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# Women in The State of Qatar

INTERNATIONAL  
WOMEN'S DAY

M A R C H

# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

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## **Qatari Women**

The State of Qatar firmly believes in the role of the Qatari woman in the community and her aptitude to assume the highest positions and to carry out duties assigned to her in a manner marked by vigor, effectiveness and responsibility. The supreme political leadership represented by His Highness the Emir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani plays an encouraging role in supporting women to achieve equal rights, improve and enhance women's position and role in society.

Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, has been keen to be seen as a 'standard bearer' for Qatari women and the role that they can play in social and public lives. She has been insistent to portray that, in fact, a woman is every bit as capable as a man in several fields in the community, such as education, tourism, law, health and investment. Her highness has supported the Qatar Foundation for Science, Education and Community Development that was established in 1996 from The Qatar Academy, which aims at promoting women's skills and providing them with opportunities to make a difference. The State of Qatar has made giant, fundamental strides in enhancing the status of women and promoting gender equality.

Qatari women play a pivotal role in education, health, investment , art, law, literature, journalism, politics, charities, banks and many other fields.



## Quick Facts

- **Article 35 of the Qatari Constitution explicitly prohibits any legal discrimination on the basis of sex, as well as race, language, and religion.**
- **Qatar has a %58 female labor participation rate – above the global average, and the highest in the Arab World.**
- **Women outnumber men in higher education in Qatar.**
- **Qatar gave men and women the right to vote and run in municipal elections at the same time in 1999 – and deliberately held the first election on International Women’s Day.**
- **Four women are included in Qatar’s Amir-appointed Shura Council, which advises on legislation and policy.**

## History

In early Qatari Bedouin (inland) and ‘Hadhri’ (coastal) culture, women often needed to act as merchants and assume positions of leadership within their tribes while their husbands were gone for long periods of time for trade or pearl diving. This particular dynamic maintained the traditional Islamic gender roles while empowering women to act as leaders within their larger communities. Thus, Qatar has historically stood out from its neighbors in how its society views the role of women. Qatar’s culture shifted as it became a major petrochemical exporter. Younger Qatari women sought role models in their own country to understand how they should view their role in their rapidly changing society.

# Roles of Women in Qatar

## Women in the Field of Education

The field of education was the doorway through which women entered into the labor market. The statistics of the Ministry of Education indicate that the number of Qatari female students in the State-owned schools has risen at greater rates compared to the number of male students. Qatari women also account for more than %50 of the total workforce of the Ministry of Education.

Women's presence at Qatar University, either as faculty members or administrative staff, account for more than %50 of the total workforce of the University. Women assumed high ranking posts. H.E. Mrs. Sheikha Al-Mahmoud was appointed as Minister of Education on May 2003 ,6, to be the first lady ever in Qatar and the GCC region to occupy such an important ministerial post. Her appointment comes as a reaffirmation by H.H. Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani to activate the Qatari woman's role in the country's educational renaissance. Similarly, Dr. Sheikha Al-Misnad was appointed to the post of President of Qatar University; being the first Qatari woman to assume such post.

## Qatari Women in the field of Health

The Qatari woman occupies high positions in the field of health in Qatar. Sheikha Ghalia bint Mohammad Al-Thani was appointed as the Minster of Health and Director of Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) to be responsible for managing nursing, pharmacology and medical centers as well as other fields.

## Qatari Women and Law

Qatari women work at the Ministry of Justice where they lead several sections of the ministry such as the legislation, translation and official gazette sections. There are several successful women lawyers in Qatar who are practicing the law and have developed themselves to acquire a high position in the legal field.

The appointment of Mrs. Mariam Abdullah Al-Jaber as the first District Attorney in the Gulf region was a phenomenal development in the region.

## Qatari Women in Tourism

Women in the tourism sector have contributed significantly to tourism events organized by the State of Qatar Museums Authority and Katara Hospitality. Qatari women in the field of fine art, photography and theatrical decoration, have forced themselves to be involved in the media field in Qatar. The Qatari women has also taken hold of senior positions in the field of visual and audio media.

Female graduates from Qatar University who have specialised in history, archaeology, and administration have carved out important roles within the growing tourist sector as guides, who can inform – from a base of knowledge and experience – about the history of the monuments and artifacts of this country.

