

the only legal importer of scrap batteries; the amount of scrap batteries allowed to be imported was being reduced until a total ban was achieved at the end of 1997 in conformity with the Basel Convention commitments; prior to the total ban, only those scrap batteries that could be safely recycled were allowed in the country; there are specific regulations intended to screen out scrap batteries that can no longer be safely recycled; PRI is regularly monitored for compliance with air quality, water effluent, and solid waste disposal standards; and regulations for processing of parts of scrap batteries are fully consistent with the government's commitment to the Basel Convention, thereby discouraging the international traffic of wastes.

With respect to the alleged mass poisoning of 4,000 people in 24 villages and toxicological risk to more than 10,000 people of Marinduque as a result of the Marcopper Mining Company mine tailings spill in March 1996, the government stated: there was no evidence that acute poisoning occurred in the exposed population due to mine tailings or that there was an immediate threat to human health as a result of the leakage; there was also no evidence of trace metal contamination or accumulation beyond internationally acceptable limits that may pose toxicological risks to either aquatic biota or human health; the Boac River, however, remained unsuitable for domestic and agricultural purposes because of heavy siltation from the mine tailings; the tunnel leak cited had been sealed to stop further flow and the Boac River had been dredged to prevent flooding, under the direct supervision of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB); long-term rehabilitation efforts by Marcopper Mining Corporation/Placer Dome Inc. continued for the Boac River and the affected delta; and MGB was conducting a post-spill impact assessment in coordination with the Environmental Management Bureau.



QATAR

Date of admission to UN: 21 September 1971.

TREATIES: RATIFICATIONS AND RESERVATIONS

Land and People: Qatar has not submitted a core document for use by the treaty bodies.

Racial Discrimination

Acceded: 22 July 1976.

Qatar's ninth, 10th and 11th periodic reports were due 21 August 1993, 1995 and 1997 respectively.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 8 December 1992; ratified: 3 April 1995.

Qatar's initial report was due 2 May 1997.

Reservations and Declarations: General reservation.

THEMATIC REPORTS

Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights

Religious intolerance, Special Rapporteur on:

(E/CN.4/1998/6, paras. 48, 50, 58, 62, 63)

The report refers to violations of freedom of religion and belief against Christianity and Islam and notes: non-Muslims are reportedly subjected to restrictions in religious matters; the conversion of a Muslim to another religion is strictly prohibited and punishable by death; any proselytizing of Muslims by non-Muslims is forbidden; and, non-Muslims must restrict the practice of their religion to the confines of their homes.

Mechanisms and Reports of the Sub-Commission

Traditional practices affecting the health of women and girls, Special Rapporteur on:

(E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/11, paras. 60–67)

The report refers to information provided by the government noting, *inter alia*, that progress in education has helped to bring about change in customs and traditions that were prejudicial to the health of individuals and of society. The government reported that many beliefs and customs that formerly harmed the health of women and children have disappeared. With regard to specific practices, the government referred to "cure by fire", which was carried out for the purpose of treating certain illnesses, but which is no longer practised. The government also noted that witchcraft and charlatanism is prohibited by Islam and by law, but that in the past witch doctors, under the pretext of caring for patients, took control of them. The government also stated that: there has been a reduction in early marriage, noting that the cultural and educational development that has taken place in Qatar has led girls to continue studying up to university level; women are now giving birth under medical supervision in clinics, eliminating the former practice of childbirth at home; and female circumcision, which was formerly widespread among the tribes of Qatar, has now totally disappeared.

