wage-monitoring mechanism, facilitate the access of all migrant workers to the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund and guarantee the timely processing of claims and the effective enforcement of recovery actions against employers;**

(f) **Effectively enforce the prohibition for employers of confiscating identity documents and passports and ensure that employers who violate that prohibition are adequately punished;**

(g) **Take further measures to ensure that mechanisms for migrant workers to file complaints of violations of labour rights are accessible and ensure their protection against retaliation by their employers, including by decriminalizing absconding;**

(h) **Adopt measures to facilitate the family reunification of migrant workers and ensure that the relevant legislative and policy frameworks meet the international standards on the right to family life.**

Right to life and occupational safety and health of migrant workers

20. The Committee welcomes the measures adopted by the State party to protect the safety and health of workers, such as Ministerial Decree No. 17 of 2021 regarding the precautions necessary to protect workers from heat stress. However, the Committee is concerned about numerous reports of labour-related deaths of migrant workers on construction sites in Qatar, including migrant workers who built stadiums, hotels and metro airport and other infrastructure related to the Fédération Internationale de Football Association World Cup 2022. It is also concerned about the lack of comprehensive information about the numbers of deceased migrant workers, the investigations launched and the results thereof and the reparation provided to the families of the victims (arts. 5 and 6).

21. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen its monitoring mechanisms and ensure compliance with occupational safety and health regulations in order to prevent the death of migrant workers. It also recommends that the State party strengthen and effectively enforce the legal framework concerning investigations into labour-related deaths of migrant workers, including on construction sites and on infrastructure related to the Fédération Internationale de Football Association World Cup 2022, and ensure adequate reparation for the families. The Committee draws the attention of the State party to the recommendations made by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁹ and the Human Rights Committee.¹⁰**

Migrant domestic workers

22. The Committee notes the adoption of recent legislative and administrative measures to safeguard domestic workers' rights. However, it remains concerned that migrant domestic workers remain excluded from the greater protection guaranteed by the Labour Act and that the legal framework requires domestic workers to provide their employers with 72 hours' notice prior to their departure from employment and/or the country. It is particularly concerned that migrant domestic workers, who are predominantly women, continue to face abusive working conditions and multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, including forced confinement in the employers' homes, excessively long workdays with no rest and no days off and physical, verbal or sexual assault by employers or members of their families. It is also concerned by reports that migrant domestic workers who have been victims of sexual violence do not seek justice as they fear that their abusers will use morality laws to accuse them of *zina* (unlawful sexual intercourse), which is punishable by imprisonment (arts. 5–7).

23. **In the light of its general recommendation No. 25 (2000) on gender-related dimensions of racial discrimination, and recalling its previous concluding observations,¹¹ the Committee recommends that the State party:**

⁹ E/C.12/QAT/CO/1, para. 39.

¹⁰ CCPR/C/QAT/CO/1, para. 23.

¹¹ CERD/C/QAT/CO/17-21, para. 18.

- (a) **Ensure that migrant domestic workers benefit from the same legal protections as other migrant workers whose rights are covered under the Labour Act (Act No. 14 of 2004);**
- (b) **Amend Ministerial Decree No. 95 of 2019 in order to eliminate the 72-hour notification requirement that applies only to domestic workers;**
- (c) **Ensure the effective enforcement of all existing legal provisions that protect migrant domestic workers from abuse and exploitation, including by strengthening the capacities of labour inspectors and other enforcement authorities and removing any restrictions that prevent the monitoring of the working conditions of domestic workers, notably in private homes;**
- (d) **Investigate all allegations of abuse and violence against migrant domestic workers, including physical, verbal or sexual violence, and ensure that abusive employers are prosecuted and appropriately punished and that the victims receive adequate reparation;**
- (e) **Provide effective and accessible mechanisms for migrant domestic workers to report exploitation, abuse or violence, guarantee their protection against retaliation by their abusers, including by decriminalizing *zina*, and ensure that victims have effective access to legal aid, shelters and rehabilitation services;**
- (f) **Ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), of the International Labour Organization.**

Racial profiling

24. The Committee takes note of the measures taken by the State party to strengthen the capacities of law enforcement officials in the area of human rights and to combat racial discrimination. It is concerned, however, that there is no legislative provision explicitly prohibiting racial profiling by law enforcement officials and other public officials. It is also concerned about reports of racial profiling by law enforcement officials, traffic authorities, airport security personnel and employees of private security companies against non-nationals, in particular persons from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, and against persons facing intersecting forms of discrimination, in particular migrants, on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity. While taking note of the adoption of the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy in 2019 and the establishment of an artificial intelligence committee in 2021, the Committee is concerned that the Strategy lacks specific safeguards to protect persons against discrimination or profiling, including on the grounds of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin (arts. 2, 4, 5 and 6).

