



رابطة معونة لحقوق الإنسان والهجرة

**Association Ma'onah for Human Rights and Immigration (AMHRI)**

*NGO in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)*

## COMPREHENSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

تقرير حقوقي شامل • Rapport complet sur les droits de l'homme

New York – UN

17 Feb. 28 – Apr. 7, 2026

Ref: AMHRI/2026/EN-04

IMRF – May 2026

### International Human Rights Advocacy Efforts by AMHRI

#### In Response to Iranian Military Aggression Against Gulf States and Neighboring Countries

#### And Its Catastrophic Human Rights Impact on Millions of Migrants in the Gulf

Reporting Period: 28 February 2026 – 7 April 2026 • From Aggression to Ceasefire • Issued: April 2026

## I. INTRODUCTION — AN UNPRECEDENTED HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS

On 28 February 2026, the world witnessed the outbreak of the most dangerous armed conflict the Middle East had seen in decades. The United States and Israel launched a large-scale military operation against Iran, targeting military and governmental installations and resulting in the killing of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. In response, Iran launched thousands of ballistic missiles and kamikaze drones under what it termed “Operation True Promise IV”, striking Israeli territory and U.S. military bases across the region. Simultaneously, and in a systematic pattern that drew immediate international condemnation, these attacks struck civilian infrastructure and residential areas across the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states — countries that had explicitly declared their non-participation in the armed conflict.

What renders this crisis exceptional from a human rights perspective is the uniquely vulnerable demographic reality of the Gulf region. With over 35 million migrant workers — constituting the majority of the population in most GCC states — the region’s workforce is overwhelmingly concentrated in the very sectors struck by the attacks: oil refineries, seaports, airports, construction sites, industrial zones, and hospitality facilities. These workers found themselves double victims:

- Victims of a war in which they were not parties, and
- Victims of restrictive kafala (sponsorship) systems that curtailed their freedom of movement even under life-threatening conditions.



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In response to this crisis, the Association Ma'onah for Human Rights and Immigration (AMHRI) — holding Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) — launched an immediate, comprehensive, and multi-track response. This combined rigorous field documentation, international legal advocacy, active engagement with UN bodies in New York and Geneva, and a formal submission to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague.

This report presents an integrated account of the crisis from two complementary angles: (1) AMHRI's international advocacy efforts, and (2) the catastrophic impact of the Iranian aggression on the rights of millions of migrant workers across the Gulf.



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## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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AMHRI's legal and human rights characterization of the Iranian aggression is grounded in the following international instruments:

- Article 2(4) of the UN Charter: Expressly prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of any State.
- UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 (1974) — Definition of Aggression: Defines aggression as the use of armed force by a State against the sovereignty or territorial integrity of another State.
- The Four Geneva Conventions (1949) and Additional Protocols: Principles of distinction, proportionality, military necessity, and Article 51 prohibiting disproportionate attacks.
- UN Security Council Resolution 2817 (2026): Condemns the Iranian aggression as unprovoked and demands its immediate and unconditional cessation.
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court: Establishes individual criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes of aggression.
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS): Guarantees freedom of navigation and prohibits the unlawful closure of international straits.
- Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM, 2018): Particularly Objectives 7 and 14 concerning migrant protection in conflict situations and consular access.
- ILO Convention No. 97 and related instruments on the rights of migrant workers.