### **Qatari Women in the Diplomatic Field**

Qatari women are not excluded from diplomatic work. Sheikha Alia Ahmad Al-Thani was appointed as the first female ambassador and assumed the post of the permanent delegate of the State of Qatar in the Europe-based United Nations headquarters in Geneva. She had previously served as an advisor to the permanent delegate of the State of Qatar in the United Nations in New York.

Qatari women have made an impact. In February 2001, Dr Sheikha Ghalia Bint Mohamed bin Hamad Al Thani, member of UN Child Rights Committee was elevated to a senior position with the United Nations in New York ahead of the representatives of 21 other countries who, like Qatar, have signed the International Convention on Children's Rights.

H.E. Lulua Al-Khater was also appointed as the ministry's spokesperson, making her one of the very first Qatari woman to hold such a high-level post.

### **Women in Finance and Investment**

Qatari women have fully emerged themselves in the financial and investment sectors. Qatar Business Woman Association the first of its kind in the region, was established in 1998. It is equally shared by a group of Qatari ladies and Qatar National Bank. The association is managed by Sheikha Hanadi bint Nasser Al-Thani. In November 2000, the Businesswomen Forum, was launched based on the approval of Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, which considered the Forum as one of the Chamber's committees. By doing so, the Chamber aimed to provide a stimulating social climate for women to play their role in the development process, actively contribute to the establishment small trades and industrial enterprises and promote the role of Qatari woman in economic decision making. Women's participation in the investment field also extended to the banking industry where they acquired high level positions based on their high-achieving qualifications.

### **The contribution of Qatari woman in Charity**

Women play a pivotal role in providing all types of aid and subsidies inside and outside the Qatari community, as well as various activities such as the preparation of field research for needy families, the establishment of charitable causes, and the organisation of donation campaigns to areas of need.

The Qatar Red Crescent Society was the first to establish a Women's Section in 1982, before more associations joined and set up women's branches in addition to the country's Social Development Center. Qatari women work in these communities both as employees and as volunteers.

# Law No (14) of the Year 2004 – Qatar Labor Law

**We, Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, The Emir of the State of Qatar,**

**After perusal of:**

- The Amended Provisional Constitution and in particular Articles (34) ,(23) and (51) thereof and,
- Labour Law No. (3) of the year 1962 and its amending Laws, and,
- Law No (11) of the Year 1962 on the Establishment of the Commercial Register System and its amending Laws, and,
- Law No.(3) of the Year 1963 on Regulating the Entry and Residence of Aliens in Qatar and its amending Laws, and,
- Law No.(3) of the year 1984 on the Regulation of the Sponsorship of the Residence and Exit of Aliens, as amended by Law No.(21) of the year 2002,
- Law No.(14) of the Year 1992 on Regulating the Recruitment of Workers from abroad for others, and,
- Law No (23) of the Year 1994 on Regulating the rules of Compounding of Offences provided for in Law No (14) of the year 1992 on the Regulation of the Recruitment of Workers from Abroad for Others, and,
- Law No (7) of the year 1999 on Regulating the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Housing and defining its competence, and
- The Commercial Companies Law Issued by Law No (5) of the Year 2002, and,
- The Proposal of the Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Housing, and,
- The Draft Law Submitted by the Council of Ministers, and,
- After taking the opinion of the Advisory Council,

**We have decided the following Qatar Labor Law:**

## **Article (1)**

The Provisions of the Labour Law accompanied with this Law shall be applied.

## **Article (2)**

The Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Housing shall, in coordination with the other competent authorities, issue the necessary Decisions for the implementation of this Law and until these Decisions are issued, the Decisions for the time being in force shall continue to be applied to the extent that they do not contradict with the provisions of the accompanying this Law.

## **Article (3)**

The Laws Nos. (3) for the Year 14) ,1962) for the Year 1992 and 23 for the Year 1994 referred to together with any provision contradicting with the provisions of the accompanying this Law are hereby repealed.

## **Article (4)**

All concerned authorities, each within its competence, shall implement this Law. This Law shall come into force six months after the date of its publication in the Official Gazette.

Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani , The Emir of the State Of Qatar

Issued at Emiri Diwan on 1425/3/ 30 AH Corresponding to 2004/ 5 /19 AD.

# **PART ONE**

## **Definitions and General Provisions**

### **Article (1)**

In the application of this law the following words and expressions shall, unless the context otherwise requires, have the meanings respectively assigned to them:

#### **1. Ministry**

Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Housing

#### **2. Minister**

Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Housing

#### **3. Department**

Labour Department at the Ministry.

