

Population Statistics: Gulf Cooperation Council States

Qatar: Foreign workers were 80 percent of the estimated mid-2001 population of 769,152, according to the U.S. State Department. The Qatari government reported to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in 2001 that “the vast majority of the labor force in the private sector consists of migrant workers of various nationalities employed on a temporary basis,” but did not provide statistics.

United Arab Emirates: Noncitizens were about 80 percent of the current population of 2.94 million, according to the UAE’s Ministry of Finance and Industry. Foreigners accounted for approximately 90 percent of the labor force of 1.7 million, the U.S. State Department reported in 2002.

Kuwait: Non-Kuwaitis were 64.8 percent of the population of 2,273,719 in mid-1999, according to the official Kuwait News Agency. There were 975,961 foreign workers, who comprised 80 percent of the labor force, according to June 2001 Kuwaiti government statistics cited by the U.S. State Department.

Bahrain: Non-Bahranis were 40.4 percent of the population of 716,150 in 2001, the government’s Central Statistics Organization estimated. It also reported that the number of workers in the labor force in 2001 was 332,521, with foreigners accounting for 64 percent, or 213,007 people.

Saudi Arabia: There are at least 7 million expatriates in the kingdom, or one-third of the total population of 21 million, the Minister of Labor informed Human Rights Watch in January 2003. At least 5.5 million of them are workers, he added.

Oman: In 2000, expatriates comprised 25.9 percent of the population of 2.4 million and 495,000 of them were employed in the private sector, Oman’s Ministry of National Economy reported. About 80 percent of Oman’s private sector workers are foreigners, according to the U.S. State Department.

-- Compiled by Human Rights Watch, March 2003