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<p><b>Is there a refugee protection program?</b></p>	<p>Yes, but it is not fully operational. In September 2018, Qatar enacted Law No. 11 of 2018 (“Qatar’s 2018 political asylum law”), its first (and only) national law setting out procedures and requirements for people to seek asylum in the country.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>However, as recently as January 2019, refugees have been denied access to the law’s protection and benefits because Qatari officials have failed to create the framework necessary to bring the new law into operation.<sup>2</sup> It is not clear when refugees will be able to seek asylum under Qatar’s new law.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Prior to this law’s enactment, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (“UNHCR”) worked informally with Qatari authorities to serve as the main provider of protection for asylum-seekers in Qatar.<sup>4</sup> Until Qatar’s asylum law becomes functional, it appears UNHCR will continue to fill the gap by informally leading refugee protection efforts in the country.</p>
<p><b>Who runs any available refugee protection program? Who determines which applicants qualify for refugee protection?</b></p>	<p>Under Qatar’s 2018 political asylum law, the Interior Minister will oversee the process of applying for asylum and ultimately decide whether an applicant qualifies for refugee protection.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>Because this law has yet to become operational, it should be noted that, outside this law, asylum seekers are not formally entitled to any special protections in Qatar on account of their refugee status.<sup>6</sup> Qatar generally views refugees instead as normal expatriates.<sup>7</sup> As such, in order to remain in the</p>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/10/30/qatar-gulfs-first-refugee-asylum-law>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/02/25/qatar-yemeni-asylum-seeker-turned-away>; <https://orientxxi.info/magazine/is-the-reform-of-the-right-of-asylum-in-qatar-for-real.3154>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5ccad3d07.html>, pages 1, 2.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.almeezan.qa/LawView.aspx?opt&LawID=7738&language=ar>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5ccad3d07.html>, page 2.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

	<p>country, even refugees are generally required to comply with Qatar’s sponsorship (kafala) system.<sup>8</sup> As a result, the ability of asylum-seekers to secure refuge in Qatar is largely dependent on sponsorship of their residency by an employer.<sup>9</sup></p> <p>In addition, prior to the 2018 asylum law, Qatar also informally granted temporary residency status to individuals that UNHCR identified as qualifying as a refugee.<sup>10</sup> However, unlike with the sponsorship approach, Qatar would grant temporary residency status to those whom UNHCR identified as refugees only for the period until UNHCR was able to arrange for their resettlement.<sup>11</sup></p>
<p><b>Is the refugee protection program functional? For example, how long does it take for decisions to be issued? What percentage of applications are granted?</b></p>	<p>No, Qatar’s refugee protection program is not functional. To date, Qatar has failed to implement its 2018 asylum law that sets out the standards for granting asylum and the rights and benefits for people granted asylum in the country.<sup>12</sup> A provision in this law requires the Interior Minister to create a “Committee for Asylee Affairs,” appoint representatives from other government departments, and specify the functions and scope of the committee.<sup>13</sup> However, as recently as January 2019, the Interior Minister has not set up the committee needed for the asylum application process to begin functioning.<sup>14</sup> As of 2019, Qatari authorities indicated that there is “no clear timeline for when the minister will establish the committee.”<sup>15</sup></p> <p>Unfortunately for potential asylum seekers, because the new law has yet to become operational, there remains no formal legal process in Qatar for asylum seekers to present and pursue their claims for asylum.<sup>16</sup> Instead, UNHCR works informally with</p>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5ccad3d07.html>, page 1.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/02/25/qatar-yemeni-asylum-seeker-turned-away>

<sup>13</sup> <https://orientxxi.info/magazine/is-the-reform-of-the-right-of-asylum-in-qatar-for-real.3154>

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/02/25/qatar-yemeni-asylum-seeker-turned-away>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

