

## QATAR

Qatar is an undemocratic absolute monarchy whose only legislative body is the Shura Council. Its 35 members are appointed and have few powers, limited primarily to approving the budget, monitoring government ministers, and drafting legislation. Legislation can only be passed with a 2/3 majority and approval from the Emir. Shari'ah Law appears to dominate in criminal legal matters and thus I was unable to find *any* piece of criminal law, let alone something in forensic policy, on any of the government sites – including the council's website and ministry of justice.

That said, there appears to be some evidence to suggest the databasing may be active in the small emirate. The first is an article dated June 2008 that describes a training program for Saudi women who came to Doha to learn forensic DNA sampling techniques and analysis at Naif Arab University. They were schooled in extraction, separation, and the operation of necessary equipment for profiling. Because of their interpretation of Shari'ah law, Saudi men cannot touch the body, dead or alive, of a woman and thus necessitates a need for women trained in the forensic sciences to perform this function in criminal investigative matters.

The second is a legal forum that heatedly debates the use of DNA testing in instances of li'aan in Qatar. Although the translation is not perfect, a judge ordered genetic confirmation of paternity in February of last year. It would appear that the civil code mandates the use of li'aan in paternity but since the judge ordered a test – subverting the validity of li'aan – it created quite a frenzy.

The clearest indication of a move toward forensic databasing in Qatar was found in a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) [statement](#) dated 27<sup>th</sup> of May, 2010. The GCC, a regional body of six Arab states with a variety of economic and security goals, apparently approved a draft DNA law in Doha. The scope, jurisdiction, or reach of the law is unknown to me, and I could not find any indication of it at the GCC secretariat's website or through broad google searches. The only additional sliver I did find was that in December of 2010 an agreement was reached between GCC members to share forensic laboratory findings and research with one another. Whether this extends to DNA profiles is again uncertain but it does lend credence to the possibility.

- *Scott Knackstedt, April 12, 2011*