



محكمة قطر الدولية
ومركز تسوية المنازعات

QATAR INTERNATIONAL COURT
AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT

18

TABLE OF CONTENTS



CASE MANAGEMENT
SYSTEM LAUNCH AND
FAMILIARISATION
SESSION

20



ANNUAL
INTERNATIONAL
BAR ASSOCIATION
CONFERENCE
ROME 2018

36

- 03 | OUR VISION
ABOUT QICDRC
- 04 | MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE COURT
- 06 | MESSAGE FROM THE CEO
- 08 | OVERVIEW - THE COURT AND THE
REGULATORY TRIBUNAL
- 10 | JURISDICTION OF THE COURT AND THE
REGULATORY TRIBUNAL
- 12 | CASE STATISTICS
- 14 | CASES BEFORE THE COURT
- 15 | CASES BEFORE THE REGULATORY TRIBUNAL
- 16 | JUDICIARY
- 18 | OVERVIEW - ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION
- 20 | CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM LAUNCH AND
FAMILIARISATION SESSION
- 22 | MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNINGS
- 24 | DELEGATION VISITS
- 30 | EVENT HIGHLIGHTS
- 42 | UNIVERSITY OUTREACH
- 42 | SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

OUR VISION

To be recognised as the world's leading forum for the resolution of international civil and commercial disputes.

ABOUT QICDRC

The Qatar International Court and Dispute Resolution Centre (QICDRC) comprises the Qatar International Court (or QFC Civil and Commercial Court) and the QFC Regulatory Tribunal. Both judicial bodies are established pursuant to the relevant provisions of QFC Law No 7 of 2005 as amended. The procedures of both the Court and Regulatory Tribunal are laid down in the QFC Law and the Regulations and Procedural Rules of each judicial body.

INTRODUCTION

2018 was a particularly remarkable year for us at the QICDRC. We continued to focus on ensuring the effective and fast delivery of justice through enhancing the Court's processes and procedures with a view to improve access to justice.

In February we introduced eCourt, the QICDRC's online case management system. The new application leverages the latest technological advancements to enable a faster and more convenient dispute resolution process. Benefits include its dual language capability, its compatibility with mobile devices, the fact that it is free to access and, perhaps most importantly, it is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The introduction of eCourt, as well as the Court's participation in various regional and international legal events, highlights the QICDRC's commitment to provide a world-class international court and dispute resolution centre with a firm commitment to upholding the Rule of Law.



THE RT HON. THE LORD THOMAS OF CWMGIEDD

PRESIDENT OF THE COURT

2018 has been another significant year for the QICDRC.

At the start of the year we launched eCourt, the QICDRC's electronic case management and hearing system. eCourt, which is free to use and is available in both English and Arabic languages, ensures that litigants, wherever they are in the world, can file, access communications with and, where appropriate, make submissions to the QICDRC, whether it be from their laptop, mobile phone or other electronic device. At the end of 2018, over 100 users had registered with eCourt.

The volume of work before the Court and the Regulatory Tribunal has continued to increase. In 2018, the Court had 25 separate actions filed before it, the Regulatory Tribunal had 4. The Court heard a wide variety of cases concerning matters such as banking and the regulation of financial services, contract claims, employment, insolvency and insurance. The Regulatory Tribunal continues to act as an important appellate body from decisions of the Qatar Financial Centre Authority, the Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority and other QFC Institutions such as the Employment Standards Office. The ability of the Court and Regulatory Tribunal to enforce their own judgments throughout the State of Qatar continues to be an invaluable tool to ensure compliance with the orders and judgments that they issue. As always, the judgments of the Court and Regulatory Tribunal (in English and Arabic) are available to members of the public through the QICDRC website.

2018 saw two new judicial appointments to the Court—namely Sir William Blair from the United Kingdom and Dr Rashid Al Anezi from Kuwait. They both bring invaluable experience and we welcome them to the QICDRC.

