



**OHCHR TECHNICAL MISSION TO
THE STATE OF QATAR
17- 24 November 2017**

**Report
On the impact of the Gulf Crisis on human rights
December 2017**

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I. Introduction

1. Since the Governments of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Kingdom of Bahrain and Arab Republic of Egypt (*hereafter the Quartet*) took the decision, on 5 June 2017, to cut diplomatic ties with the State of Qatar, OHCHR has been closely monitoring the consequences of that decision on the enjoyment of human rights. On 14 June, the High Commissioner issued a press statement urging “*all the States involved to solve this dispute as quickly as possible through dialogue, to refrain from any actions that could affect the well-being, health, employment and integrity of their inhabitants, and to respect their obligations under international human rights law*”. He further held meetings with the Quartet’s Permanent Representatives in Geneva, urging them to take immediate corrective measures, including by establishing hotlines to look into individual cases.

2. Various international human rights organizations and mechanisms have expressed concern about the detrimental impact of the decision on individuals’ civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights. The National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) of Qatar has been very active in monitoring and documenting allegations of human rights violations reported to them by Qatari citizens and residents since 5 June, particularly those living in neighbouring countries.

3. On 14 September 2017, the Chairperson of the NHRC invited the High Commissioner to dispatch a technical mission to Qatar, as soon as possible, to assess the impact of the crisis on human rights. Subsequently, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Section informed the Permanent Missions of KSA, UAE and Bahrain about the invitation, expressing the readiness to conduct similar missions. The MENA Section further informed the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, the United Nations Task Force on the Gulf crisis and other relevant actors about OHCHR’s engagement with the States concerned.

4. Consequently, an OHCHR team (*hereafter the Team*) visited Qatar from 17 March to 24 November 2017, with the following objectives:

- i. To engage with Government institutions, the NHRC, civil society representatives and other actors, with a view to gathering information about the impact of the ongoing crisis on human rights;
- ii. To explore opportunities to provide technical assistance to national actors, including the NHRC, and;
- iii. To report to the High Commissioner and recommend concrete actions.

5. The mission was facilitated by the NHRC, whose support was highly appreciated. The

team also met with representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs; Defence; Interior; Economy and Trade; Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs; Education; Health; Religious Affairs; the Customs Authority; the Chamber of Commerce; the Qatar University; the Qatar Foundation; the Director of the Salwa crossing point with Saudi Arabia; the Qatar News Agency, editors in chiefs of all main local newspapers, staff of *Al Jazeera* and the High Audio-visual Authority; the compensation claims commission (established to provide legal advice to individuals filing claims related to the crisis); migrant communities, and Qatar Airways. The team also met with the regional representatives of UNESCO and UNODC.

6. Moreover, based on cases filed with the NHRC, the team interviewed about 40 individuals to get a better understanding of their situation. It also reviewed a large number of other cases, documents and data provided by various entities.

II. Background

7. Although rooted in long-standing tensions among KSA, UAE and Qatar in particular, the emergence of the current crisis has been attributed to comments aired initially in Qatari media on 24 May 2017, reportedly made by the Emir of Qatar, denouncing the hostile remarks made by the President of the United States of America towards Iran during his visit to KSA. The Government of Qatar has declared that these statements were planted by hackers. The Governments of KSA, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt have dismissed this explanation.

8. On 5 June 2017, the Governments of KSA, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt announced they were cutting diplomatic ties with the State of Qatar, ordering their citizens to leave Qatar, declaring a ban on all travel to and from Qatar, and instructing Qatari residents and visitors to leave their territories within 14 days. The four States gave Qatari diplomats 48 hours to evacuate. While the Governments of KSA, UAE and Bahrain withdrew their diplomatic personnel from Qatar, Egypt maintained a limited number of staff under the protection of the Embassy of Greece in Doha. Qatar was subsequently expelled from the Saudi-led coalition on Yemen. Kuwait and Oman have remained neutral, with Kuwait engaging in mediation efforts to solve the crisis.

9. As of 5 June, the Governments of KSA, UAE and Bahrain closed all air, sea and land transportation links with Qatar. These measures have had a significant impact on Qatar's economy and residents, particularly during the first weeks of the crisis due to the considerable dependence of the country on KSA and the UAE.

