
Labor Laws: Qatar

Overview

Labor Laws in Qatar

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Labour Law

Qatar has implemented extensive reforms to strengthen labour laws and increase protections for migrant workers, Free Mobility has been given due importance in the reforms, and employees now may switch jobs as per procedures.

Notably, No exit permissions are required to leave the country and various other reforms

The reforms have been recognised by major human rights groups and UN organisations.

Qatar Labor Laws at Glance & Brief History

Brief History	<p>Two key labour law provisions in QATAR before 2021 were:</p> <p>Qatar Labor Act No. 3 of 1962 which determined the rights and duties of employers and workers in Qatar, and regulates the relationship between them.</p> <p>Article 4 of Labour Law No.14 of 2004 stipulates the protections and rights of workers, wherein employers should commit.</p> <p>Immigration Rules and Regulations which are mainly emphasized through the provisions of Law No. (4) of the year 2009 Regulating the Entry, Exit, Residence & Sponsorship of Foreigners (the “Sponsorship Law”)</p>
Minimum Wages	Not explicitly mentioned till 2020.
Kafala system	Foreign immigrants required sponsors (kafeel) for employment and residence in Qatar.
Change of Jobs	NOC required to transfer between employers.
Leaves	<p>Annual leaves not less than three weeks, are granted to employees whose service is more than a year and less than five years and four weeks for employees whose service is more than five years.</p> <p>Maternity leave is ranted for 50 days.</p>

End of Service Gratuity	Article 54 states the employer shall pay the end of service gratuity to the worker who has completed employment of one year or more.
Complaints	Certain provisions of Labour Law No.14 of 2004, were amended in Law No.13 of 2017 to set up new Labour Disputes Settlement Committee and
Trade Unions	Qatari workers can form Workers Committee and join larger trade unions. Strikes are permitted, provided, they follow the rules of the Labour Law. The Qatar workers' committee should adhere to the rule that no less than 100 Qatari workers are part of such an organization.
Exit permission	Yes

Old Labour Laws & Post 2020 Reforms

Points	Pre 2020	Post 2020
Notice Period- Probationary Period	Employers could terminate employees in three days	A minimum of a month's notice is required.
Non - Competence	'Non-Compete clauses included in employment contracts could last a maximum of two years	The plausible length of non-competence post termination is one year.
Minimum Wages	Not defined	Law No. 17 states Minimum wage: QAR1,000 (\$275) per month Food Allowance: QAR300 (\$82) per month. Accommodation Allowance: QAR500 (\$137) per month
NOC and Exit Permission	Previously required	Not required, serving notice period is essential in this regard.
Heat stress protection	Not Defined	Work not allowed in outdoor spaces from 10.00 to 15:30 for a period starting 1 June to 15th September
Health, safety & welfare	Not Elaborative	In April 2021, the Shura Council approved a new law mandating health insurance for all expatriates and visitors, Individuals may report complaints via 11 electronic kiosks, operational in 11 Languages through out Qatar.

Changes in the Analysis of Sponsorship System of different Gulf Countries by ILO in 2017

FIGURE 2. ANALYSIS OF SPONSORSHIP SYSTEMS OF EIGHT COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

COUNTRY	BAHRAIN	KUWAIT	OMAN	QATAR	SAUDI ARABIA	UAE	JORDAN	LEBANON
SPONSORSHIP-RELATED ELEMENTS								
IS THE MIGRANT WORKER TIED TO THE EMPLOYER FOR:								
i. Entry to country of destination	yes ²¹	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
ii. Renewal of residence permit	no	yes	yes	yes	yes	no ²²	yes ²³	yes
iii. Termination of employment	no ¹⁵	yes	yes	yes	yes	no ²⁴	yes	yes
iv. Transfer to different employer	no ¹⁷	yes ¹⁸	yes	yes	yes	no ¹⁹	yes	yes
v. Exit from country of destination	no	no	no	yes	yes	no ²⁰	no	no

Any 'yes' in the matrix offers employers a level of control and may impede internal labour market mobility and fair migration