#### **4. Employer**

Any natural or juristic person employing one or more workers in return for a wage.

#### **5. Worker**

Any natural person who works in return for a wage for an employer or under his control or supervision.

#### **6. Apprentice**

Any natural person having an apprenticeship contract with an employer for his being instructed on the origins of a trade or craft or increasing his knowledge and skills thereon.

#### **7. Juvenile**

Any natural person who has reached the age of sixteen but has not reached the age of eighteen.

#### **8. Labour**

Any human effort, whether intellectual, technical or physical exerted in return for a wage.

#### **9. Service Contract**

An agreement between an employer and worker, whether of a definite or indefinite duration, whereby the worker undertakes to perform a certain work for the employer, under his direction or supervision in return for a wage.

#### **10. Basic Wage**

The rate of payment for the work done by the worker in a certain period of time or on the basis of piece or production and includes periodic increment.

#### **11. Wage**

Basic wage plus all increments allowances and bonuses paid to the worker in return for or in respect of work of whatever kind and means of calculation.

#### **12. Vocational Training**

Educating the trainee on the origins of a trade or craft or increasing his knowledge or skills thereon or qualifying the worker to change his trade by the necessary practical and theoretical means and programs.

#### **13. Licensed Physician**

The person licensed to practise the medical profession in Qatar.

#### **14. Corporation**

Any establishment in which the Qatari share capital is not less than 51 % and whose main place of business is in Qatar.

#### **15. Establishment**

Any project managed by a natural or juristic person and employing a worker or more.

#### **16. Continuous Service**

The uninterrupted service of the worker with the same employer or his legal successor. This continuous service will not be interrupted in case of periods of leave, permitted or agreed absence or stoppage of work in the establishment for reasons not related to the worker.

#### **17. Temporary Work**

The work whose nature necessitates its performance in a limited period or which is limited to a certain work and ends upon its performance.

#### **18. Casual Work**

The work which is by its very nature not included in the activities carried on by the employer and the performance of which does not take more than four weeks.

#### **19. Work Injury :**

Suffering by the worker from any of the occupational diseases listed in schedule No.(1) to this law or any injury resulting from an accident happening to the worker during the performance of his work or by reason thereof or on his way to or back from his work provided that the journey to and from the work is made without any break lingering, or diversion from the normal route.

#### **20. Workers Organizations**

The Workers' Committees, the General Committee for the Workers in a trade or industry and the General Union for the Workers of Qatar.

#### **21. Competent Medical Authority**

The Authority to be specified by the Ministry of Public Health.

## **PART NINE**

### **EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN**

#### **Article (93)**

Working women shall be granted a wage equal to that of men for performing the same work and shall have the same training and promotion opportunities.

#### **Article (94)**

It is prohibited to employ women in hazardous works that may be harmful to their health or works or in other works specified by a decision from the Minister.

#### **Article (95)**

It is prohibited to employ women at times other than those specified by a decision from the Minister.

#### **Article (96)**

The worker who spent one full year of service at the employer shall have the right to obtain a fully paid maternity leave of fifty days. This leave shall cover the period preceding delivery and the post-delivery period, provided that the postpartum period is not less than thirty-five days.

This leave shall be granted based on a medical certificate issued by a licensed physician stating the likely date of delivery. If the remaining period of the leave after delivery is less than thirty days, the worker may be granted a complementary leave to be deducted from her annual leave.

Otherwise, the complementary leave shall be unpaid.

If the health condition of the worker after delivery prevents her from resuming work after the end of the leave set forth in the preceding paragraphs, she shall be considered in an unpaid leave provided that the period of suspension of work does not exceed sixty continuous or intermittent days.

A medical certificate about her health condition shall be submitted by a licensed physician. The women who obtain their maternity leaves shall not forfeit their rights of obtaining any other leaves.

#### **Article (97)**

The breastfeeding worker, in addition to her right of the rest period set forth in Article 73 hereof, shall have the right to be given a daily breastfeeding hour for one year, with effect from the end of the maternity leave.

The time for breastfeeding shall be specified by the worker.

The breastfeeding period shall be counted within the working hours and shall not entail any reduction in the wage.

### **Article (98)**

The employer shall not have the right to terminate the employment contract of the worker because of her marriage or because obtaining the leave set forth in Article 96 hereof.

He shall not notify her of the termination of her employment contract during this leave or send her a notice that expires during the leave.