The Qatari National Human Rights Committee and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights have co-organised under the auspices of the General Secretariat of the Arab Interior Ministers’ Council, the Arab Parliament, the League of Arab States, and the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions, a regional conference on Human Rights Approaches to Conflict Situations in the Arab Region from 20 to 21 February 2017 in Doha, Qatar.

The Conference brought together representatives from ministries of foreign affairs and interior of 18 Arab countries, and more than 320 national human rights, civil society organizations, regional and international organizations, independent human rights experts, and United Nations entities.

The conference aimed to provide a platform for an interactive debate between relevant actors on the human right approach to conflict situations and its relevance in the Arab region. In this regard, participants discussed the different stages in which human rights play an integral role in preventing, protecting and resolving conflicts.

Participants in the end of the conference stated the following recommendations:

**Respecting human rights as a preventative approach:**

1. All actors to empower individuals belonging to groups most at risk of marginalisation to claim their rights and overcome the challenges associated with discrimination.
2. Arab States, national human rights institutions, and civil society to promote and facilitate the inclusive participation of all sections of society in public life and to eliminate all forms of discrimination in society.
3. Arab States to give priority to efforts aiming at preventing violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.
4. All actors to consider the establishment of a regional early warning centre based on human rights and the prevention of conflict.

**Human rights education and awareness building**

5. All actors to support activities, policies, and strategies aimed at promoting human rights education and human rights awareness.
6. Arab States revise school curricula and reform educational policies and systems to introduce programmes aimed at supporting human rights education, and promoting equality, respect and tolerance for all persons.
7. United Nations entities to provide support to increase the capacity of state institutions, national human rights institutions, and civil society to deliver human rights education and awareness building.

8. All parties to conflict to abide by international human rights and humanitarian rules and principle.

9. Arab States to exercise their influence over all parties to armed conflict to respect rules of international humanitarian law and human rights principles, and to give priority to humanitarian aid to victims.

10. International community to support people under occupation to realise their right to self-determination, and to take responsibility in accordance with international law to put an end to human rights and humanitarian law violations during armed conflict and occupation.

11. Arab States to ensure the protection of civilians, and pay special attention to the protection of human rights of persons in vulnerable situations, in particular women, children, older persons, human rights defenders, internally displaced persons, marginalized communities, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

12. Arab States, national human rights institutions, and civil society to promote and protect the rights of children, including by combating recruitment and the use of children for military purposes.

13. Arab States to prevent, investigate and punish all forms of gender-based violence, in particular sexual violence perpetuated by State and non-State actors; and implement a policy of zero tolerance.

14. Arab States and national human rights institutions to allocate adequate resources and adopt effective measures to ensure that victims of human rights violations, particularly survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, have access to adequate support without discrimination, including comprehensive medical treatment, mental health care and psychosocial support.

15. National human rights institutions and civil society to continue advocacy towards ensuring a greater protection of children and education by all parties to conflicts.

16. OHCHR to continue its mandated work in situations of conflict, to ensure State’s compliance with international standards, and to support civil society and national human rights institutions in documenting violations in such contexts.

Humanitarian assistance:

17. All parties to conflict allow and facilitate access to humanitarian assistance, including rapid and unimpeded passage of relief consignments, equipment, personnel, medical care, and other support to victims.

18. States to ensure humanitarian workers and facilities are protected from attack.

19. States to hold accountable the perpetrators of attacks on humanitarian workers in line with international standards, and ensure that victims are afforded the right to remedy.

Education under attack:
20. States, national human rights institutions, and civil society to promote and protect the right to education, in particular of vulnerable groups including minorities, the internally displaced and girls, whose rights may be particularly at risk during armed conflict.

21. States national human rights institutions, and civil society to utilise the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 4 to guide action in ensuring education for all.

22. States to introduce and implement legislation and regulations that prohibit attacks and occupation of schools by any party and take measures to bring those responsible for violating such measures to justice.

23. States to endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration adopted in Oslo in May 2015.

24. States to take effective measures to deter the use of schools by parties to conflicts, including by bringing the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict into military policy and operational frameworks.

Human rights in conflict resolution and peace processes

25. All actors to support international and regional cooperation in the field of human rights, education, and conflict resolution with the aim of establishing a culture of peace.

26. All actors to ensure that women and civil society organizations focused on women’s issues and representatives of civil society are included equally in all peace negotiations and conflict management efforts.

27. All actors to apply a human rights based approach when considering the formulation and implementation of public policy as a tool for the legal and institutional reform.

28. United Nations entities to strengthen the capacity of decision-makers in government agencies, parliaments and consultative councils and civil society with respect to conflict management through dialogue, negotiation, and peaceful solutions.

Transitional justice

29. All actors to support the inclusion of commitments to accountability and to uphold the protection of human rights in peace processes.

30. All actors to involve children and youth in post transition and post conflict efforts to address the legacy of conflict and to engage with them directly on the subject of their human rights.

31. All actors to ensure the centrality of victims in the design and implementation of transitional justice and reconciliation processes and mechanisms.

32. All actors to ensure transitional justice processes and mechanisms take account of the root causes of conflict and repressive rule, and address violations of all rights.

33. All actors to ensure that transitional justice processes are designed and implemented in a comprehensive, inclusive, and gender-sensitive manner, in line with international norms and standards.

34. Arab States to establish a regional specialised institution on transitional justice to document and share good practices.
The participants of the conference expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the Qatari National Human Rights Committee and the State of Qatar for hosting the conference and for their continuing efforts to ensure its success with a view to implementing recommendations which will seek to address the challenging situation in the region.

Participants were also encouraged to utilize the recommendations emanating from the conference with a view to adopting them in their respective plans of action to build a future based on peace, justice, tolerance, and respect for the human rights of all.