10. While the Emir of Kuwait endeavoured to engage with all the States concerned so as to ease tensions and avoid any escalation, dialogue appears to have stalled. Many people met by

the team expressed disappointment with the passivity of regional organizations, notably the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States. The crisis has generated particular distrust in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) which had thus far been the medium of numerous cooperation agreements among its members.

11. On 9 June, the Quartet designated 59 individuals and 12 institutions alleged to have financed terrorist organizations and to have received support from Qatar. On 23 June, and according to online reports, the Quartet further issued a 10-day ultimatum on Qatar to abide by a list of 13 demands, including closing down Al Jazeera among other things, cutting diplomatic and commercial ties with Iran, shutting down the Turkish military base in Qatar and, ending any form of support and assistance to the Muslim Brotherhood. On 5 July, the Quartet replaced this initial list of demands with six broader “principles” that still include the shutting down of the permanent Turkish military base in Qatar, and the closure of Al Jazeera and other Qatar-backed news outlets which the Quartet accuses of spreading extremist views and providing platforms for dissidents.

III. Main human rights issues arising from the crisis

12. The 5 June decision and related measures undertaken by the Quartet had immediate negative, intertwined effects on a number of human rights, as described in the present chapter.

13. There are four categories of victims of the crisis:

- Qatari individuals who were residing in KSA, UAE, Bahrain (and studying in Egypt), and were compelled to rapidly exit these countries, leaving behind their family, businesses, employment, property, or being forced to interrupt their studies.
- KSA, UAE and Bahrain nationals who resided in Qatar (including many married to Qataris) and felt compelled to move to their country of origin, and have consequently been separated from their family, source(s) of income and/or property.
- Migrant workers and their families, who constitute the majority of the population of Qatar, some of whom have lost their employment and have been facing increased economic pressure.
- The population of Qatar, KSA, UAE and Bahrain at large due to the suspension of freedom of movement between their countries and the repercussions on various civil, economic, social and cultural rights.

1. Instrumentalization of the media and restrictions of freedom of expression

14. The instrumentalization of the media, particularly in KSA and UAE, has been a prominent feature of the crisis. The Mission was informed by all interlocutors that the

Quartet's unilateral measures have been accompanied by a widespread defamation and hatred campaign against Qatar and Qataris in various media linked to the four countries as well as on social media, and by the introduction of criminal sanctions in KSA, UAE and Bahrain against people expressing sympathy for Qatar and Qataris.

15. Most media professionals the Mission met described the instrumentalization of foreign media networks by the authorities of KSA and UAE, particularly to convey anti-Qatar and anti-Qatari editorial lines. Most interlocutors were of the view that this media and social media campaign was premeditated and organized to “*generate a general feeling of hostility and hatred towards Qatar*”.

16. The Mission was informed that at least 1,120 press articles and some 600 anti-Qatar caricatures were published in KSA, UAE and Bahrain between June and October 2017, which has been documented by media professionals and the NHRC. Such material included accusations of Qatar's support to terrorism, calls for a regime change or a *coup d'état*, attacks against leading figures and symbols of Qatar, as well as appeals for attacks on, and murder of Qataris. For instance, a Saudi tweeter with five million followers has been issuing “*religious opinions*” calling for the killing of the Emir of Qatar. Another Saudi tweeter warned he could send one million Yemeni suicide bombers to Qatar.

17. Entertainment programmes have also been used to air anti-Qatar messages. For example, Rotana media company produced songs by popular artists stigmatizing Qatar (“Qulo la Qatar”- “Tell Qatar”, and “Sanoalem Qatar”- “We will teach Qatar”) and well-known television series on MBC and Rotana channels (“Selfie” and “Garabeb Sood”) conveyed negative messages on Qatar, which have been regularly and widely broadcast.

18. The team met the editor-in-chief of the Qatari daily newspaper Al Arab, Mr. Jaber Al Mirri, who has been listed No. 18 on the list of 59 individuals accused by Quartet's as a terrorists. He reported having received 10 death threats since then and described the psychological impact on his family.

