

Maryam Al Attiyah highlights Qatar's advancements in equality, legal reforms, and labour rights during official visit to Ottawa.



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Ottawa, April 19, 2025 – Chairperson of Qatar's National Human Rights Committee (NHRC), HE

Maryam bint Abdullah Al Attiyah, has affirmed that Qatar has made a significant leap in

promoting equality and social justice across education, employment, health, and labour rights.

In separate high-level meetings in Ottawa with the Vice-President of the Human Rights Tribunal of Canada, H E Athanasios Hadjis, and Deputy Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Youth of Canada, H E Frances McRae, Al Attiyah detailed Qatar's transformative reforms and inclusive policies.

She highlighted that Qatar's legislative advancements, especially in labour rights, reflect the state's strong commitment to international human rights standards. "Our reforms have elevated women's participation across key sectors—judiciary, military, diplomacy, and civil aviation—while ensuring equal access to health and education," Al Attiyah said.

Labour Reforms and Legal Rights

Al Attiyah underscored the establishment of the Labour Dispute Settlement Committee as a landmark initiative that has improved access to justice and alleviated court burdens. She emphasized that Qatar has eliminated all worker-paid legal fees in labour lawsuits and offers free legal aid through around 30 cooperating law firms.

The NHRC Chairperson also noted the Wage Protection System, an integrated electronic platform ensuring timely salary payments, and the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund, which secures financial dues in cases of employer default. She added that Qatar mandates summer working

hours to protect labourers from extreme heat and permits flexible work arrangements, including part-time roles for expatriates with sponsor consent.

She further highlighted that workers are now exempt from exit permit requirements and can freely transfer between employers, in accordance with Ministry of Labour procedures.

Human Rights Advocacy and Education

Al Attiyah emphasized the NHRC's central role in raising awareness and promoting a culture of human rights through school curricula, multilingual educational materials like the "Worker's Pocket Booklet," and continued legal reforms. She said that the NHRC, established in 2002, has maintained an "A" status accreditation from the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) since 2010—a recognition praised by both Canadian officials.

Women's Rights and Equality

During her meeting with Deputy Minister Frances McRae, Al Attiyah spoke of Qatar's progress in women's empowerment, citing access to paid maternity leave, childcare services, housing, and comprehensive maternal healthcare. She reaffirmed that Qatar strongly opposes violence against women and criminalizes such acts through its Penal Code.

"Qatari women today hold leadership roles in ministries, the diplomatic corps, and the judiciary. They benefit from equal opportunities and rights protected by law," she noted, while also

highlighting Qatar's ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Canadian Officials Commend Qatar's Progress

Frances McRae praised Qatar's continued "A" status rating, saying it reflects the NHRC's institutional strength and commitment. She discussed potential collaboration in raising awareness about family protection in partnership with Qatar's Ministry of Social Development and Family.

Vice-President Athanasios Hadjis also welcomed the NHRC delegation and elaborated on the independent nature of Canada's Human Rights Tribunal, which specializes in discrimination cases. He emphasized the Tribunal's authority to issue binding compensation orders and noted that nearly 70% of complaints are resolved through early settlement mechanisms.

He cited Canada's landmark \$20 billion ruling in favor of Indigenous peoples as a testament to the Tribunal's legal impact. He also praised Qatar's reforms and welcomed opportunities for future cooperation through joint research, events, and knowledge-sharing platforms.

Looking Ahead

Both parties agreed on the importance of continued collaboration to enhance human rights protections globally. They expressed interest in holding joint seminars, workshops, and studies

that contribute to the mutual exchange of expertise and promotion of equality.