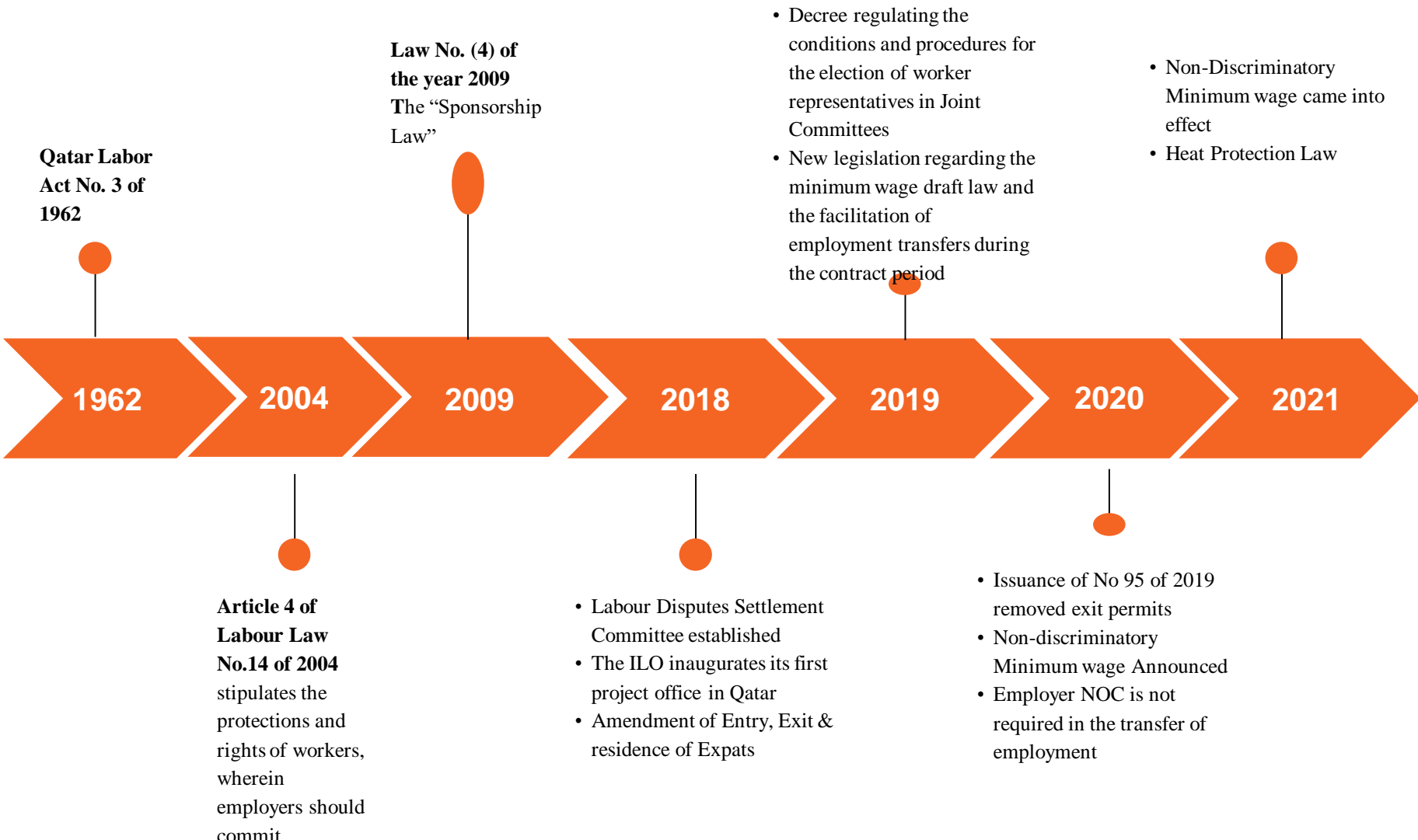
Does the migrant worker need the approval of the employer for:

- In Qatar - Termination of employment may happen with a month's notice period
- In Qatar - The employees may switch jobs as per procedures
- Exit permission is not required.