19. The Governments of KSA, UAE and Bahrain announced, via their respective news agencies, that any individuals within their jurisdiction expressing empathy vis-à-vis Qatar would be subjected to criminal sanctions in the form of hefty fines and/or detention. A group of editors-in-chief of Qatari newspapers met by the team stated that an Adviser to the Royal Court in KSA, reportedly, was orchestrating the media campaign against Qatar, referring to the mobilization of a “social media army”. They also alleged that person had been urging people, via tweeter, to denounce individuals supporting Qatar or Qataris through a hotline number, which had reportedly generated 800 calls.

20. The effect of this media campaign may amount to a form of incitement. It has also undoubtedly created anxiety among many people in KSA, UAE and Bahrain who have had

close family, amical or commercial ties with Qataris. Most journalists met by the team referred to the fear this situation has instilled among their colleagues and friends in KSA, UAE and Bahrain. Several interlocutors further noted they would be contacted by relatives and friends in KSA through non-KSA phone numbers for fear of being tracked.

21. The Governments of KSA, UAE and Bahrain have suspended the circulation and broadcasting of all Qatari and Qatar-based media and, as satellite diffusion cannot be controlled, they prohibited commercial entities (such as hotels) to offer access to such media (namely Al Jazeera, BEIN Sports and associated channels). The case of Al Jazeera is emblematic as the closure of this broadcaster and affiliate stations remains one of the requirements set by the Quartet to restore diplomatic ties with Qatar.

22. All interlocutors met by the team stated that the Government of Qatar had clearly instructed all Qataris, Qatari based institutions, companies and media not to criticize the citizens of KSA, UAE and Bahrain. The Qatari and Qatar-based media met by the team, including Al Jazeera, all declared they had encouraged their staff members from the Quartet countries to remain in Doha. The editor-in-chief of Al Raya Al Qataria, a daily newspaper, noted that 50 to 60 per cent of his journalists were Egyptians and that while all had left Qatar after the call of their Government on its citizens to come home, 40 per cent of them had returned to Qatar after obtaining formal approval from the Egyptian authorities. Al Jazeera reported that only three of their 26 journalists from KSA had left while its 349 Egyptian and three Bahraini employees had continued to work for the broadcaster.

2. Suspension and restrictions of freedom of movement and communications

23. One of the most immediate and visible impact of the decision of 5 June has been the border closures (air, sea and land), with considerable effects on freedom of movement to and from Qatar. On 17 November, the team was informed that the Government of KSA had closed down its border with Qatar. Some interruption of telecommunications (namely phone connections) was also reported to the team. Besides the economic implications for Qatar, the suspension and restrictions of freedom of movement and communications have affected the exercise of various rights, as described in subsequent sections of this chapter.

24. On 5 June, the authorities of KSA and UAE notified their ports and shipping authorities they would not receive Qatari vessels or ship owned by Qatari companies or individuals. The KSA General Authority of Civil Aviation prohibited the landing of any Qatari planes in KSA airports, while Abu Dhabi-based Etihad, Dubai-based fly-Dubai and long-haul carrier Emirates announced the suspension of flights to Qatar. Qatar Airways was forced to suspend all flights to KSA, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt until further notice, and to reroute most of its West-bound flights.

25. Shortly thereafter, the Government of Qatar issued a statement assuring that Qatar's

seaports would remain open for trade, and airspace for trade, transport and travel, except with the countries that had closed their borders and airspace with Qatar. The statement indicated that the Government of Qatar would not take any measures of reprisal against citizens of KSA, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt working in Qatar.

26. The considerable restrictions on movement of people and goods had an immediate impact on various human rights. Some had a punctual effect but most have had continuing implications to date. These measures first constituted a direct violation of freedom of movement, particularly as they were not communicated formally and were not legally motivated. The lack of freedom of movement between Qatar and the other countries is sanctioning Qataris and residents of Qatar, as well as residents of KSA, UAE and Bahrain. At least temporarily, the restrictions of movement disrupted the exercise of freedom of religion as they were imposed in the midst of Ramadan and the Hajj pilgrimage. The implications for family life are also important given the bonds between the countries concerned. Moreover, many young people were forced to interrupt their studies or could not take exams. Durable consequences of the restrictions of movement are a deprivation of the rights to work and to access to property for those who were residing, working and / or engaged in trade cross-border. These aspects are described in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

27. While the Government of Egypt did not issue a formal order to Qatari citizens to leave its territory, Qatari students who tried to return to Egypt in August 2017, after the summer holiday, were not issued visas or were requested to apply for security clearance upon obtaining visas. Students interviewed by the team and the NHRC stated they still had not obtained security clearance. On 18 November, the National Council for Human Rights in Egypt informed the NHRC of Qatar that it had lifted restrictions for some categories of the Qatari population and that students would be granted visas. At the time of the mission, it was too early to assess whether this measure was being implemented.