	<p>Qatari authorities to serve as the main provider of protection for asylum-seekers in Qatar.<sup>17</sup></p> <p>Because Qatar has not implemented its asylum law, it is unclear how long the formal process will take, but the 2018 asylum law provides that the Interior Minister has three months to decide on an asylum seeker’s application after the Interior Minister receives a recommendation from the Committee for Asylee Affairs.<sup>18</sup></p> <p>Despite lacking a formal legal process for handling asylum requests, it appears that in 2019 Qatar received 22 applications for asylum and granted 68% of those applications.<sup>19</sup> For comparison, in 2018, Qatar received 5 applications for asylum and granted 0%.<sup>20</sup></p>
<p><b>Do refugees have a right to work? A right to education? A right to medical care?</b></p>	<p>Under Qatar’s 2018 political asylum law, individuals who are granted refugee status are entitled to “a monthly stipend until there is a job opportunity.”<sup>21</sup> Refugees are also entitled to “receiving health care . . . [and] education.”<sup>22</sup></p> <p>Because this law has yet to become fully operational, it should be noted that, outside this law, asylum-seekers are not formally entitled to any special protections in Qatar on account of their refugee status.<sup>23</sup></p>
<p><b>Are those seeking refugee protection free to live freely or forced to reside in camps?</b></p>	<p>Refugees are not forced to reside in camps, but Qatari authorities do have the right to limit the movement of asylum seekers and refugees. Although Qatar’s 2018 asylum law gives refugees the right to “housing” and “freedom of movement,” another provision in the law requires refugees to reside in a government-assigned place of residence.<sup>24</sup> Further, refugees are required to</p>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5ccad3d07.html>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.almeezan.qa/LawView.aspx?opt&LawID=7738&language=ar>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=x6gBbf>

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.almeezan.qa/LawView.aspx?opt&LawID=7738&language=ar>

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5ccad3d07.html>, page 2.

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.almeezan.qa/LawView.aspx?opt&LawID=7738&language=ar>

	<p>seek approval from Qatari authorities if they want to move from their government-assigned place of residence.<sup>25</sup></p>
<p><b>Does a grant of refugee protection result in a pathway to permanent status? In other words, can a refugee eventually become a citizen? Is there another form of legal permanent status available for people with refugee status?</b></p>	<p>While it may be technically possible for a refugee to become a Qatari citizen or permanent resident, the legal requirements for doing so are so difficult to meet that the prospect of it actually occurring seem slim.</p> <p>There do not appear to be any prohibitions on refugees becoming Qatari residents. In fact, a provision in Qatar’s new asylum law appears to contemplate that some refugees may acquire Qatari citizenship.<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, the asylum law does not include any guidance on the process of applying for Qatari citizenship as a refugee.<sup>27</sup></p> <p>Nonetheless, in September 2018, Qatar signed Law No. 10 of 2018 (“Qatar’s 2018 permanent residency law”) which for the first time created a pathway for foreign nationals to apply for permanent resident status in Qatar.<sup>28</sup> However, to be eligible to receive permanent resident status, a foreign national must first legally reside in Qatar for more than 20 years (among other things) and no more than 100 foreign nationals may be granted permanent residency in a year.<sup>29</sup></p> <p>The 20-year residency requirement may be difficult for many refugees, because under Qatar’s 2018 asylum law, a refugee’s permission for temporary residence must be revoked if the need for the person’s asylum status ends. Accordingly, unless the conditions for a refugee’s asylum persist for at least 20 years, the refugee will likely be unable to even receive consideration for permanent resident status. And even then, Qatar’s tight cap on the number of permanent resident permits issued may make it difficult for eligible refugees to be among the 100</p>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2018-11-08/qatar-amir-ratifies-countrys-first-asylum-law/>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2018-11-19/qatar-new-law-to-create-permanent-residency-system-adopted/>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.almeezan.qa/LawView.aspx?opt&LawID=7738&language=ar>

	foreign nationals in a given year to receive permanent resident status.
<b>Does the country offer temporary protections available other than refugee status? If so, what are they?</b>	Under Qatar’s asylum law, the Interior Minister can grant an asylum-seeker temporary residency in Qatar until a final decision is made on the person’s application for refugee status and protection. <sup>30</sup> However, it is not clear whether an asylum-seeker with temporary residency status is entitled to the same social benefits (e.g., access to public education and healthcare) <sup>31</sup> as a permanent resident. <sup>32</sup>
<b>What, if any, penalties are there for people without status or people who are denied refugee protection?</b>	<p>The penalties for immigration-related offenses in Qatar are provided in Law No. 4 of 2009, (the “Sponsorship Law”).<sup>33</sup> The law indicates that immigration-related offenses may be met by either criminal or administrative forms of punishment.<sup>34</sup></p> <p>As for criminal punishments, under the Sponsorship Law, a person may be fined up to 50,000 Qatari Riyals (approximately \$13,700 U.S.) and/or jailed for up to three years for failure to obtain a residence permit or comply with a deportation order.<sup>35</sup> An asylum seeker who is denied refugee protection and legal status in Qatar would be unable to obtain a residence permit and may even be met with a deportation order in certain circumstances.<sup>36</sup> As such, an asylum seeker with no legal status in Qatar would be at risk of facing a maximum fine of 50,000 Qatari Riyals or imprisonment for up to three years, or both.</p> <p>As for administrative forms of punishment, the Sponsorship Law provides for the arrest and 30-day detention of an expatriate (irrespective of refugee status) who has been ordered deported.<sup>37</sup> This can be renewed as often as deemed necessary.<sup>38</sup> There is thus</p>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/10/30/qatar-gulfs-first-refugee-asylum->