25. **In the light of its general recommendations No. 13 (1993) on the training of law enforcement officials in the protection of human rights, No. 31 (2005) on the prevention of racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system and No. 36 (2020) on preventing and combating racial profiling by law enforcement officials, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

- (a) **Include in its legislation a comprehensive prohibition of racial profiling and ensure that law enforcement officials are provided with clear guidelines aimed at preventing racial profiling during police and identity checks;**
- (b) **Take appropriate measures to end racial profiling by law enforcement and other public officials, as well as by personnel of private security companies, in particular against persons from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and against migrants on the basis of their real or perceived sexual orientation and gender identity;**
- (c) **Facilitate the reporting by victims of racial profiling, investigate, in an effective and timely manner, all incidents of racial profiling by law enforcement and other public officials and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished with appropriate penalties and that victims of racial profiling have access to effective remedies and adequate reparation and do not face reprisals for reporting such acts;**

(d) **Adopt the measures necessary, including legislative, policy, regulatory and standard-setting measures, to ensure that the design, development, deployment and use of artificial intelligence systems comply with international human rights standards, in particular with regard to the protection of persons against discrimination or profiling, including on the grounds of race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin.**

Freedom of expression, association, assembly and civic space

26. The Committee notes with concern that articles 44 and 45 of the Constitution of the State party only guarantee the right to freedom of assembly and association to Qatari citizens. It is concerned about reports of migrant workers being detained and deported after participating in protests against their employing company. It is also concerned about reports that journalists, bloggers and human rights defenders who have published information on the situation of migrant workers in Qatar and other related issues have been detained, arrested or deported on the basis of broad and vague legal provisions such as the dissemination of rumours or false news (art. 136 bis of the Criminal Code) or the posting online of content that violates social values or principles or spreading false information on the Internet (art. 6 of the Cybercrime Act of 2014) (arts. 1, 2, 5 and 6).

27. **Recalling its previous concluding observations,¹² and in line with the recommendations made by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights¹³ and the Human Rights Committee,¹⁴ the Committee recommends that the State party adopt the measures necessary to guarantee, in law and in practice, the effective exercise by non-nationals, notably migrant workers, of their rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association, including the right to form and join trade unions, without discrimination. It also recommends that the State party adopt measures to ensure an open space for the operation of civil society organizations, journalists and human rights defenders, notably those working on combating racial discrimination and on the rights of migrant workers, including by amending the legislation that may unduly restrict their rights of freedom of expression, association and assembly, so that they can carry out their activities freely and independently, without any undue interference from the State party and without fear of intimidation, threats or reprisals.**

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

28. The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party on the measures adopted to guarantee freedom of worship to all and on the role of the Doha International Centre for Interfaith Dialogue. However, it is concerned by reports that non-nationals belonging to religious minorities, in particular Baha'is, Christians and Hindus, face intersecting forms of discrimination on the grounds of nationality and religion, in law and in practice, including discriminatory dismissal from employment and exclusion in the education and public sectors, as well as restrictions on organizing cultural activities with a religious character such as public worship, public displaying of religious symbols and accessing religious literature. It is also concerned about the disparate impact on non-nationals belonging to religious minorities of the excessive administrative barriers to registering a religious group, which subject members of unregistered religious groups to the risk of deportation, and of the provisions of the Criminal Code that criminalize blasphemy and proselytizing religions other than Islam (arts. 1, 2 and 5).

29. **The Committee recommends that the State party take effective measures to guarantee, in law and in practice, the effective exercise by non-nationals of their right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, without any discrimination, as specified in article 5 of the Convention. It also recommends that the State party take positive measures to prevent and address any discrimination faced by non-nationals belonging to religious minorities in the enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights, and to ensure the freedom to manifest their religion or belief, either individually or in community with others, and in public or private, without being penalized. It further**

¹² Ibid., para. 32.

¹³ E/C.12/QAT/CO/1, paras. 11 and 43.

¹⁴ CCPR/C/QAT/CO/1, paras. 39 and 41.

recommends that the State party eliminate all barriers to the registration of religious groups and to the practice of religion in cases where a religious group is unregistered, and to revise the provisions of the Criminal Code that criminalize blasphemy and proselytizing religions other than Islam.

Nationality rights

30. The Committee is concerned that, under the Nationality Act (Act No. 38 of 2005), Qatari women cannot transfer their nationality to their non-Qatari spouses or to their children, unlike Qatari men. It is also concerned that the Nationality Act contains broad and vague provisions that allow for the removal or withdrawal of Qatari nationality without the right to appeal to the judiciary, which could result in the arbitrary deprivation of nationality (arts. 2 and 5).

