



Committee: Special Political and Decolonization

Country: State of Qatar

Topic: Addressing the Challenges of Statelessness and Refugee Intergration in a Globalized World

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I.BACKGROUND

The issue of statelessness and refugee integration remains one of the most pressing challenges in our interconnected world. Stateless individuals, lacking any formal recognition as citizens of any state, face severe barriers in accessing fundamental rights, such as education, healthcare, and employment. Similarly, the plight of refugees—fleeing conflict, persecution, or environmental disasters—calls for urgent global cooperation.

Qatar, as a nation committed to humanitarian aid and global solidarity, recognizes the intricate socio-political and economic complexities surrounding these issues. The country is particularly aware of the regional implications of these crises, as the Middle East hosts a significant proportion of the world’s refugees and stateless populations. Qatar has consistently contributed to addressing these challenges through its leadership in international aid, diplomatic mediation, and developmental programs.

Although, the state is not party to either the 1954 or the 1961 UN Statelessness Conventions. Qatar, as a member of the United Nations is obligated by the Charter of the United Nations to promote “universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion”. Also, Article 15 of the UDHR states that “everyone has the right to a nationality” and “no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality”, which Qatar must respect.

II. QATAR’S PERSPECTIVE

The Qatari NHRC claims that there are currently between 300 and 400 stateless persons residing in Qatar. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, however, this figure is, in fact, significantly higher, namely about 1,500. The stateless population in Qatar suffers an array of discriminatory measures due to the denial of their right to nationality.

While the government affords stateless residents access to basic education and healthcare, the latter face hurdles when pursuing higher education. They also have to renew their residency

permit every two years at a high price, even though they are economically disadvantaged and face challenges in gaining employment and are denied the right to property. As stateless persons are only allowed a travel document, asserting their statelessness, their right to freedom of movement is also severely curtailed; while some countries may allow them to apply for and attain refugee status, many other countries will refuse them entry altogether. Lastly, Qatar requires its stateless community to obtain approval prior to getting married, whether that is to a Qatari citizen, a non-Qatari citizen or another stateless person. Similarly, prior to registering the birth of a child to a Qatari father and a stateless mother, the father must present documentation of his permission to marry the child's mother as part of the birth registration process.

The law allowed long-term residents to apply for citizenship after living in the country for 25 consecutive years, but the citizenship applications were by law capped at 50 per year and were rarely approved by the government. Restrictions and inconsistent application of the law prevented stateless persons from acquiring citizenship, which conferred the right to own property, open businesses without local partners, and receive free education and health services. Generally, the government did not approve marriage requests between Qatari women and stateless men.

Qatar also provides support to people in need with the zakat the state gives. With the rapid growth of the global Islamic economy and philanthropy sector and given the increasing desire by Zakat donors and institutions to channel Zakat funds to refugees – nearly than 50% of whom are originating from Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries – UNHCR piloted the “Refugee Zakat Fund” in 2017, a trusted, compliant and effective distributor maximizing the impact of Zakat and Sadaqah on the lives of refugees. The Fund is subject to rigorous governance, ensuring transparency at every step, from donation to distribution of Zakat funds to eligible families among the refugees and internally displaced persons.

UNHCR implements several humanitarian programmes, including shelter, healthcare, education, economic inclusion, in addition to cash and in-kind assistance. The latter was identified as the best fit for Zakat distribution, assuring funds or goods are received by the most vulnerable beneficiary families. UNHCR is covering overhead costs associated with Zakat distribution from other non-Zakat sources.

The support Qatar offers to Palestinian refugees is as follows:

Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) and UNRWA have signed a US\$ 7 million agreement to provide critical support to Palestine Refugees in Syria. The agreement is part of Qatar's commitment to humanitarian assistance and improving the living conditions of Palestinian Refugees, in line with UNRWA's 2024 Emergency Appeal.

The funding will be allocated to essential services, including education, healthcare, and cash assistance for Palestine Refugees affected by the ongoing conflict in Syria. The partnership aims to enhance the resilience and well-being of this vulnerable population, ensuring access to vital services and basic needs.

III. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

1. Enhancing Legal Protections: Qatar advocates for the universal adoption and implementation of international legal frameworks to reduce statelessness and protect refugees.

The country recommends amending nationality laws that discriminate based on gender or ethnicity, which are primary contributors to statelessness.

2. Strengthening Regional Frameworks:Acknowledging the unique challenges faced by the MENA region, Qatar proposes the establishment of a Regional Statelessness Task Force. This body would facilitate the sharing of best practices, resources, and data among nations to effectively address statelessness.

3. Supporting Refugee Livelihoods:Integration must go hand-in-hand with empowerment. Qatar proposes initiatives to enhance refugees' access to education, vocational training, and employment opportunities. These programs would be implemented in collaboration with host countries and international organizations.

4. Promoting Mediation and Conflict Resolution:Qatar emphasizes the necessity of addressing root causes such as armed conflict and political instability, which contribute to forced displacement. As a neutral mediator, Qatar offers its support for international peace processes aimed at resolving conflicts that lead to displacement.

IV. CONCLUSION

Qatar continues to present concrete and comprehensive approaches to addressing the challenges of statelessness and refugee integration. With a firm commitment to ensuring access to fundamental rights for stateless individuals and refugees, Qatar emphasizes the adoption of international legal frameworks, strengthening regional cooperation, and expanding humanitarian aid programs.

In particular, Qatar's proposal for the establishment of a Regional Statelessness Task Force stands out as a critical step toward developing long-term solutions in the MENA region. Additionally, Qatar's efforts to enhance refugees' access to education, employment, and economic opportunities lay the necessary foundation for their successful integration.

Qatar continues to contribute as a neutral mediator in international peace processes aimed at resolving the root causes of forced displacement, such as conflict and instability. These efforts play a vital role in ensuring regional and global stability.

By calling for cooperation and solidarity, Qatar urges the international community to prioritize the protection of its most vulnerable individuals. Ensuring access to fundamental rights for every individual, to lead a dignified life, is a critical necessity not only for the individuals involved but for the shared future of all societies

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