

QATAR INTRODUCES SIGNIFICANT AMENDMENTS TO THE LABOUR LAW

Date: 1 September 2026

Qatar Labor, Employment, and Workplace Safety

By: Amjad Hussain, Randa I. Shiblaq

OVERVIEW

Qatar has enacted law number 9 of 2026, amending certain provisions of law number 14 of 2004 (the Labour Law). The amendments were published in the Official Gazette on 25 June 2026.

The Ministry of Labour (MOL) is taking steps to implement these amendments, and ministerial resolutions are expected to be issued in due course to provide further guidance to companies falling within its jurisdiction.

The amendments represent one of the more substantive recent updates to Qatar's on-shore employment framework and are intended to modernize labor market regulation, improve regulatory flexibility, strengthen compliance and enforcement tools, and balance the interests of employers and employees.

The key changes to the Labour Law are set out below:

Part-Time and Freelance Work:

Part-time and freelance workers are expressly mentioned in the amendments as categories of persons specifically excluded from the scope of the Labour Law. However, the Council of Ministers may, on the recommendation of the MOL, apply all or part of the Labour Law to these categories or issue separate regulations governing them. Employers using or intending to use these types of flexible working arrangements should monitor the anticipated implementing decisions.

Vocational Certification and Regulated Occupations:

Workers in certain designated occupations may be required to obtain training and examination certificates from centers accredited by the MOL. Ministerial decisions will be issued in due course to clarify the implementation of such change in the Labour Law and employers should pay careful attention to this development.

Noncompete Restrictions:

The amendments introduce material changes to post-termination noncompete restrictions. The maximum permitted duration has been extended from a period of one year to two years, and the MOL's approval appears to be required for enforceability of such restrictions. Noncompete restrictions are also not enforceable where employment terminates during the probation period. Employers should revisit existing contractual arrangements to ensure that any restrictive covenants are appropriately drafted or updated and capable of approval.

Recruitment Regulation:

The Minister of Labour has been granted wider authority to regulate recruitment-related businesses and activities, including determining licensing procedures, operating conditions, and administrative penalties for violations. This is expected to increase scrutiny of recruitment practices and the contractual arrangements used with recruitment providers.

Labor Dispute Procedures:

The amendments refine the labor dispute process by introducing clearer procedural timelines, supporting amicable settlement, and permitting the use of electronic systems in Labour Dispute Resolution Committee proceedings. The law provides for a period of seven days for the parties to attempt to settle the dispute amicably, and if a resolution cannot be achieved promptly, the MOL will refer the dispute to the Labour Dispute Resolution Committee within three working days. If settlement is reached during the early stage of the dispute process, the settlement may have immediate enforceability. Limitation periods are suspended while settlement requests are pending.

Strike Controls:

The right to strike remains recognized but is now subject to more detailed conditions. These include the taking of prior dispute resolution steps, written notice being given to the employer and the MOL, obtaining ministerial approval, the setting of restrictions on location and duration, limits in relation to vital facilities, and the possibility of engaging temporary replacement workers with ministerial approval. Strike days are treated as unpaid leave and should not exceed a period of six working days.

Further, an employer has the right to terminate an employment relationship without providing notice or paying end-of-service entitlements if an employee incites others to strike for illegitimate reasons and this causes disruption to the employer's organization.

Joint Committees:

Previously, establishments employing 30 or more workers may establish joint committees comprising employer and employee representatives. This has now been updated to state that joint committees must be established in organizations with 100 or more employees. The requirement is intended to continue to promote workplace dialogue and provide a platform for addressing work-related matters in a constructive manner.

Expanded Enforcement Powers:

The amendments strengthen the MOL's enforcement rights, including the ability to suspend certain ministerial transactions, publish the names of repeat violators in specified cases, and impose financial penalties for recruitment-related violations. The reforms also reinforce wage protection compliance, including the timely and regular payment of salaries.

CONCLUSION

The amendments to the Labour Law are a development in Qatar's employment framework.

Although several areas remain subject to the issuance of additional implementing decisions from the MOL and the Council of Ministers, employers should begin preparing now by reviewing existing employment documentation (including forms of contracts, policies, and procedures), flexible work arrangements, recruitment practices,

workplace governance structures, and compliance processes with a view to considering whether changes are required to ensure that they can continue to meet their regulatory obligations under the updated Labour Law.

KEY CONTACTS



AMJAD HUSSAIN

MANAGING PARTNER, DOHA AND DUBAI
OFFICE

DOHA

+974.4.424.6119

AMJAD.HUSSAIN@KLGATES.COM



RANDA I. SHIBLAQ

SENIOR PARALEGAL

DOHA

+974.4.424.6138

RANDA.SHIBLAQ@KLGATES.COM

This publication/newsletter is for informational purposes and does not contain or convey legal advice. The information herein should not be used or relied upon in regard to any particular facts or circumstances without first consulting a lawyer. Any views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the law firm's clients.