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### III. MIGRANTS IN THE GULF — THE INVISIBLE VICTIMS

The true scale of this human rights catastrophe cannot be understood without recognizing the region's exceptional demographic reality. The GCC states are home to one of the largest concentrations of migrant labor anywhere in the world:

<b>35+ million</b> Migrants across GCC states <i>Source: IOM / Al Jazeera 2026</i>	<b>90%</b> Migrant share of population <i>UAE and Qatar</i>	<b>21 million</b> Workers from South Asia alone <i>One-third of the region's population</i>	<b>9+ countries</b> Principal migrant origins <i>India, Pakistan, Bangladesh...</i>
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Principal countries of origin include: India (~9 million), Pakistan (~5 million), Bangladesh (~5 million), Nepal (~1.2 million), Sri Lanka (~650,000), the Philippines, Indonesia, Ethiopia, Sudan, and numerous other African and Asian countries. These workers are employed in the sectors most directly targeted by the Iranian strikes: oil refineries, seaports, airports, construction, hospitality, and industrial complexes. Many carry substantial debt from recruitment and travel costs and support entire families who depend entirely on their regular remittances.



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## IV. DOCUMENTATION OF VIOLATIONS — FACTS AND FIGURES

Category of Violation / Statistic	Figure	Source
<b>Total missile and drone strikes on Gulf states</b>	<b>1,511+</b>	ACLED — through 7 April
<b>Ballistic missiles targeting the UAE alone</b>	<b>438</b>	UAE Ministry of Defence
<b>Kamikaze drones targeting the UAE</b>	<b>2,012</b>	UAE MoD — through 1 April
<b>Civilian deaths in Gulf states</b>	<b>31+</b>	Al Arabiya / April 2026
<b>Documented civilian injuries</b>	<b>268+</b>	Human Rights Watch — 16 March
<b>Proportion of fatalities who were migrants</b>	<b>&gt;57%</b>	Foreign nationals, multiple nationalities
<b>Deaths in the UAE (across 29 nationalities)</b>	<b>12</b>	Military, civilian & migrant workers
<b>Destruction of Qatar's Ras Laffan LNG capacity</b>	<b>17%</b>	CNBC — years to recover
<b>Estimated economic losses to Arab states</b>	<b>\$120B+</b>	Preliminary estimates through 31 March
<b>Depletion of Bahrain's Patriot interceptors</b>	<b>87%</b>	JINSA — late April
<b>International airports targeted</b>	<b>9+</b>	Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait City, etc.

### A. Scale and Geographic Scope of Attacks

The Iranian attacks were characterized by their exceptional scale, the diversity of weapons deployed, and the breadth of their geographic reach. Thousands of ballistic missiles and kamikaze drones were launched against nine countries across the region. Statements by Iranian General Ibrahim Jabbari declaring intent to strike “all economic centers in the region” reveal premeditated exposure of civilians to harm — a direct violation of the principles of international humanitarian law. Human Rights Watch researchers, using geo-verification platforms including GeoConfirmed, verified attacks on residential buildings, hotels, airports, diplomatic missions, seaports, and energy facilities across all GCC states.

### B. Timeline of Attacks

#### 28 February – 3 March 2026 — First Wave



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- UAE: Strike on the Fairmont The Palm Hotel, Dubai (4 injured); fuel storage fire at Dubai International Airport; damage at Jebel Ali Port; damage near the Israeli diplomatic compound in Abu Dhabi.
- Bahrain: Repeated strikes on the U.S. Navy Fifth Fleet headquarters; several residential buildings hit in Manama.
- Kuwait: Drone strike on Kuwait International Airport; workers injured, terminal building damaged.
- Qatar: 66 missiles targeting Al-Udeid Air Base on day one.
- Saudi Arabia: Interception of drones over the Ras Tanura oil facility; damage near the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh.
- UAE, Abu Dhabi, and Kuwait airports closed; regional airspace effectively paralyzed.

### 4 – 15 March 2026 — Escalation Phase

- UAE: Sustained attacks escalated to 438 ballistic missiles and 2,012 drones.
- Bahrain: A 29-year-old Bahraini woman killed when Millennium Tower was struck (10 March); eight others injured.
- UAE: A Palestinian civilian killed when a missile struck his vehicle in Abu Dhabi.
- Qatar: Attack on Ras Laffan LNG facilities reduced production capacity by 17%.
- AWS data centers struck in the UAE and Bahrain; cloud services disrupted.
- Kuwait: Fuel depot fire at the airport following drone strike.