ADR, in particular mediation and arbitration, plays a vital role in resolving disputes. Throughout 2018, a number of judicial mediations took place at the QICDRC with the aim of resolving disputes amicably and without recourse to litigation. The QICDRC continues to facilitate arbitrations (both ad-hoc and institutional) at its premises along with the ability of the Court to act as the 'Competent Court' where parties have elected it to perform this function pursuant to the provisions of Law No 2 of 2017 issuing the Civil and Commercial Arbitration Law.

The QICDRC has entered into a number of important Memorandums of Understanding throughout the course of the year, including with Lexis Nexis which has opened an office at the QICDRC. Both institutions will be working together to improve access to legal materials and promote the Rule of Law.

We have welcomed a number of delegations throughout the year and participated in an increasing number of both local and international events. A particular highlight was the second meeting of the Standing International Forum of Commercial Courts ('SIFoCC') which took place in New York. SIFoCC is currently working, among other things, on finalising and publishing a Multilateral Memorandum on Enforcement.

Education initiatives continue to be an important part of the extra-curricular work of the QICDRC. We have strengthened our relationships with Qatar University and Hamad Bin Khalifa University through various initiatives as well as with the College of the North Atlantic, the University of Treviso and Sorbonne University. We look forward to continuing to work with them and others throughout 2019.

As I have only recently succeeded Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers as President of the QICDRC, I would like to thank him on behalf of all at the Court for his outstanding leadership, dedication and hard work over the last 6 years. I would also like to pay tribute to the enormous contributions made to the Regulatory Tribunal by Sir David Keene (as Chairman) and Francois Gianviti; both recently retired from many years of service on the Regulatory Tribunal. We wish them all well.



FAISAL RASHID AL-SAHOUTI

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

As the State of Qatar accelerates its economic diversification efforts and continues its mission to attract foreign direct investments, the importance of maintaining a renowned judicial system remains at the forefront of our work. At QICDRC, we pride ourselves in our unique judicial framework that specialises in resolving civil and commercial disputes in accordance with international legal standards.

Under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, Qatar has ensured to position itself as the ideal model for a transparent and reliable legal framework. In line with the Qatar National Vision 2030, our court and all its staff remain committed to realising the goals set out in the economic pillar.

Recent studies show that companies around the world have found more incentives to expand their trade networks globally and reach out to new markets and regions. This is especially true in Qatar, a country with one of the highest internet penetration rates in the world and the highest in the region, and where the local government is focused on paving the ground for the growth of small and medium enterprises and e-commerce businesses, leading an ambitious economic diversification strategy that aims to increase regional and international trade and business partnerships, and building the nation's reputation as a trustworthy trading partner.

The findings of the World Trade Report 2018 suggest that the increase in cross-cultural and international trade has inevitably led to a corresponding increase in commercial disputes. In fact, the growth and complexity of international trade and commerce in itself brings a considerable demand and scope for various forms of dispute resolution. While the dichotomy between Western and the Eastern judicial systems is narrowing, there will always be need for a unified legal system that is adaptable of the international commercial environment and is mindful of cultural differences.

In times when the future of international trade remains ambiguous due to tense geopolitical conflicts and a concerning spike in tensions between some of the

world's major powers, many legal experts around the world see in international courts the hope for providing the legal framework that guarantees rights and ensures adherence to the rule of law. By looking into cases related to the Gulf dispute independently, QICDRC judges have truly exemplified an independent judicial framework that works to serve justice and enforce the rule of law.

At QICDRC, we have made it our mission to leverage the latest courtroom technologies that help us enhance access to justice, transform the process of filing and submitting court case documents, and achieve court excellence. We continued to do so in 2018, as we introduced eCourt, the first comprehensive online case management system in the region that allows parties to initiate, manage, attend hearings and receive cases decisions without the need to physically appear before a jury or be present in court.