28. More broadly, the suspension of movement of people and goods between Qatar and the three Gulf countries of the Quartet has had considerable implications for Qatar's economy, impeding trade and financial flows, and considerably increasing the costs of transportation and goods as the Government (and individuals) has had to resort to alternative options.

29. Although imports from the other Gulf States were modest, the bulk of trade flow before the crisis occurred through KSA and UAE in particular (via land, sea and air), including overland from Jordan and Lebanon, and via cargo ship that would dock at ports in KSA and UAE, from which merchandise would be transported by trucks to other Gulf destinations, including Qatar. Thus, Qatar was heavily dependent on its two neighbours to access items vital for the subsistence of its population, such as food and medicines, and for its economy. Qatari officials met by the team, notably the Customs Authority, underlined that the abrupt closure by the authorities of KSA of their border with Qatar had left any vehicles transporting perishable food items and other merchandise stranded in KSA. According to the Ministry of

Economy and Trade, before the crisis, some 800 trucks used to cross the land border from KSA into Qatar on a daily basis. In the couple of weeks that followed the 5 June decision, this situation caused some panicked reactions, with people rushing to supermarkets to stock up food.

30. In a meeting with Director's Managing Team of Qatar Airways, the team was informed that the closure of airspace was a major irritant as Qatar is largely surrounded by the airspace of KSA, UAE and Bahrain, with only a narrow corridor to the north available, requiring Qatar Airways' flights to be routed through Iran and then flow wide around Saudi Arabia to access destinations to the west and south. This, combined with the end of flights to and from KSA, UAE and Bahrain has significantly reduced Qatar's accessibility by air and increased travel times and costs.

31. While telecommunications between the three countries and Qatar have generally remained operational, some people reported experiencing difficulties in contacting people in KSA, UAE and Bahrain, or have been using foreign phone numbers to call people in Qatar for fear of sanctions. Some interlocutors also stated that they would be no response when they would contact institutions in KSA and UAE (for instance universities). Postal services have ceased to function between Qatar and the three countries, and access to some Qatari websites has been blocked by the authorities in KSA, UAE and Bahrain.

3. Separation of families and related issues of nationality and residence

32. The decision of 5 June has led to cases of temporary or potentially durable separation of families across the countries concerned, which has caused psychological distress as well as some difficulties for some individuals to economically support their relatives left in Qatar or the other countries.

33. Moreover, the crisis has underscored the urgency of addressing the long-standing issues of nationality and residence in the Gulf countries, including in Qatar. Indeed, the non-Qatari spouses and children of Qataris have faced acute uncertainties, even if the majority have reportedly remained in Qatar. The NHRC received a high number of calls, particularly in June, from women who were afraid to be unable to apply for the renewal of their national passport and Qatar residence ID, and feared being expelled from Qatar or compelled to return to their country of origin, and being consequently separated from their husband and children.

34. As of 5 June 2017, according to official data, the State of Qatar counted some 6,474 mixed marriages involving citizens of Qatar, KSA, UAE and Bahrain (5,137 Qatari men and 1,337 Qatari women). The authorities of KSA, UAE and Bahrain ordered their citizens to leave Qatar within 14 days, with their children, under threat of civil penalties, including deprivation of their nationality, and criminal sanctions. However, the team did not get any information that such cases had occurred.

35. Many of those who have not returned, fearing separation from their family, were concerned they may not be able to renew their passport, particularly given the closure of the KSA, UAE and Bahrain Embassies. This generated particular anxiety for those whose passport was close to expiring as a valid passport was required to apply for and obtain the extension of a residence permit in Qatar (which is valid for 10 years) and to access various services. However, the Ministry of Interior informed the team that after the 5 June crises the Government of Qatar had lifted such a condition to address the situation of non-Qatari residents from KSA, UAE and Bahrain.

