

NHRC Statement No. 03/2018**on the statement of the countries of the blockade on the report of the OHCHR technical mission to the State of Qatar**

The National Human Rights Committee of the State of Qatar reviewed the statement issued by the countries of the blockade through some news agencies on the report of the technical mission of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to the State of Qatar during the period from 17 to 24 November 2017.

The NHRC deplores the misrepresentation of the facts and the allegations made against the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the challenge of its credibility as well as the unfounded accusations against the National Human Rights Committee of Qatar. The countries of the blockade, without any doubt, reveal a more intransigent position, expressing a categorical refusal to recognize the violations committed against citizens and residents of the State of Qatar and the citizens of the Gulf States as a result of the blockade and the unilateral measures taken against them.

These countries were supposed to act to address violations and to immediately end the victims' impunity, instead of their futile efforts to make accusation against the United Nations and human rights organizations that are not in line with their attitudes and orientations, and the vicious attacks by their officials and media outlets against these organizations.

To raise the public and Gulf awareness, The NHRC, since the beginning of the crisis, has promptly submitted requests to several human rights organizations and Arab and international media to dispatch missions and representatives to the State of Qatar to investigate the tragedies and suffering caused by the blockade, which targeted primarily civilians. Accordingly, many of these organizations and media as well as some parliamentary missions and international figures visited the State of Qatar during the previous period, where all the reports of those organizations and missions confirmed the serious violations by the countries of the blockade. Furthermore, The NHRC has submitted a formal request to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to dispatch a technical mission to the State of Qatar, as the highest official body concerned with the protection and promotion of human rights in the United Nations, with the following objectives:

- Investigate the violations and meet the victims and the concerned authorities in the state including government authorities and civil society organizations.
- Verification of procedures made by the NHRC in monitoring and reporting violations.
- Providing technical support to the NHRC and concerned bodies in the State in the field of protection and promotion of human rights.
- Addressing the reality of human rights in the State of Qatar.

The report was issued by the Technical Mission and sent to NHRC as the applicant; where the NHRC considers the publication of this report an important step to redress the victims and to communicate their voice to the international public opinion, rather than for propaganda or political purposes.

The statement issued by the countries of the blockade clearly reflects their unwillingness to respond to the demands of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and international human rights organizations, as well as their intention to continue violations, punishment and use of the people in this crisis.

The allegations made by the countries of the blockade against the State of Qatar on the pretext of protecting their national security neither give rise to a right to violate the Charter of the United Nations and the international resolutions issued by the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, nor give rise to a right to deny the obligations contained in the human rights conventions which they ratified and acceded; furthermore, it doesn't justify the extent of the serious violations suffered by the peoples of the region as a result of the blockade.

The statement of the countries of the blockade on the report of the OHCHR technical mission again reflects the extend of pressures and the serious harassment exercised by these countries on advocates and human rights organizations including challenging the impartiality, integrity and credibility of the OHCHR. This is not strange to those countries that have consistently punished the peoples and use them as a tool to implement their policies, and their practices of communicating lies from the first moment of the blockade to cover up violations and find justifications for them.

The questioning of the OHCHR report and the reports issued by the UN human rights mechanisms, is not a precedent in the practices of the countries of the blockade that have criminalized showing sympathy with the people of Qatar.

Since the beginning of the crisis, these countries have questioned all the international reports of major human rights organizations; and through their diplomacy, they used their various media outlets to launch fierce campaigns against these organizations and accuse them of being biased towards the State of Qatar.

The NHRC stresses that the repeated and desperate attempts of the countries of the blockade to undermine its credibility and question its work in order to obstruct its efforts to expose violations will only increase its determination to perform its duty in accordance with the Paris Principles.

The NHRC reiterates its call on the countries of the blockade to allow the missions of international organizations and special rapporteurs to enter their territories to assess the reality of the situation and have a broader understanding of the impacts of the blockade crisis, especially the measures taken and their impact on their citizens and residents, rather than reliance on the policy of plausible deniability and unjustified and immoral justifications.

The NHRC stresses that the desired unity of the Gulf shall not be achieved through the destruction of the social fabric and the persistent reliance on the policy of disregarding the human rights of the Gulf people or ignorance of the seriousness of the crisis and its repercussions.

The NHRC calls upon the OHCHR to continue its efforts and to immediately move according to the foundations of the Mission's report in accordance with its legal mandate to ensure an immediate end to the blockade and the suffering of the victims.

The NHRC also calls upon the Government of Qatar not to accept any solution to the crisis or any negotiations before lifting the violations and injustice and redress for the victims, as well as expediting the procedures for holding accountable those who are responsible for the violations.

Finally, the NHRC confirms that the countries of the blockade cannot cover their violations by these methods and pretexts, and that whatever they do, the voices of the victims are stronger than their attempts. They should have the courage to admit and address the mistakes and redress the victims.

The NHRC will continue to work in cooperation with its partners including human rights organizations and advocates to defend victims, make their voices heard in international forums, and expose the illegal and immoral practices of the countries of the blockade. The NHRC shall also continue its legal and human rights movements to establish the international responsibility of the countries of the blockade and their officials.

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