In 2018, we continued to expand our collaboration with local and international legal organisations, promoting alternative dispute resolution means and reinforcing the court's commitment to the rule of law. We exchanged mutual visits with delegations and government representatives from Europe, Asia and the Middle East to discuss aspects of cooperation and explore our state-of-the-art courtroom and arbitration facilities. We also continued to sponsor the 2018 edition of the Annual Conference of the International Bar Association (IBA) for the second consecutive year. The 2018 edition, held in Rome, Italy, saw the court not only having on the ground presence, but a greater participation in sessions and panels from myself and the team. Our participation in the 2018 IBA Annual Conference reaffirmed our commitment to partnering with different organisations and stakeholders to exchange experiences. In 2018, our President Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers retired from his position, having been committed to serving justice for several years. Since his joining in 2012, Lord Phillips was committed to the establishment and growth of QICDRC.

2018 was also the year we announced the appointment of the Right Honourable Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd as President of the Court, following the departure of Lord Phillips. As the former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, Lord Thomas joins the Court with a wealth of experience and knowledge that will help the court grow and develop to become a global model for justice. We are looking forward to a new era filled with growth and success.

As we mark the end of one exceptional year with the beginning of another, it is imperative to remember that 2019 comes with new hopes and aspirations. It marks the beginning of a journey that will bring bigger and better things to QICDRC, and the legal community in Qatar and around the world. We are proud of our achievements in 2018, and we look forward to reaching new milestones that further reaffirm our commitment to the rule of law throughout 2019.



OVERVIEW

THE COURT AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL

As of 1 January 2019, the judiciary of the Court and Regulatory Tribunal comprise 16 judges from 9 different jurisdictions (Qatar, Kuwait, England and Wales, Scotland, Cyprus, India, Singapore, Hong Kong and New Zealand). The judges subscribe to a judicial code of conduct, the cornerstones of which are impartiality, independence, integrity and propriety.

With the agreement of the Supreme Judicial Council in the State of Qatar, the Court and Regulatory Tribunal continue to be supported by Justice Rashid Al Badr who fulfills the role of Enforcement Judge. The successful enforcement of judgments of the Court has been a key milestone in the development of the Court. The fact that the Court has been able to successfully enforce its own judgments sets it apart from other comparable judicial institutions in the Region.





JURISDICTION OF THE COURT AND REGULATORY TRIBUNAL

The jurisdiction of the Court and Regulatory Tribunal is provided for under Article 8 of the QFC Law.

ARTICLE 8(2)(C)

Article 8(2)(c) of the QFC Law provides that:

The Regulatory Tribunal shall have the jurisdiction to hear Appeals raised by individuals and corporate bodies against decisions of The QFC Authority, The Regulatory Authority, and other QFC institutions.

ARTICLE 8(3)(C)-(D)

Article 8(3)(c)-(d) of the QFC Law sets out the jurisdiction of the Court:

The First Instance Circuit of the Court shall have the jurisdiction to hear the following disputes:

Civil and commercial disputes arising from transactions, contracts, arrangements or incidences taking place in or from The QFC between the entities established therein.

Civil and commercial disputes arising between The QFC authorities or institutions and the entities established therein.

Civil and commercial disputes arising between entities established in The QFC and contractors therewith and employees thereof, unless the parties agree otherwise.

Civil and commercial disputes arising from transactions, contracts or arrangements taking place between entities established within The QFC and residents of The State, or entities established in the State but outside The QFC, unless the parties agree otherwise.

The Appellate Circuit of The Civil and Commercial Court shall have the jurisdiction to hear appeals against decisions of The First Instance Circuit, as well as appeals against decisions of The Regulatory Tribunal. A member shall not sit in The Appeals Circuit to look over an appealed judgment if such member was a member of the circuit that originally issued the judgment.