36. In addition, the possible forfeiture of nationality risks making these people stateless. Saudi, Emirati and Bahraini women whose husband and children are Qatari fear pressure from their State of origin for them to leave Qatar. Those who contacted their embassies within the 14 days following 5 June were reportedly instructed to return alone to their country of origin.

37. The team was informed that in response to some reports of family separations, the Governments of KSA, UAE and Bahrain had stated they would grant exceptions for 'humanitarian cases of mixed families' to travel back and forth between Qatar and their territories. Yet, Qatari Government officials, including the Director of the Salwa border cross point with KSA, informed the team that such measures remained inappropriate, inefficient and random. Some families reported not using the hotlines, fearing to be identified by the KSA authority as citizens who remained in Qatar and to be subjected to intimidation.

38. Many people with relatives in KSA, UAE and Bahrain, including elderly or sick parents for instance, have reportedly refrained from traveling to these countries, fearing they would not be allowed to return to Qatar.

4. Impact on economic rights and the right to property

39. According to information received by the team, individuals from Qatar working in KSA, UAE and Bahrain, and / or with business interests in these countries, were forced to return to Qatar, reportedly with no access to their companies and other sources of activity and income since then. While the authorities could not determine the number of individuals affected with certainty, a national compensation claims commission established following the 5 June decision had documented at least 1,900 cases related to the right to property by the end of November 2017, with claims pertaining to private residences, stockshares, financial assets and livestock).

40. The team conducted interviews with some of the claimants, mostly Qatari nationals who have property in KSA and UAE, particularly commercial entities. They confirmed that financial transactions between Qatar and KSA, UAE and Bahrain had been suspended,

preventing people from receiving salaries or pensions, perceiving rents, paying bills, or supporting relatives. They also highlighted the absence of any formal and available litigation mechanism to claim and/or manage their assets. Indeed, legal cooperation has been suspended, including power of attorney. Furthermore, lawyers in these countries are unlikely to defend Qataris as this would likely be interpreted as an expression of sympathy towards Qatar.

41. The Chamber of commerce of Qatar described how it dealt with the impact of the crisis on entrepreneurs so as to mitigate the consequences on their work and property. From 5 June to 9 July, it identified supplies and alternatives to businesses that were blocked as a consequence of the 5 June decision. The Government of Qatar took measures to support entrepreneurs and coordinate logistical support. It shared a questionnaire with the 350.000 companies registered in Qatar and set up a hotline working 24/7 to receive complaints. It received 700 complaints. Since 10 July, the Chamber of Commerce has been trying to put in contact these entrepreneurs with potential contractors, mostly from Asia. It prioritized companies involved in the production of food, medicines and construction equipment. It also sent letter to creditors requesting a delay in payments and the waiving of penalties resulting from such delays.

42. The Customs authorities provided the team with statistics covering the period of 17 January to 30 June 2017, on products which were mainly imported from the Gulf countries, such as sugar (76 per cent was imported from these countries), oil (67 per cent), and dairy products (59 per cent), construction material (93 per cent), timber and gravel (47 per cent), cables for construction (51 per cent), showing the dependence of Qatar on its neighbours. The Qatar authorities immediately referred the situation to the World Organization of Customs. While the total importation from KSA, UAE and Bahrain amounted to some QAR 11.9 billion (USD 3 billion) in May 2017, it represented QAR 392 million (USD 107 million) in September 2017. This situation has provoked an increase of the price of commodities of 83 per cent (although the Government of Qatar has intervened to maintain it below the threshold of 3 per cent). Since June, the customs authorities have had no communications with the customs of the other Gulf countries.

5. Impact on the right to health

43. The team met with representatives of the Ministry of Health who raised some humanitarian consequences of the 5 June crises. As of 23 November, it had received 130 individuals reporting medical issues related to the crisis.

44. For instance, an individual previously treated in KSA and who returned to Qatar, had to travel to Germany to receive treatment as his means of payments from KSA were blocked in Qatar. Two patients from Qatar, who resided in KSA prior to the crisis, were transferred to Turkey and Kuwait to undergo surgery as they were reportedly unable to pursue their medical

treatment in KSA.