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.fragomen.com/insights/blog/permanent-residence-qatar-do-you-qualify-and-what-do-you-get>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5864d60b4.pdf>, pages 5, 6.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> <https://www.almeezan.qa/LawView.aspx?opt&LawID=7738&language=ar>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5864d60b4.pdf>, page 6.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

	<p>no time limit placed on this form of administrative detention.<sup>39</sup></p> <p>Alternatively, the Sponsorship Law provides that Qatari authorities may force an expatriate facing deportation to reside in a specific area for two renewable weeks in lieu of arresting him for a period or other similar periods.<sup>40</sup></p> <p>Qatari authorities may issue an immediate deportation order to an asylum seeker without legal status in Qatar for a number of reasons, including that the person “poses a threat to national security.”<sup>41</sup> In addition, an asylum seeker that is granted refugee protection may subsequently have that status revoked and receive a deportation order if the person, among other things, engages in “political activity during their stay” or it is later discovered that the asylum seeker engaged in “war crimes.”<sup>42</sup></p> <p>In any of those situations, an asylum seeker without legal status in Qatar could face renewable terms of administrative detention for their failure to comply with deportation orders.</p> <p>Finally, in Qatar, a residency permit is required for a number of activities, including entering government buildings, opening a bank account, and applying for a loan.<sup>43</sup> Asylum seekers who are denied legal status in Qatar will not be given a residency permit and thus may struggle with daily life in the country due to how much access depends on having the permit.</p>
<p><b>What organizations exist in-country that can help displaced people seek available protections? What other organizations in the country may be able to help displaced people access services and rights, even if their</b></p>	<p><u>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)</u></p> <p>Historically, UNHCR has served as the main provider of protection to refugees and asylum-seekers in Qatar. Prior to the recent passage of Qatar’s 2018 asylum law, UNHCR carried out all functional</p>

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/5864d60b4.pdf>, pages 5.

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.almeezan.qa/LawView.aspx?opt&LawID=7738&language=ar>

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.expatica.com/qa/moving/visas/residence-permit-identification-in-qatar-71009/#What>

<p><b>mission is not to specifically work with refugees and displaced people?</b></p>	<p>responsibilities for refugee protection in Qatar, including registration, refugee status determination, and finding resettlement solutions. Representatives from UNHCR can be contacted about their current operations in Qatar using the information below:</p> <p><u>Online Contact Form:</u> <a href="https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/contact-form.html">https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/contact-form.html</a>  <u>Phone:</u> +41 22 739 8111  <u>Mailing Address:</u>          UNHCR Headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland          United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees          Case Postale 2500          CH-1211 Genève 2 Dépôt          Suisse</p> <p><u>National Human Rights Committee (NHRC)</u></p> <p>The NHRC was established to uphold and promote the human rights in the International Treaties to which Qatar has acceded. While NHRC it does not mention refugees in the services it provides, it does have a Legal Department, which is charged with receiving and recording complaints and with helping individuals to solve or mitigate their problems. The Committee undertakes a number of additional activities, such as providing legal advice regarding Qatar’s sponsorship and labor laws. Representatives from NHRC can be contacted using the information below:</p> <p><u>Website:</u> <a href="http://www.nhrc-qa.org">www.nhrc-qa.org</a>  <u>Email:</u> <a href="mailto:info@nhrc-qa.org">info@nhrc-qa.org</a>  <u>Phone:</u> +97 44 404 8844  <u>Fax:</u> +97 44 444 4013  <u>Mailing Address:</u>          Fereej Abdulaziz,          Nasser Bin Khalid intersection,          Behind Doha petrol station,          Otabi Tower,          P. O. Box: 24104,          Doha, Qatar</p>
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<p><b>Is there other information that might be valuable for displaced people arriving in that country to know?</b></p>	<p>Qatar signed Law 38 of 2005, which prevents Qatari women from passing their nationality onto their children.<sup>44</sup> Thus, children born to Qatari mothers and non-Qatari fathers are not automatically recognized as Qatari nationals or even entitled to permanent residency permits.<sup>45</sup></p>
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<sup>44</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5ccad3d07.html>, page 3.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.