LAW NO 2 OF 2017

In addition, Law No 2 of 2017 expands the jurisdiction of the Court where the Court has been selected as the “Competent Court” over arbitrations seated in Qatar.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
وَإِذَا حُكِمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ
فَعَلُوا صِدْقًا



مركز
ومركز تسوية
NATIONAL COURT
CENTRE



CASE STATISTICS

	<u>CASES FILED BEFORE THE COURT</u>	<u>CASES FILED BEFORE THE REGULATORY TRIBUNAL</u>
2009	1	0
2010	9	0
2011	2	3
2012	2	0
2013	2	1

	<u>CASES FILED BEFORE THE COURT</u>	<u>CASES FILED BEFORE THE REGULATORY TRIBUNAL</u>
2014	5	1
2015	9	1
2016	11	0
2017	14	23
2018	25	4

CASES BEFORE THE QATAR INTERNATIONAL COURT

25 CASES

Twenty five cases were filed before the Qatar International Court in 2018. These cases ranged in type and covered areas such as contract disputes, employment, insurance, insolvency, applications under the QFC Financial Services Regulations as well as regulatory matters. The Court issued 17 judgments throughout this period.

INSURANCE

In Case No 12 of 2018 the Appellate Division of the Court refused permission to appeal where the Applicant company sought to argue that it was entitled to compensation in circumstances where its insurer had declined to renew its policy of insurance. The Court rejected an argument that there was a “rule” in the insurance market that an insurer who had issued a certain type of policy should continue to provide cover until the project which was the subject of the policy had been completed. The Court observed that even if such a rule did exist, it would have been overridden by the express terms of the policy which the Applicant agreed upon.

COSTS

In Case No 6 of 2017 the Registrar addressed a number of issues in the context of a disputed costs assessment, including the extent to which self-represented law firms can recover professional legal costs as part of a costs assessment. I concluded that, in principle, there are good reasons why law firms should be able to recover at their professional rates provided that such rates are reasonable. The costs assessment in this case also looks at the extent to which costs spent in furtherance of an unsuccessful mediation may be recovered as well as the costs consequences of unreasonable behaviour of a party to proceedings.

EMPLOYMENT

One of the most significant judgments issued by the Appellate Division of the Court in 2018 was in the context of employment law. In Case No’s 3 and 4 of 2018 the Appellate Division of the Court handed down judgment in an important case for those subject to the QFC employment framework and those who practice in employment law. First, the Court rejected a submission by the Respondent that the decision of the QFC Employment Standards Office (‘ESO’) was capable of constituting *res judicata*. This was because, in the Court’s judgment, the ESO “does not have the structural independence to perform the quasi-judicial function of making binding resolutions of disputes between the QFCA, or entities linked to the QFCA such as the QFBA, and their employees.” However, the Court concluded that, ordinarily, where an individual elects to have their dispute determined by the ESO, the correct route of challenge is to appeal the Decision of the ESO to the Regulatory Tribunal, not to commence a fresh action, based upon the same facts, before the Court. On the subject of the applicable time limit for filing an appeal before the Regulatory Tribunal, the Court held that the correct approach was to apply the 60 day time limit contained within the QFC Law and not the 30 day time limit provided for under the QFC Employment Regulations. The 60 day time limit was, in the Court’s judgment, not capable of being extended by the Regulatory Tribunal.

BANKING AND REGULATORY

In Case No CTFIC1009/2018 the First Instance Circuit of the Court concluded that, for the purposes of the QFC Companies Regulations, a ‘branch’ is not to be considered as an entity distinct in law from the non-QFC company on whose application the branch was established. On the facts of this case, the Court ordered the Respondent bank to comply with a Notice served upon it by the Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority requesting the production of documents and other materials relevant to its investigation which included materials held outside the QFC.

JURISDICTION

In Case No 7 of 2017 the First Instance Circuit of the Court made clear that it will not entertain claims in circumstances where there is a clear exclusive jurisdiction clause conferring jurisdiction on another judicial authority, in this case the Dubai International Financial Centre Courts.

SUMMARY JUDGMENT

Litigants continue to make appropriate use of the Summary Judgment procedures provided for by Article 22. 6 of the Regulations and Procedural Rules of the Court. In 2018, the Court granted Summary Judgment in 5 cases.