45. Medical services in Qatar are known to be of high quality. Since September 2017, the Ministry of health recorded 388.000 visits to public health services by patients, including by 260.000 patients from KSA, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt whose residents in Qatar. The Qatar authorities stated they will continue to provide treatment to patients from these countries without any discrimination.

46. Medical public services employ 3.000 employees from the Quartet countries. Medical authorities also noted that Qatari individuals who will comply with the decision to leave or return to Qatar would affect their employment status and therefore their access to medical insurance or capacity to pay for medical services.

47. The suspension of trade has also affected Qatar's access to medicines (including life-saving items) and medical supply. Before 5 June, 50 to 60 per cent of Qatar pharmaceutical stock came from 20 suppliers companies based in the Gulf countries with most international pharmaceutical companies based in UAE. While the shortage of most drugs lasted only one day due to the Government's prompt identification of new suppliers, the Ministry of Health informed the team is was still seeking alternatives for 276 medicines. An illustrative case is that of anti-venom largely used in Qatar for snakebites, which can only be produced with snakes from the region and is therefore unavailable.

48. Recourse to suppliers from outside the region has led to an increase of the costs of products, transportation and insurance fees, and has incurred delays in getting some items. The State of Qatar has thus far been covering the extra cost to limit the impact on consumers.

49. Finally, the opening of new hospitals has been delayed due to construction material and other equipment being blocked in Dubai.

6. Effect on the right to education

50. The expulsion of Qatari students who were studying in KSA, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt has had a detrimental effect on the right to education as Qatari students who were prevented from either pursuing their studies or passing their exams. Students in KSA, Bahrain, and reportedly particularly in UAE, were ordered to immediately return to Qatar, often by the administration of universities. According to information collected by the team, this was generally not followed by any formal or personalized communication.

51. The management and professors of Qatar University informed the team that the university had initially received 171 requests for the placement of students who had had to leave KSA, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt. It reported being able to accommodate 66 students

while it transmitted the 105 other cases to the Ministry of Education for the review of the students' transcripts. The NHRC and the team followed up on some cases of students whose file was under review. They declared having been provided with at least two options by the Qatar University, namely to integrate that institution, usually by taking additional credit hours, or to be placed in a university abroad, for instance in Jordan and Malaysia. The efforts of Qatar University and the Ministry of Education to promptly identify solutions for each student are to be commended.

52. The Ministry of Education and Qatar University reported that students who had been enrolled in universities in UAE and Egypt were unable to get their transcripts, which hampered their placement as they were unable to produce any evidence of previous studies or examinations. Some UAE universities reportedly blocked access to their websites to Qatari students". In Egypt, the University of Cairo told Qatari students that they should collect their transcripts in person although the authorities were not providing visas to Qataris.

Countries	Number of Qatari students affected by the crisis
KSA	62
UAE	157
Bahrain	28
Egypt	3004
Sources. Ministry of Higher Educations	

53. The Ministry of Education of Qatar on its part estimates that at least 201 Qatari students were not able to pursue their studies, mainly due to the lack of transcripts, different credit systems or because their specialization is not available in Qatar. For instance medical studies were only recently introduced at Qatar University and students reaching their fifth year are not able to enrol.

7. Long-standing human rights issues

54. During the mission, the team raised a number of long-standing human rights issues with relevant authorities, namely regarding the rights of migrant workers and the issue of citizenship.

55. The team raised the case of those who have been stripped from their Qatari citizenship in 2004, the authorities informed that most of them (mainly those that did not possess another nationality) had regained their Qatari citizenship in 2005. The authorities further noted that approximately 100 cases are still pending to date.

56. The team also raised the case of two individuals (Sheikh Taleb bin Lahem bin Shraim and Mr. Bin Al Shafi) who, according to reports received by the team before the mission, have been arbitrarily stripped from their Qatari citizenship in connection with their political opinion in the context of the current crisis. Qatari counterparts confirmed that this decision was taken by executive decrees in accordance with Law No. 38/2005 on the acquisition of Qatari Nationality. This implies it was taken without any due process, with no possible

remedies.

