

Tuesday, January 20th 2026

Forum Highlights Human Rights in Combating Drugs



Published on January 20, 2026

Document Date: Tue, Jan 20 2026 10:13:13 pm

Category: , English, Qatar -

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By Haroon Rashid Qureshi

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Fourth National Human Rights Forum Opens in Doha with Broad National and International Participation

Doha, January 20, 2026

The Fourth National Human Rights Forum officially opened in Doha on Tuesday with wide national and international participation, underscoring Qatar's commitment to addressing drug-related challenges through a human-rights-based approach. The forum is organized by the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) in partnership with the Ministry of Interior under the theme "Human Rights at the Heart of Combating Drugs: Challenges and Prospects for Sustainable Solutions," and runs for two days.

The forum is held in cooperation with the Ministries of Social Development and Family, Education and Higher Education, and Public Health, alongside the Public Prosecution, the National Planning Council, the National Cyber Security Agency, the GCC Criminal Information Center to Combat Drugs, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). UN offices, civil society organizations, and the media are also participating.

The opening session was attended by HE Ibrahim bin Ali Al Mohannadi, Minister of Justice and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs; HE Sultan bin Saad Al Muraikhi, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs; HE Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Jamal, President of the General Authority of Customs; and HE

Maryam bint Abdullah Al Attiyah, Chairperson of the National Human Rights Committee, along with senior officials, ambassadors, diplomats, and experts.

In her keynote address, HE Maryam bint Abdullah Al Attiyah emphasized that drugs are a serious and destructive threat undermining human dignity, social stability, and sustainable development. She explained that the forum aims to develop sustainable, human-rights-focused solutions to mitigate the negative effects of drugs on individuals and communities.

Al Attiyah highlighted the global rise in drug addiction, particularly in conflict-affected and unstable regions, warning that these conditions foster drug networks and escalate risks to society. She pointed out the emergence of new cross-border drug crimes facilitated by illicit uses of artificial intelligence and new technologies, increasing social, economic, and security threats while undermining basic rights such as life, health, and adequate living standards.

She stressed that effective responses must adopt a human-rights-centered approach across legislation, policies, and enforcement measures. She welcomed Qatar's legislative frameworks, public policies, and institutional measures against drugs, noting that international indicators place the country among the safest globally. She urged continuous review of measures to ensure flexibility and rapid response to new challenges, especially digital risks, while guaranteeing children and youth a safe digital environment.

Al Attiyah also emphasized the importance of integrating prevention, rehabilitation, and social reintegration programs into national policy, highlighting that these measures must protect individuals from stigma, discrimination, and marginalization. She praised the Ministry of Interior and other national institutions for their significant roles in safeguarding society and raising awareness. She stressed that civil society, media, and youth must be actively involved not only as participants but as partners in policy formulation, peer support programs, and awareness campaigns. She further underscored that youth engagement is essential in shaping solutions, strengthening prevention, and promoting sustainable change.

Concluding her remarks, Al Attiyah expressed confidence that the forum would produce a clear roadmap to strengthen Qatar's human-rights-based approach to combating drugs, including establishing a permanent national platform for awareness and follow-up, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

HE Ahmed bin Abdullah Al Jamal, President of the General Authority of Customs, said the forum demonstrates Qatar's commitment to protecting society and maintaining security. He emphasized that drug control is now a humanitarian and societal issue. He highlighted 346 foiled drug smuggling attempts in 2025, reflecting the effectiveness of customs measures and the readiness of personnel. He added that Qatar Customs continues to develop procedures, enhance risk

management, and use advanced technologies such as X-ray and AI-supported inspection devices to ensure effective control while facilitating legitimate trade.

Major General Abdullah bin Saqr Al Mohannadi, Director of the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Interior, affirmed the Ministry's focus on drugs as a core human rights issue. He emphasized that integrating institutional and community efforts is essential to counter drug risks and highlighted that the 2024–2030 strategy centers on protecting society through security, awareness, rehabilitation, and preventive measures, in coordination nationally, regionally, and internationally.

Dr. Ghanem bin Ali Al Mannai, Assistant Undersecretary for Healthcare Affairs at the Ministry of Public Health, underlined the Ministry's commitment to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and equal access to services. He highlighted the "Naufar" Center, which provides comprehensive care, including education, prevention programs, and treatment for individuals affected by drug addiction, emphasizing confidentiality, respect, and integrated social support.

Meanwhile, Mustafa Onal Arten, Head of the UNODC Office in Doha, praised Qatar's leadership in adopting a comprehensive, human-rights-based approach aligned with international standards. He emphasized the country's proactive role in regional and global initiatives to address drugs, highlighting Qatar's alignment with international conventions, policies, and the Gulf Strategy on

Drug Control 2025–2028, contributing to prevention, rehabilitation, and social reintegration.