### 16 – 31 March 2026 — Hormuz Closure and Economic Shock

- Iran imposed a de facto closure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20% of global oil supplies pass.
- 27 March: Strike on Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia — 15 U.S. soldiers wounded; refueling aircraft damaged.
- Iranian attack on a U.S. oil tanker in Gulf waters.
- Iranian drones entered Azerbaijani airspace; Nakhchivan International Airport struck.
- 26 March: Joint condemnation issued by UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Jordan.

### 1 – 7 April 2026 — Final Phase and Ceasefire

- Attacks continued despite ongoing diplomatic negotiations.
- UAE and Kuwait depleted 75–87% of their Patriot interceptor stockpiles.
- 7 April: Two-week ceasefire announced, brokered by Pakistan; effective 8 April.



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- Violations continued after announcement: fire at Abu Dhabi's Habshan gas complex; direct drone strike on Saudi pipeline.



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## V. CATASTROPHIC HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT ON MIGRANTS

### A. Casualties and Field Testimonies

<b>31+</b> Civilian deaths in GCC <i>Al Arabiya / April 2026</i>	<b>268+</b> Documented injuries <i>HRW — through 16 March 2026</i>	<b>&gt;57%</b> Victims were migrants <i>Foreign nationals, multiple nationalities</i>
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According to Agence France-Presse figures compiled through mid-March 2026, 14 civilians had been killed in Gulf states, at least 8 of whom were foreign nationals from Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and India. Human Rights Watch documented that 10 of the 11 confirmed deaths in its tracking were foreign nationals. In the UAE alone, 12 people were killed across 29 nationalities — including military personnel and migrant workers.

**Saleh Ahmed — Bangladeshi water delivery worker, Ajman (killed 28 February):** “He was making a routine delivery in the Al-Talla district when debris from an intercepted Iranian strike tore through his truck, killing him and injuring two other workers. He had been remitting savings to build a family home in Bangladesh for three decades.”

**Muraib Zaman Nazar — Pakistani worker, Abu Dhabi (aged 43, killed in drone debris strike):** “He had been sending \$300 every month without fail to his family. Hundreds came from his village to bid him farewell. He lost not only his life; his children lost their future.”

**Female domestic worker, UAE (7 years of residence):** “My children call me constantly, frightened by what they see on television. I tell them everything is fine — and I don’t know if that’s true.”

**Unemployed Bangladeshi worker, Bahrain (free visa status):** “Some days I don’t have enough to eat. Even if going out is dangerous, I have to look for work. But there is no work. I don’t know how much longer I can survive.”

### B. Economic Impact on Migrants and Origin Countries

<b>\$400B</b> Pakistan’s Gulf remittances <i>≈10% of national GDP</i>	<b>400+ workers</b> Had wages halved <i>In a single Bahrain firm (HRW)</i>	<b>~\$250,000</b> Private charter evacuation cost <i>3 March 2026 — for the affluent only</i>
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Airport closures, port shutdowns, and industrial damage caused a sharp contraction or complete elimination of income for vast numbers of workers. A supply company manager in Bahrain reported to Human Rights Watch that three of his major clients had demanded he halve the wages of over 400 workers. A restaurant worker in Kuwait described a collapse in customers, reduced hours, and pay cuts — with no means of return, as commercial flights had been suspended and alternative overland travel costs had become prohibitively expensive.

The economic impact extends far beyond the region. Remittances from Gulf workers represent approximately 10% of Pakistan's GDP. Economists have raised serious concerns about the long-term impact of this crisis on regional migration patterns, with many workers potentially deterred from seeking employment in the Gulf, thereby increasing unemployment in origin countries already under acute economic strain.