31. In the light of its general recommendation No. 30 (2004) on discrimination against non-citizens, and recalling its previous concluding observations,¹⁵ the Committee recommends that the State party amend the Nationality Act to allow Qatari women married to non-Qataris to transmit their nationality to their children from birth, and to their spouses, on an equal footing with Qatari men. It also recommends that the State party adopt all measures necessary, including by amending the Nationality Act, to prevent the arbitrary deprivation of nationality and to ensure that all persons who have been deprived of their nationality are provided with redress and effective legal remedies, including judicial appeals procedures.

Housing

32. The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party on the measures adopted to guarantee the access to adequate housing to migrant workers, including Ministerial Decree No. 18 of 2014 defining the conditions and specifications of proper workers' accommodation. However, it is concerned about reports that many employers accommodate numerous low-wage and unskilled migrant workers in inadequate housing facilities, without or with limited access to essential services such as water, sanitation and electricity. It is also concerned about the discriminatory impact of certain housing policies and legislation that designate some areas as family zones and prohibit the rental of properties to migrant workers, which has the effect of relegating low-income migrant workers, in particular South Asians and sub-Saharan Africans, who are in the country without their families to the outskirts or industrial areas (arts. 1, 2 and 5).

33. In the light of its general recommendation No. 30 (2004) on discrimination against non-citizens, and recalling its previous concluding observations,¹⁶ the Committee recommends that the State party guarantee the equal enjoyment of the right to adequate housing for migrant workers, in particular low-income workers from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, including by reviewing housing laws and policies that prohibit them from residing in certain areas, such as Act No. 15 of 2010 on the prohibition of workers' camps within family residential areas and resolution No. 83 of 2011 of the Minister of Municipalities and Urban Planning. It also recommends that the State party fully enforce all measures adopted to guarantee the right to adequate housing of migrant workers, including by strengthening the capacities of labour inspectors and other enforcement authorities to prevent, identify and effectively punish any violations of this right.

Right to health

34. The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party on the measures adopted to guarantee the right to health care for all persons, including Act No. 7 of 2013 concerning social health insurance system. However, the Committee is concerned about reports that stateless persons and undocumented migrants face challenges with regard to the right to health due to the lack of the identity documents required to have access to essential

¹⁵ CERD/C/QAT/CO/17-21, para. 26.

¹⁶ Ibid., para. 24.

health care in the State party. It is also concerned about reports of low-income migrant workers facing racially and ethnically discriminatory treatment in the provision of health care. It is further concerned that migrant workers are subjected to mandatory HIV testing and, if found to be living with HIV, their work visas are denied and they are subject to deportation (arts. 1, 2 and 5).

35. In the light of its general recommendation No. 30 (2004) on discrimination against non-citizens, and recalling its previous concluding observations,¹⁷ the Committee recommends that the State party adopt the measures necessary to ensure equal access to health care to non-nationals, including stateless persons and undocumented migrants, and to prevent and address any racially and ethnically discriminatory treatment in the provision of health care. It also recommends that the State party abolish mandatory HIV testing for migrant workers and put an end to the denial of work visas and deportation of migrant workers living with HIV.

Education

36. The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party on the measures adopted to ensure the realization of the right to education for all, including the second strategic plan for education and training 2018–2022 and the support granted to community schools through the provision of land and school buildings. However, the Committee is concerned about reports that public schools have limited places available for non-nationals and that the fees charged by community and private schools are difficult to afford, in particular for families of migrant workers, who often have no choice but to send their children, or the mother with her children, to their countries of origin. It is also concerned about reports that schools only enrol children who hold valid identity documents, which constitutes a barrier to education for children of undocumented migrants (arts. 1, 2 and 5).

37. In the light of its general recommendation No. 30 (2004) on discrimination against non-citizens, and recalling its previous concluding observations,¹⁸ the Committee recommends that the State party ensure equal access to education to non-nationals, including access to compulsory primary and secondary education free of charge. It recalls that, in accordance with its general recommendation No. 30 (2004), States parties to the Convention should ensure that public educational institutions are open to non-citizens and children of undocumented immigrants residing in the territory of a State party.

Naturalized citizens

38. The Committee remains concerned that, by law, naturalized citizens do not enjoy the same rights as Qatari citizens born in the country, including with regard to the right to housing, the right to work in the public service and the right to participate in public affairs. It is also concerned that the electoral laws adopted in July 2021, in particular Act No. 6 of 2021, excluded all naturalized Qatari citizens from voting in the first elections for the Shura Council of October 2021 (arts. 1, 2 and 5).