Judgments of the Court are available online at <https://www.qicdrc.com.qa/the-courts/judgments>

CASES BEFORE THE QFC REGULATORY TRIBUNAL

4

CASES

Four cases were filed before the Regulatory Tribunal in 2018. Two were appeals against determinations of the Employment Standards Office and two were appeals against Decision Notices issued by the Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority. The Regulatory Tribunal issued three Decisions throughout this period.

EMPLOYMENT

In Case No's 2-22 of 2017, the Regulatory Tribunal upheld a determination of the Employment Standards Office that it had no jurisdiction, on the facts of those particular cases, to determine complaints that there had been a breach of the QFC Employment Regulations.

In Case No 1 of 2018, the Regulatory Tribunal concluded that it had no power to extend the 60 day time limit for appeals to it as set out in Schedule 5(8) of QFC Law No 7 of 2005 (as amended). This Decision was later upheld by the Appellate Division of the Court.

In Case No 2 of 2018, the Regulatory Tribunal dismissed an appeal brought by an employer against a determination of the Employment Standards Office that it had failed to pay the full amount of salaries and medical insurance due to one of its employees.

Decisions of the Regulatory Tribunal are available online at <https://www.qicdrc.com.qa/tribunal/judgments>

JUDICIARY

As of 1 January 2019, the judiciary of the Court and Regulatory Tribunal comprise the following:



**LORD THOMAS
OF CWMGIEDD,
PRESIDENT**



**RASHID AL BADR
ENFORCEMENT JUDGE**



GEORGE ARESTIS



**DR HASSAN AL
SAYED**



**DR RASHID AL
ANEZI**



SIR WILLIAM BLAIR



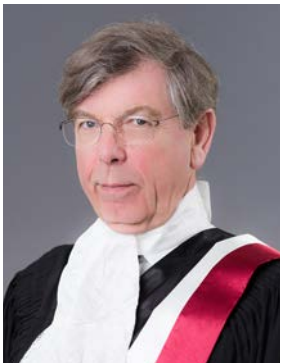
**SIR BRUCE
ROBERTSON**



CHELVA RAJAH SC



FRANCES KIRKHAM



**LORD ARTHUR
HAMILTON**

REGULATORY TRIBUNAL



SIR DAVID KEENE
CHAIRMAN OF THE
REGULATORY TRIBUNAL



EDWIN GLASGOW
QC



LAURENCE LI



**GOPAL
SUBRAMANIAM**
SUPPLEMENTARY
JUDGE

REGISTRY



**CHRISTOPHER
GROUT**
REGISTRAR



**ABDULLATEF
AHMED AL-
MOHANNADI**
DEPUTY REGISTRAR



HAMAD AL-MUSFIR
RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

JUDICIAL ADVISORY BOARD

LORD THOMAS OF CWMGIEDD
PRESIDENT OF THE COURT

FRANCES KIRKHAM
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE JUDGES

FAISAL AL SAHOUTI
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SIR DAVID KEENE
CHAIRMAN OF THE REGULATORY TRIBUNAL

DR HASSAN AL SAYED

CHRISTOPHER GROUT
REGISTRAR



OVERVIEW

ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Court continues to promote the use of ADR in appropriate cases. Judicial mediation has continued to be used throughout 2018. In addition, the QICDRC continues to host arbitrations at its premises where parties make such a request and the QICDRC can accommodate it.

In 2017, Law No 2 of 2017 concerning the Civil and Commercial Arbitration Law was enacted. This law, among other things, granted parties the ability to elect the Court as the “Competent Court” to exercise supportive and supervisory roles over arbitrations seated in Qatar. The fact that a piece of State legislation has expanded the jurisdiction of the Court in this regard was welcomed by both domestic and international stakeholders and was seen as huge support for the ongoing work of the Court at the highest level.





CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM LAUNCH AND FAMILIRASATION SESSION

2018 saw the official launch of eCourt, the QICDRC’s new eCase Management System which was developed in conjunction with Singaporean company Crimson Logic. The system was inaugurated in February by His Excellency the Minister of Justice, Dr. Hassan bin Lahdan Al-Mohannadi, Mr. Faisal Rashid Al-Sahouti, CEO of QICDRC and Mr. Saw Ken Wye, CEO of CrimsonLogic. In attendance at the launch event was Mr. Jai S Sohan, Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore to Qatar and Dr. Mohamed Al-Khulaifi, Dean of the College of Law, as well as members of the legal community.

Furthermore, training was provided, throughout 2018, to a whole variety of court users including legal practitioners, court staff and the judiciary.



OVER 100 REGISTERED USERS

As at the time of writing, just over 100 individuals have had accounts created in the eCourt system.

Law firms, legal practitioners and litigants in person can sign up to eCourt via the QICDRC website: www.qicdrc.com.qa



HIGHLY SECURE

eCourt provides a safe and secure method by which users can file case papers, receive communications and access information relating to their case.

BILINGUAL



It is free to use and is available in both English and Arabic languages.

MOBILE-FRIENDLY



eCourt is accessible from portable electronic devices (such as smart phones and tablets) allowing users to access their case files and send and receive communications from anywhere in the world.

END-USER ALERT



eCourt has the capability to provide notifications by email and SMS to alert users of required tasks and communications, thus ensuring that users are kept up-to-date with how their case is progressing and what actions, if any, are required from them.

VIRTUAL HEARING SOLUTION



Perhaps one of the most exciting features of eCourt is its integration with the Court's pre-existing virtual hearing capabilities, allowing users to participate in live court proceedings from anywhere in the world simply by logging in to the system and accessing a secure link which will transport them into the courtroom.

In this regard, eCourt helps to improve access to justice through a transparent medium which is custom built around the Regulations and Procedural Rules of the Court and Regulatory Tribunal.

eCourt facilitates the end to end management of cases before the Court from the commencement of proceedings through to the issuing of judgments. It has an easy to use interface, customised for litigants in person and legal practitioners, to ensure streamlined navigation.



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNINGS

in 2018, QICDRC continued to expand its collaborations with local and international legal organisations, promoting alternative dispute resolution means and reinforcing the court's commitment to the rule of law.

QATAR SPORTS ARBITRATION MOU



QICDRC signed a memorandum of understanding with the Foundation of Qatar Sports Arbitration (FQSA) to begin their cooperation in the field of alternative dispute resolution. The memorandum paves the way for a joint cooperation that aims to strengthen the international arbitration environment in the State of Qatar and co-ordinate the organisation of events, seminars, training workshops and conferences on arbitration, conciliation and mediation. In light of the signed agreement, FQSA will be utilising the arbitration facilities available in court, and both parties will further increase the exchange of experiences and information on various dispute resolution instruments for the common interest, the creation of an international dispute settlement environment.

LEXISNEXIS MOU



Later in 2018, QICDRC signed a memorandum of understanding with LexisNexis, a leading global provider of legal, regulatory and business information and analytics, to promote collaboration between the two parties in relation to a wide variety of initiatives, publications and training. In addition, LexisNexis will be opening an office at the QICDRC premises, where a law library accessible by members of the public will be established. The signed agreement expands on the strong relationship between the two parties through which they aim to promote the rule of law and alternative dispute resolution methods both locally and internationally.

DELEGATION VISITS

Last year was a particularly busy year for us as we continued to expand our networks and build lasting relationships with stakeholders and industry leaders both regionally and internationally. In 2018, QICDRC welcomed delegations and government representatives from all around the world who visited us to learn more about our advanced online case management system and explore our state-of-the-art courtroom and arbitration facilities.



PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR VISIT TO QICDRC AND OTHER QFC ENTITIES

2018 witnessed the visit of His Excellency the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al Thani, who visited QICDRC as part of his visit to Qatar Financial Centre and its entities. During his visit, H.E. the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior met with the leadership of QFC to review the centre's growth and development strategy and goals, as well as the entities' various initiatives that aim to support the Qatar National Vision 2030.