### **C. The Kafala System as a Legal Trap in Wartime**

The armed conflict brutally exposed the structural vulnerabilities created by the kafala (sponsorship) system prevailing in Gulf states. A migrant worker bound to a specific employer's sponsorship has no freedom to relocate or depart without explicit permission, effectively making them a hostage to circumstances even when their life is in danger. Human Rights Watch documented cases of workers unable to leave because:

- Flight tickets had become unaffordable due to the collapse of commercial aviation.
- Employers had not released them from their contracts.
- Most had no health insurance or access to social protection.
- No clear legal remedy existed to claim compensation for harm suffered.
- U.S. consular services were suspended from 22–23 March, leaving thousands with no official channel for document renewal or protection.



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## VI. LEGAL CHARACTERIZATION OF VIOLATIONS

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### A. Violations of International Humanitarian Law

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Völker Türk stated before the Human Rights Council (March 2026) that “many of the strikes in this conflict raise serious concerns under international law, which prohibits attacks directed against civilians and civilian infrastructure, as well as attacks on military targets where civilian harm would be disproportionate.” Specifically, he noted that ports, energy facilities, airports, water infrastructure, and diplomatic sites had “sustained damage causing disruptions to essential services and increased risks to civilians.”

AMHRI concludes that the Iranian attacks on non-belligerent Gulf states constitute:

- **Crime of Aggression:** The use of armed force against States not party to the conflict (UNGA Resolution 3314, 1974).
- **Violation of the Principle of Distinction:** Systematic targeting of civilian objects including hotels, residential buildings, airports, and water desalination facilities (Articles 48 and 52, Additional Protocol I).
- **Violation of the Principle of Proportionality:** Launching thousands of strikes against neutral States with no legitimate military objective (Article 51(5)(b), Additional Protocol I).
- **War Crimes:** Targeting water desalination plants constitutes a war crime under Article 54 (prohibition of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare). UN legal experts have affirmed that such strikes are “probably unlawful.”
- **Violation of Freedom of Navigation:** Closure of the Strait of Hormuz in breach of UNCLOS and UNSC Resolution 2817 (2026).

### B. Migrants under the Global Compact for Migration

The crisis reveals a compound failure in implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM):

- **Objective 14 (Consular Access):** Remained a dead letter when embassies suspended services and thousands of migrants were left with no recourse for protection or document renewal.
- **Objective 7 (Reducing Vulnerability):** The kafala system, exposed as a structural barrier, converts economic precariousness into a legal constraint preventing self-protection in times of crisis.
- **Objective 2 (Anti-Trafficking Safeguards):** Workers describing their inability to leave danger zones due to recruitment debts exhibit characteristics alarmingly similar to conditions of forced labor and trafficking.



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## VII. AMHRI ADVOCACY EFFORTS — CHRONOLOGY AND OUTCOMES

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AMHRI pursued a coordinated, multi-track advocacy strategy from the first day of the conflict:

### **Phase 1 — 28 February 2026: Immediate Response**

- Daily issuance of legal condemnation statements with precise IHL characterization.
- Documentation of the systematic nature and civilian character of targeted sites.
- Urgent calls for compliance with international humanitarian law and migrant protection.

### **Phase 2 — 2 March 2026: UN Engagement in New York and Geneva**

- Formal urgent request to the UN Secretary-General and the President and members of the Security Council, calling for a binding resolution condemning the aggression.
- Formal request to the President of the UN Human Rights Council (Geneva) for an emergency special session to address the Iranian attacks and their human rights impact.

### **Phase 3 — 6 March 2026: Comprehensive Legal Report and CSW70**

- Preparation and submission of a comprehensive written human rights report to the United Nations in both New York and Geneva.
- Presentation of a written report at the 70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (#CSW70) on the impact of the aggression on Arab women and migrant women workers' access to justice.

### **Phase 4 — 11 March 2026: UN Security Council Resolution 2817**

The adoption of UNSC Resolution 2817 — less than ten days after AMHRI's formal request — constituted the first concrete human rights victory for the Association in this case. The resolution:

- Explicitly condemned the Iranian aggression as unprovoked and unjustified.
- Demanded the immediate and complete cessation of Iranian military operations against Gulf states.
- Became the binding international legal reference point for all subsequent AMHRI actions.