- Law No. 15 of 2017 regulates the relationship between domestic workers and their employers, the law advances the rights of domestic workers by the provisions of the International Labour Organisation's Convention No. 189 on working conditions for domestic workers.
- Ministerial Decision No. 95 of 2019 further allows domestic workers to leave the country without first obtaining permission from their employers. To protect the rights of both employers and domestic workers, domestic workers must notify employers at least 72 hours prior to their departure.

COUNTRY	BAHRAIN	KUWAIT	OMAN	QATAR	SAUDI ARABIA	UAE	JORDAN	LEBANON
EXACERBATING ELEMENTS								
Passport confiscation allowed (not prohibited the law)	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	yes
Domestic workers excluded from labour law	no ³¹	yes ³²	yes ³³	yes ³⁴	yes ³⁵	yes ³⁶	no ³⁷	yes ³⁸
Charging recruitment fees to workers allowed (not prohibited by the law)	yes	yes	yes	no	no	no	yes	no

Any 'yes' in the matrix means lack of legal coverage thus not offering legal protection to migrant workers



Aim of the Policies	Countries				
	UAE	Saudi Arabia	Qatar	Kuwait	Bahrain
Minimum wage	Yes amount not stipulated yet	40% higher than domestic workers. Mobility Saving Accounts to streamline monthly salary contribution	The minimum wage of QAR 1000 is applicable to all sectors of migrants including domestic workers.	Not Specified	Not Specified
Labour Mobility	Different sources of employment are allowed. Exit visas required	Freely change employers one year into their first contract. Foreign workers have the choice to pick their employer and information about their options	No exit visas are required. No NOC is required from the employer to change their job or leave the country.	Type 20' visa for domestic servants issued to full time female employees while the Type 18 Visa is Issued to those who work under employers from the private sector	Minimum of one year of employment to a single employer before switching over jobs
Heat Protection	Yes, midday breaks in the month of May, June, July & August	Yes Allowed	Mid-day breaks from 1 June to 15 September, between 10:00 to 15:30 to safeguard the health labourers	Nothing Specified	Nothing Specified
Protection from Discrimination	Yes, equal pay for all along with extended maternity leaves upto 60 days	Yes	Yes, an evidenced-based minimum wage system to avoid any discriminations	Lagging behind compared to other countries of GCC	New Labour Law No 36 of 2012 emphasises on no discrimination on the payment of wages based on sex, ethnic origin, language, religion or beliefs.
Accommodation	Workers Earning less than 5000 Dirhams has to be provided with suitable accommodation	Yes	The employer must additionally provide QAR 500 per month for accommodation & QAR 300 for food unless provided by their employer.	Not Specified Yet	Yes
Trade Union/ Right to Strike	No	No	Yes	No	Yes

Implications of the New Labor Laws

- New Labour reforms in Qatar concern the introduction of new national minimum wage requirements and the ease with which foreign workers can move between employers in Qatar, and with this, the effective abolishment of the 'no objection certificate' once central to the 'Kafala' sponsorship system.
 - The new law reforms allow almost all migrant workers in Qatar – including domestic workers – to leave the country without first obtaining permission from their employers, except for military personnel. To protect the rights of both employers and domestic workers, domestic workers must notify employers at least 72 hours prior to their departure.
 - Heat protection is allowed in the summer.
 - The minimum wage of QAR 1000 applies to all employees across all sectors in Qatar including domestic workers. The employer must additionally provide QAR 500 per month for accommodation and QAR 300 per month for food unless provided by their employer.
 - The New Labour reform aims to ultimately introduce more efficient and effective employment regulations that are in line with current international standards and best practices
 - Qatar is the only country with a provision for domestic workers, Law No. 15 of 2017 regulates the relationship between domestic workers and their employers, it advances the rights of domestic workers in accordance with the provisions of the International Labour Organisation's Convention No. 189 on working conditions for domestic workers.
 - Labour laws in Qatar allow employee representatives in the joint committee in an organisation employing more than 30 employees.
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