39. Recalling its previous concluding observations,¹⁹ the Committee urges the State party to ensure that naturalized Qatari enjoy all human rights without discrimination and on an equal basis with Qatari citizens born in Qatar, including by removing from its legislative framework all the provisions that are discriminatory towards naturalized Qatari citizens.

Asylum-seekers and refugees

40. The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party that Act No. 11 of 2018 concerning political asylum is in its first experimental phase of implementation and that the results and data emerging from that implementation will determine to what extent it needs to be amended or improved. However, the Committee

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., para. 22.

remains concerned that article 8 of that Act stipulates that asylum-seekers whose asylum claims are rejected can appeal to the prime minister but not before a court, that article 11 prohibits asylum-seekers and refugees from engaging in political activity while residing in Qatar and that article 10 requires refugees to seek approval if they want to move from their government-assigned place of residence, which restricts their right to liberty of movement and residence (arts. 5 and 6).

41. In the light of its general recommendation No. 22 (1996) on refugees and displaced persons in the context of article 5 of the Convention, and recalling its previous concluding observations,²⁰ the Committee recommends that the State party amend the provisions of Act No. 11 of 2018 that prohibit asylum-seekers and refugees from engaging in political activity and that restrict the right of asylum-seekers and refugees to liberty of movement and residence, and ensure that asylum-seekers are provided with redress and effective legal remedies in relation to their requests for refugee status, including judicial appeal procedures. It also recommends that the State party accede to the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

Stateless persons

42. While taking note of the information provided by the State party that cases of statelessness decreased in the period 2017–2020, the Committee regrets the lack of detailed information on the total number of stateless persons in the State party, including Bidoon and members of the Al-Ghufran clan. It is concerned about reports that Bidoon encounter difficulties in accessing naturalization procedures, that the citizenship of some members of the Al-Ghufran clan has not yet been reinstated and that stateless persons face discrimination in their ability to fully enjoy their human rights, including with regard to access to work, housing, education and health care (arts. 2 and 5).

43. In the light of its general recommendation No. 30 (2004) on discrimination against non-citizens, and recalling its previous concluding observations,²¹ the Committee urges the State party to take all measures necessary to prevent and reduce statelessness and to ensure that stateless persons are able to enjoy all human rights without discrimination, including access to work, housing, education and health care. It recommends that the State party accede to the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

Complaints concerning racial discrimination and access to justice

44. The Committee takes note of the information provided by the State party on the measures adopted to facilitate access to justice to all, including the possibility of holding trials and hearings for witnesses and victims in an electronic manner or remotely, on the basis of provisions of the Judicial Authority Act (Act No. 8 of 2023) and of the Act on the Protection of Victims, Witnesses and Similar Persons (Act No. 5 of 2022). However, the Committee is particularly concerned about the lack of complaints of racial discrimination submitted to courts. It is also concerned about reports of obstacles to access to justice encountered by non-nationals, in particular migrant workers, such as discriminatory attitudes in the judicial system, insufficient interpretation services for those who do not speak Arabic, insufficient free legal aid services, high legal fees and fear of reprisals or negative repercussions. The Committee regrets the lack of information regarding the incorporation of the principle of the reversal of the burden of proof in matters of racial discrimination in the legislative framework of the State party (arts. 5 and 6).

45. In the light of its general recommendation No. 31 (2005) on the prevention of racial discrimination in the administration and functioning of the criminal justice system, the Committee reminds the State party that the absence of complaints does not necessarily mean that racial discrimination does not exist, but rather may indicate a lack of relevant and specific legislation, poor awareness of the remedies available,

²⁰ Ibid., para. 30.

²¹ Ibid., para. 28.

insufficient will on the part of the authorities to prosecute perpetrators, a lack of trust in the justice system or a fear of reprisals on the part of victims. Recalling its previous concluding observations,²² the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Facilitate the reporting of cases of racial discrimination and ensure that all victims of racial discrimination have access to effective legal remedies and adequate reparation;

(b) Strengthen public information campaigns on the rights enshrined in the Convention and on judicial and non-judicial remedies available with respect to those rights, targeting in particular the groups most exposed to racial discrimination, notably migrant workers;

(c) Prevent, identify and sanction discriminatory attitudes in the judicial system, ensure that victims of racial discrimination, including migrant workers, have effective access to interpretation services and free legal aid services and allocate sufficient human and financial resources to such services;

(d) Improve the training of law enforcement officials to enable them to deal effectively with cases of racial discrimination;

(e) Adopt legislation that places the burden of proof on those accused of racial or other forms of discrimination.

