



Genocide Watch
The Alliance Against Genocide

Country Report: Qatar April 2021

The discovery of natural gas reserves in Qatar in [1939](#) transformed its economy. Gas revenues funded ambitious projects, such as hosting the 2022 Football World Cup. Qatari citizens have become some of the [wealthiest people](#) in the world. However, noncitizens make up ninety percent of Qatar's population. [Noncitizens](#) have no political rights. Noncitizens have limited civil rights and economic opportunities.

Two million of these noncitizens are migrant workers. The [Kafala](#), or sponsorship, system is notorious for facilitating exploitation and abuse. It gives employers total power over a migrant workers' immigration status. Domestic workers, who are mostly women, are often isolated in the private homes of their employers. They work long hours with no breaks, and they are sometimes victims of physical or sexual abuse. Migrant workers fear retribution by employers if they report mistreatment. Reprisals may include physical abuse, withheld wages, or deportation.

Migrant workers face structural [racial discrimination](#). U.N. Special Rapporteur Professor E. Tendayi Achiume found that there is a de facto caste system in which "European, North American, Australian, and Arab nationalities systematically enjoy greater human rights protections than South Asian and sub-Saharan nationalities." This affects the types of jobs migrant workers are offered and the salaries they earn. The U.N. raised these concerns in light of the [2022 Football World Cup preparations](#), for which Qatar hired two million migrant workers, mostly from south Asia and east and west Africa.

Qatar made significant [labor reforms](#) in 2020, including establishing a minimum wage for all workers and allowing migrant workers to switch jobs without the permission of their original employer. Though such measures would effectively end the Kafala system, they have not been [fully implemented](#) or enforced. In February 2021 the [Shura Council](#) recommended stripping migrant workers of many of the rights provided in the 2020 reforms.

Though the United States has [praised](#) Qatar for its efforts to promote tolerance and diversity, the [Anti-Defamation League](#) found that anti-Semitism is still taught in Qatari schools. Qatar stopped teaching *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in 2017, but government-published textbooks still include anti-Semitic tropes accusing Jews of lust for power, greed, and perpetration of the blood libel. A survey of 200 textbooks found no mentions of the Holocaust. The official curriculum also denies the existence of Israel and calls on Muslims to take "every effort to liberate Palestine from the Occupation."

Genocide Watch considers Qatar to be at **Stage 3: Discrimination** and **Stage 4: Dehumanization**.

Genocide Watch recommends:

- The Qatari government should enforce the implementation of the 2020 labor reforms to ensure the end of the Kafala system. The Shura Council's recommendations to strip workers of their rights should be rejected.
- The Qatari government should adopt and enforce legislation to address the structural racial discrimination faced by migrant workers. It should include the legal definition of racial discrimination in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
- The U.S., E.U., U.N., and corporate investors should demand that Qatar eliminate all anti-Semitic, anti-Israel teachings in its curriculum and textbooks.
- Qatar should officially recognize the Holocaust and include genocide education in its schools.