### **Phase 5 — 12 March 2026: First NGO Oral Statement at the Human Rights Council**

AMHRI's representative delivered the first oral statement by a non-governmental organization on the subject of Iranian aggression at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, within the framework of the 61st Session. The statement called for an international coalition to ensure implementation of the resolution and the protection of civilians and migrants.



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### **Phase 6 — 21 March 2026: Submission to the International Criminal Court**

In a pivotal legal step, AMHRI submitted a formal communication to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, requesting the opening of a criminal investigation into the crime of aggression. The Association received an official acknowledgement of receipt from the Office of the Prosecutor — establishing the first international criminal accountability pathway for Iran's actions.

### **Phase 7 — 24–25 March 2026: HRC Emergency Session and Resolution**

In a landmark development, the Human Rights Council voted to convene an emergency special session on 25 March 2026 to address the Iranian military aggression — responding directly to the request AMHRI had submitted on 2 March. In this historic session:

- AMHRI delivered an oral statement calling for the adoption of a resolution of condemnation and demanding accountability and reparations.
- The Council adopted a resolution condemning the Iranian aggression — recognized by AMHRI as the second major international human rights victory in this case.
- Bahrain's leading newspapers Al-Bilad and Al-Ayyam described AMHRI as a "principal representative of Arab and Gulf civil society organizations" within the UN system.

### **Phase 8 — 27 March 2026: Joint Statement on Educational Institutions**

AMHRI delivered a joint oral statement addressing the protection of educational institutions from a universal and non-selective perspective, documenting Iran's track record of destruction of schools in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen through its proxy militias, and calling for the unconditional protection of education in all conflict contexts.



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## VIII. CEASEFIRE AND AFTERMATH

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On 7 April 2026, after forty days of escalating conflict, U.S. President Donald Trump announced a two-week ceasefire, brokered by Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The agreement entered into force on 8 April, with Iran committing to the temporary reopening of the Strait of Hormuz. However, attacks continued for hours after the announcement was made, raising serious doubts about the durability of the truce.

Gulf state responses to the ceasefire announcement:

- Saudi Arabia: Welcomed the ceasefire; called for an end to all attacks on regional states and the permanent reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.
- Kuwait: Expressed hope for a “comprehensive and permanent settlement”; called on Iran and its proxy militias to cease all hostile acts.
- Qatar: Characterized the ceasefire as “an initial step toward de-escalation”; urged a halt to “all Iranian hostile acts and practices.”
- UAE: Called for a long-term security solution for the region; warned against any ceasefire that fails to deliver lasting stability.



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## **IX. OUTCOMES OF AMHRI'S ADVOCACY EFFORTS**

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### **At the UN in New York**

- Adoption of UNSC Resolution 2817 by unprecedented international consensus.
- AMHRI established as a leading Arab civil society voice in shaping international discourse on the Iranian aggression.

### **At the UN in Geneva**

- First-ever NGO oral statement on Iranian aggression at the Human Rights Council (12 March).
- Adoption of emergency session and condemnatory HRC resolution (25 March).
- Strengthened partnership with the Geneva International Centre for Justice and international NGO partners.

### **At the International Criminal Court**

- Formal complaint accepted and acknowledged by the ICC Office of the Prosecutor — first international criminal accountability pathway established.

### **In International Public Discourse**

- The Iranian attacks' legal characterization as aggression — not self-defense — consolidated in international discourse.
- AMHRI's role recognized by regional media as the principal Arab human rights organization in the UN system for this file.