Human rights education to combat prejudice and intolerance

46. The Committee welcomes the creation of Bin Jelmood House at the Msheireb Museums, which is devoted to the history of Indian Ocean trade in enslaved persons and includes exhibitions on the history of enslavement in Qatar. It takes note of the measures adopted by the State party to provide training in human rights and to promote a culture of coexistence, tolerance and dialogue. However, the Committee remains concerned about the prevalence of racist stereotypes and stigmatization in the public and private spheres, notably with regard to migrant workers, and in particular towards persons from South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (art. 7).

47. Recalling its previous concluding observations²³ the Committee recommends that the State party continue and increase its efforts to provide human rights training, notably on the fight against racial discrimination, and to raise public awareness of the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity and understanding and tolerance, including among law enforcement officials, members of the judiciary, prison officers, lawyers and teachers. It also recommends that the State party continue developing initiatives related to the history of the Indian Ocean trade in enslaved persons and the history of enslavement in Qatar and its consequences, including by promoting research and incorporating the topic into education curricula at all levels.

D. Other recommendations

Ratification of other treaties

48. Bearing in mind the indivisibility of all human rights, the Committee encourages the State party to consider ratifying those international human rights treaties that it has not yet ratified, in particular treaties with provisions that have direct relevance to communities that may be subjected to racial discrimination, including the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

²² Ibid., para. 12.

²³ Ibid., para. 34.

Amendment to article 8 of the Convention

49. The Committee recommends that the State party accept the amendment to article 8 (6) of the Convention, adopted on 15 January 1992 at the fourteenth meeting of States parties to the Convention and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/111.

Declaration under article 14 of the Convention

50. The Committee encourages the State party to make the optional declaration provided for in article 14 of the Convention, recognizing the competence of the Committee to receive and consider individual complaints.

Follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action

51. In the light of its general recommendation No. 33 (2009) on the follow-up to the Durban Review Conference, the Committee recommends that, when implementing the Convention in its domestic legal order, the State party give effect to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in September 2001 by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, taking into account the outcome document of the Durban Review Conference, held in Geneva in April 2009. The Committee requests that the State party include in its next periodic report specific information on action plans and other measures taken to implement the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action at the national level.

International Decade for People of African Descent

52. In the light of General Assembly resolution 68/237, in which the Assembly proclaimed 2015–2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent, and Assembly resolution 69/16 on the programme of activities for the implementation of the International Decade, and considering that the International Decade is in its final year, the Committee requests the State party to include in its next periodic report information on the outcome of the measures taken to implement the programme of activities and on the sustainable measures and policies put in place in collaboration with people of African descent and their organizations, taking into account the Committee's general recommendation No. 34 (2011) on racial discrimination against people of African descent.

Consultations with civil society

53. The Committee recommends that the State party consult and increase its dialogue with civil society organizations working in the area of human rights protection, in particular those working to combat racial discrimination, in connection with the preparation of the next periodic report and in follow-up to the present concluding observations.

Dissemination of information

54. The Committee recommends that the State party's reports be made readily available and accessible to the public at the time of their submission and that the concluding observations of the Committee with respect to those reports be similarly made available to all government bodies entrusted with the implementation of the Convention, including at the municipal level, and publicized on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or any other website accessible to the public, in the official and other commonly used languages, as appropriate.

Follow-up to the present concluding observations

55. In accordance with article 9 (1) of the Convention and rule 65 of its rules of procedure, the Committee requests the State party to provide, within one year of the adoption of the present concluding observations, information on its implementation of

the recommendations contained in paragraphs 13 (a)–(c) (national plans on human rights and against racial discrimination) and 19 (b) and (c) (migrant workers) above.

Paragraphs of particular importance

56. The Committee wishes to draw the attention of the State party to the particular importance of the recommendations contained in paragraphs 17 (structural discrimination and special measures to address inequalities), 23 (migrant domestic workers), 25 (racial profiling) and 39 (naturalized citizens) above and requests the State party to provide detailed information in its next periodic report on the concrete measures taken to implement those recommendations.

Preparation of the next periodic report

57. The Committee recommends that the State party submit its combined twenty-fourth to twenty-sixth periodic reports, as a single document, by 21 August 2027, taking into account the reporting guidelines adopted by the Committee during its seventy-first session²⁴ and addressing all the points raised in the present concluding observations. In the light of General Assembly resolution 68/268, the Committee urges the State party to observe the limit of 21,200 words for periodic reports.

²⁴ [CERD/C/2007/1](#).