57. Many of the people met by the team described how Qatar had managed to turn the crisis into an opportunity, notably to accelerate the reform agenda of the Emir, including on human rights. Efforts are underway to develop a road map for an effective implementation of migrant and domestic laws; to prepare a new law on asylum, and to possibly ratification of the Refugee Convention of 1951; to review of the nationality law to provide additional rights to the children of Qatari women married to non-Qataris; to increase engagement with international human rights mechanisms. The team was encouraged by the Government renewed commitment to further strengthen its cooperation with OHCHR in promoting and protecting human rights in Qatar.

58. The team's discussions on the aforementioned issues are to be reflected in a separate report or other form of communication.

IV. Findings and observations

59. All Interlocutors met by the team mostly referred to the decision of 5 June as a "blockade", and some evoked an "embargo", a "boycott" or "unilateral sanctions" against the State of Qatar and its inhabitants (nationals and residents). Most emphasized the unprecedented divide and distrust this situation has generated, not least given the tight family bonds across the Gulf region. They also expressed concern about the uncertain and far-reaching consequences, with fears that this crisis may become protracted and/or deteriorate.

60. The team found that the unilateral measures, consisting of severe restrictions of movement, termination and disruption of trade, financial and investment flows, as well as suspension of social and cultural exchanges imposed on the State of Qatar, had immediately translated into actions applying to nationals and residents of Qatar, including citizens of KSA, UAE and Bahrain. Many of these measures have a potentially durable effect on the enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of those affected. As there is no evidence of any legal decisions motivating these various measures, and due to the lack of any legal recourse for most individuals concerned, these measures can be considered as arbitrary. These actions were exacerbated by various and widespread forms of media defamation and campaigns hated against Qatar, its leadership and people.

61. The majority of the measures were broad and non-targeted, making no distinction between the Government of Qatar and its population. In that sense, they constitute core elements of the definition of unilateral coercive measures as proposed by the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee: *"the use of economic, trade or other measures taken by a State, group of States or international organizations acting autonomously to compel a change of policy of another State or to pressure individuals, groups or entities in targeted States to*

influence a course of action without the authorization of the Security Council". Moreover, measures targeting individuals on the basis of their Qatari nationality or their links with Qatar can be qualified as non-disproportionate and discriminatory.

62. The considerable economic impact of the crisis takes over the dimension of an economic warfare, with significant financial losses for the State, companies and individuals, and the confidence of investors being eroded. To date, the wealth of Qatar and its human potential have allowed the country to promptly absorb the shock and protect the population from potentially disastrous economic and social consequences. However, the shock of the decision and the immediate and serious effect of unilateral coercive measures on many individuals have had a major psychological impact on the overall population. This has been exacerbated by a hostile media campaign that flared up from early June and is ongoing. All interlocutors met by the team evoked the lack of trust or even fear this situation has generated, and concerns about the social fabric of very closely-knit societies eroding.

63. In some cases, Qatari institutions, notably the NHRC, have proactively sought prompt solutions, especially for individuals whose studies were interrupted. The NHRC immediately, and for several weeks following 5 June, received a considerably number of complaints. They undertook a series of communications with regional and international mechanisms and have endeavoured to engage with the national human rights institutions of KSA, UAE, Bahrain (to no avail to date) and Egypt (the latter has reportedly cooperated). The team received a detailed report prepared by the National Compensation Claims Commission on the impact of the crisis on individuals (including on human rights impact), and was informed that the National Compensation Claims Commission had hired a private American law firm company to look at options for potential legal actions against the States of KSA, UAE and Bahrain. The commission indicated that the legal file was in the hands of the Government for its consideration.

64. The majority of cases remain unresolved and are likely to durably affect the victims, particularly those having experienced family separation, loss of employment or who have been barred from access to their assets.

65. The crisis has been characterized by the absence of dialogue among the States concerned, with the mediation efforts initiated by Kuwait having stalled. The team noted strong resentment about the lack of action by regional organizations and about the role of the GCC, which many considered as *de facto* defunct. Given the origins and ramifications of the crisis in KSA, UAE and Bahrain, it would be critical to pursue opportunities to engage with the Governments of these countries to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the situation, notably of the actions they have taken and the impact on their own citizens and residents.