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## **X. CHALLENGES AND DIFFICULTIES**

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- **Political pressure within the UN system:** Iranian diplomatic missions, alongside NGOs aligned with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the Muslim Brotherhood, sought to discredit AMHRI's position through counter-statements within the HRC and to UN NGO management bodies.
- **Weak Arab civil society coordination:** Absence of support from other Arab NGOs holding consultative status, placing a disproportionate burden on AMHRI to advance this file largely alone.
- **Limited resources:** Facing a file of extraordinary scale, geographic breadth, and legal complexity.
- **Restricted access:** Difficulty in establishing direct contact with affected migrant workers in high-risk zones.



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## **XI. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **A. To the International Community and the Security Council**

- Ensure the full implementation of UNSC Resolution 2817 and enforce its legal consequences.
- Establish an independent international accountability mechanism to investigate crimes of aggression against non-belligerent states.
- Guarantee the permanent reopening of the Strait of Hormuz to international navigation in accordance with UNCLOS.

### **B. To Gulf States — Immediate Migrant Protection Measures**

- Open safe and affordable evacuation corridors enabling migrants wishing to leave to return to their countries of origin without restriction.
- Establish multilingual early-warning systems transmitting real-time alerts to all workers in affected areas.
- Waive migrant recruitment debts, administrative fees, and absence penalties for the duration of the conflict.
- Guarantee healthcare access to all migrants regardless of employment or visa status.

### **C. To the 2nd International Migration Review Forum (IMRF — May 2026)**

- Include a binding protocol for the protection of migrants in conflict zones within the Progress Declaration — with enforceable implementation mechanisms, not merely aspirational language.
- Strengthen GCM Objective 14 (consular access) by linking it to conditions in bilateral labor agreements.
- Adopt an explicit recommendation to reform the kafala system as a structural obstacle incompatible with GCM objectives, particularly in crisis conditions.
- Establish an international coordination framework for migrant pre-crisis evacuation planning with the participation of both origin and destination states.

### **D. To UN Human Rights Mechanisms**

- Launch an independent investigation into strikes targeting residential areas heavily populated by migrant workers.
- Activate the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants to issue an urgent appeal classifying migrant workers as a protected vulnerable category in armed conflict.



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- Hold migrant-sending states accountable for developing pre-crisis evacuation contingency plans rather than responding after tragedy strikes.



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## **XII. CONCLUSION — TOWARD A MIGRATION COMPACT THAT WITHSTANDS WAR**

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The situation of 35 million migrants across the Gulf states today lays bare a fundamental truth: the Global Compact for Migration, despite being a genuine diplomatic achievement, lacks the enforceable protection mechanisms needed when crises erupt. A migrant worker who came to the Gulf seeking a dignified livelihood — who carried debt to finance a visa and sends money home to a family that depends entirely on him — finds, when missiles fall, only three options: to remain trapped, to flee if he can (and most cannot), or to become a number in a news bulletin.

The violations documented in this report — in their scale, their targeting of non-belligerent states, and their impact on millions of unprotected migrant workers — exceed any reasonable interpretation of legitimate self-defense. They constitute grave breaches of international humanitarian law and international human rights law that demand full and immediate accountability before international justice mechanisms.

The Second International Migration Review Forum convenes in exceptional circumstances not envisioned when its agenda was set. The crisis facing the Gulf region is not a passing episode; it is an existential test of the Global Compact itself. Is it a document for prosperity alone? Or is it a covenant with humanity that holds firm in the face of war?

AMHRI reaffirms its steadfast commitment to pursuing this file at every level of international engagement — advancing accountability, strengthening international protection frameworks, and working toward the establishment of the first Arab-led international civil society coalition to enforce the resolutions of international legitimacy and ensure that impunity is not an option. The word “protection” in the title of the Global Compact must be a genuine pledge — not ink on paper — for those who need it most, when they need it most.

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**Issued by:**

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New York – Geneva – United States of America • April 2026

Tel: +1 (718) 872-5017 • info@maonah.org • www.maonah.org

*International Human Rights Organization — NGO in Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)*