

Mission permanente
de l'État du Qatar
auprès de l'Office
des Nations-Unies à Genève



الوفد الدائم لدولة قطر
لدى مكتب الأمم المتحدة
جنيف



2022/0035570/5

الوفد الدائم لدولة قطر / جنيف



The Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar to the United Nations Office in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with reference to latter's note dated 11/4/2022, transmitting the questionnaire of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food.

The Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar is pleased to attach herewith the response received from the competent authorities in the State of Qatar.

The Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 27th April 2022

OHCHR
CH- 1211 Geneva 10
Fax: 022 917 9008
Email: ohchr-srfood@un.org/ registry@un.org


E.E 99055/22



TÉLÉCOPIE / FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

DATE: 11 April 2022

A/TO: To all Permanent Missions
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

DE/FROM: Beatriz Balbin 
Chief
Special Procedures Branch

FAX: +41 22 917 90 08

TEL:

E-MAIL: ohchr-srfood@un.org

PAGES: 5 (Y COMPRIS CETTE PAGE/INCLUDING THIS PAGE)

COPIES:

OBJET/SUBJECT: **Letter from the Special Rapporteur on the right to food - Inputs request on “The impact of COVID-19 on the realization of the right to food”**

Please find attached a letter and a questionnaire from the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, Mr. Michael Fakhri.



PALAIS DES NATIONS • 1211 GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND
www.ohchr.org • TEL: +41 22 917 9000 • FAX: +41 22 917 9008 • E-MAIL: registry@ohchr.org

Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food

11 April 2022

Excellency,

I have the honour to address you in my capacity as the Special Rapporteur on the right to food, pursuant to resolution 43/11 of the Human Rights Council.

I am writing to invite your Excellency's Government to contribute your inputs for the preparation of my 2022 thematic report, which will focus on the impact of COVID-19 on the realization of the right to food and will be submitted to the 77th session of the UN General Assembly. The attached questionnaire will also be available on my webpage in the coming days at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/calls-for-input/calls-input/call-input-impact-covid-19-right-food>

I would be grateful if this letter and the annexed questionnaire could be transmitted to relevant authorities, inviting them to provide submissions or documents no later than 6 May 2022. Submissions to the questionnaire should be sent in Word format (subject: Questionnaire on COVID-19 and right to food) by email to ohchr-srfood@un.org.

Due to a limited capacity for translation, we request that your inputs be submitted in English, French, or Spanish. Kindly note that all inputs will be published on the official webpage of the mandate.

Please, accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Fakhri". The signature is stylized and somewhat abstract.

Michael Fakhri
Special Rapporteur on the right to food

To all Permanent Missions
to the United Nations Office at Geneva

The responses provided in this document should be read in context and full understanding of specificity of the food security challenges faced by Qatar. Food security is a challenge primarily caused by 1) limited availability of natural resources that limits domestic production and 2) geopolitical issues causing supply-chain disruption.

COVID-19 pandemic posed a different and new type of challenge for Qatar's food security that was addressed adequately in a timely manner due to coordinated actions of various stakeholders in the food supply-chain including the Government, strategic originations like Hassad Food and the private sector. Such policy and its implementation were already in place due to prior food security incidents that Qatar experienced. On top of that, to ensure any economic shock caused by the pandemic, to any quarters of the society, the Government announced and successfully delivered a support package of QAR xxx billion.

1. The most notable impact on the supply of food items to Qatar was noted in the beginning of the pandemic in early 2020. This was due to the compound effect of supply shortages caused by import-supply chain disruptions and consumer panic-buying bulk quantities. This was mostly applicable to consumer staple commodities like rice, wheat, pasta and fresh vegetables.
2. The key challenge was the ability to arrange shipments from source countries like India and Jordan, two key suppliers of food items to GCC countries, due to the non-availability of labor due to lockdowns in those countries. As far as any impact of human rights is concerned, Qatar maintains more than adequate safety stocks of all key staple commodities, therefore there were no such issues at any time during the pandemic.
3. Qatar's food security policy addresses all its residents including citizens and migrant workers alike. Generally, it's a free market where access to food is available to everyone, regardless of their social classification. Additionally, economic support package offered by the government ensured no single category of residents is adversely impacted.
4. Following on from the experiences of the blockade in 2017, Qatar has placed food security on top of its national agenda. The key to the success of the strategy is increasing the national production of various food items and increasing the storage of certain long-shelf-life commodities as safety stocks. Post pandemic Qatar has placed even more focus on its successful strategy to broaden the safety net. The success of such policy is working key players in the business like Hassad Food and private sector players to ensure they arrange and maintain adequate levels of supply at all the times.

5. In terms of food prices, the average inflation over the past 2 years has been at a level no different than before i.e., average of 3% inflation. However, recently, in the past few months, food prices have seen higher than normal inflation due to increase in global food prices. Since, Qatar imports a substantial amount of its food, global prices took a significant toll on domestic prices. As far as shortages are concerned, except for the first couple of months of the pandemic, there were no shortages of any food items and even those did not lead to higher prices. Food price inflation has been independent from pandemic.
6. In the long term, policy measures, access to alternative supply markets globally, increase in domestic production, adequate levels of safety stocks and supply-chain capability in global food supply-chain are the key areas of focus; and that's where we believe the international community should also focus on, making countries food independent as much as possible.
7. With regards to multilateral arrangements, the following areas of concern should be investigated:
 - a. Improved logistics between trade countries, particularly, in countries with poor logistics infrastructure
 - b. Enhanced and standardized food safety standard in both exporting and importing countries
 - c. Transparency in food security strategy at country level
8. When it comes to small scale businesses in the food and agriculture industry, the pandemic has impacted them most. Particularly, restaurants and food stalls suffered immensely during the lockdown with plenty of them seeing permanent closures. In Qatar, these businesses were supported by the Government financial support package, waivers in rentals and other support measures. On the other hand, these businesses also adopted a more online/central kitchen model capitalizing on home delivery and working with food delivery companies. We believe, this will change the fundamentals of this industry and how it will shape in the future.