As part of his visit, H.E. Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al Thani toured the courtroom and the arbitration facilities at QICDRC, where he was introduced to the advanced technology employed at the courtroom and the online case management system, eCourt.



PRESIDENT OF SUPREME COURT OF RUSSIA VISIT

QICDRC was honoured by the visit of His Right Honourable the President of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation, Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Lebedev, who visited the Court as a part of his official visit to the State of Qatar. His Right Honourable's visit to QICDRC featured a meeting with CEO Mr. Faisal Al-Sahouti, during which both parties discussed means of enhancing collaborations in legal and judicial relations between the QICDRC and the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Faisal Al-Sahouti briefed His Right Honourable on the unique legal model adopted at QICDRC and the court's efforts to position Qatar as a trustworthy business environment. His Right Honourable was then introduced to the Court's online case management system, eCourt, designed to support litigants attend court hearings in other countries, and to ease the process of filing case documents and tracking case status. He also toured the court's arbitration facilities and the courtroom, where we witnessed first-hand the advanced technology used at QICDRC.



SUPREME COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA VISIT

Later in 2018, QICDRC welcomed a delegation from the Supreme Court of the Republic of China, headed by the Deputy Chief Justice, Juang Wei, who was accompanied by several judges and officials. The visit of the Chinese delegation came in light of the recent increase in trade and commerce relations between the State of Qatar and the Republic of China.

The visit of the Chinese delegation paves the ground for a strong cooperation in the legal and judicial fields between the QICDRC and the Supreme Court of the Republic of China, as both parties discussed ways to enhance relations and increase partnerships.



SPANISH SENATE VISIT

A high-level delegation from the Spanish Senate led by Mr. Manuel Guerl Mo Altaba, Chairman of the Spanish Senate Justice Commission, visited QICDRC, where they discussed with CEO Mr. Faisal Al-Sahouti, means of enhancing cooperation between QICDRC and the Spanish Senate, represented by the Justice Commission.

During their visit, the delegation was introduced to the judicial system of the Qatar International Court, the mechanism of its operation, the nature of its proceedings, the manner of its consideration and the levels of litigation.



UK AMBASSADOR VISIT

QICDRC was honoured to welcome His Excellency the Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the State of Qatar, Mr. Ajay Sharma, who visited QICDRC to discuss means to further enhancing collaborations in legal matters between the Qatar International Court and the United Kingdom.

Mr. Faisal Al-Sahouti introduced H.E. Sharma to the success of the State of Qatar's attempt to establish its specialised judiciary through the establishment of the Qatar International Court, the first specialised court in Qatar to deal with commercial and investment disputes arising from international financial transactions in the country.

EVENTS







QICDRC WELCOMES ITS NEW COURT PRESIDENT AND HOSTS FAREWELL DINNER IN HONOUR OF FORMER PRESIDENT LORD PHILLIPS

As 2018 had started to wrap up, we announced the appointment of Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd as the new President of the Court, succeeding Lord Phillips, who we said goodbye to at a farewell dinner hosted by Lord Thomas in his honour. Ambassadors, stakeholders and members of the legal community attended the farewell dinner to recognise Lord Phillips' dedication and commitment to the growth of QICDRC in the past six years and congratulate Lord Thomas for his new appointment.

Lord Thomas was officially appointed as the President of the Court following his swearing-in ceremony which was attended by QICDRC CEO, Mr. Rashid Al-Sahouti, QICDRC Registrar, Christopher Grout, and Justice Rashid Al-Bader. As the formal Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, Lord Thomas joins QICDRC with a wealth of experience and knowledge to support QICDRC's development and expansion plans.



4TH ANNUAL ARBITRATION SUMMIT

Last year, QICDRC continued to promote alternative dispute resolution by sponsoring the 4th Annual International Arbitration Summit organised by Wolters-Kluwer. The summit, which was held on the 20th and 21st of March at the Marriott Marquis Doha, is one of the most renowned legal events in the region that promotes arbitration and discusses the challenges that face alternative dispute resolution methods.

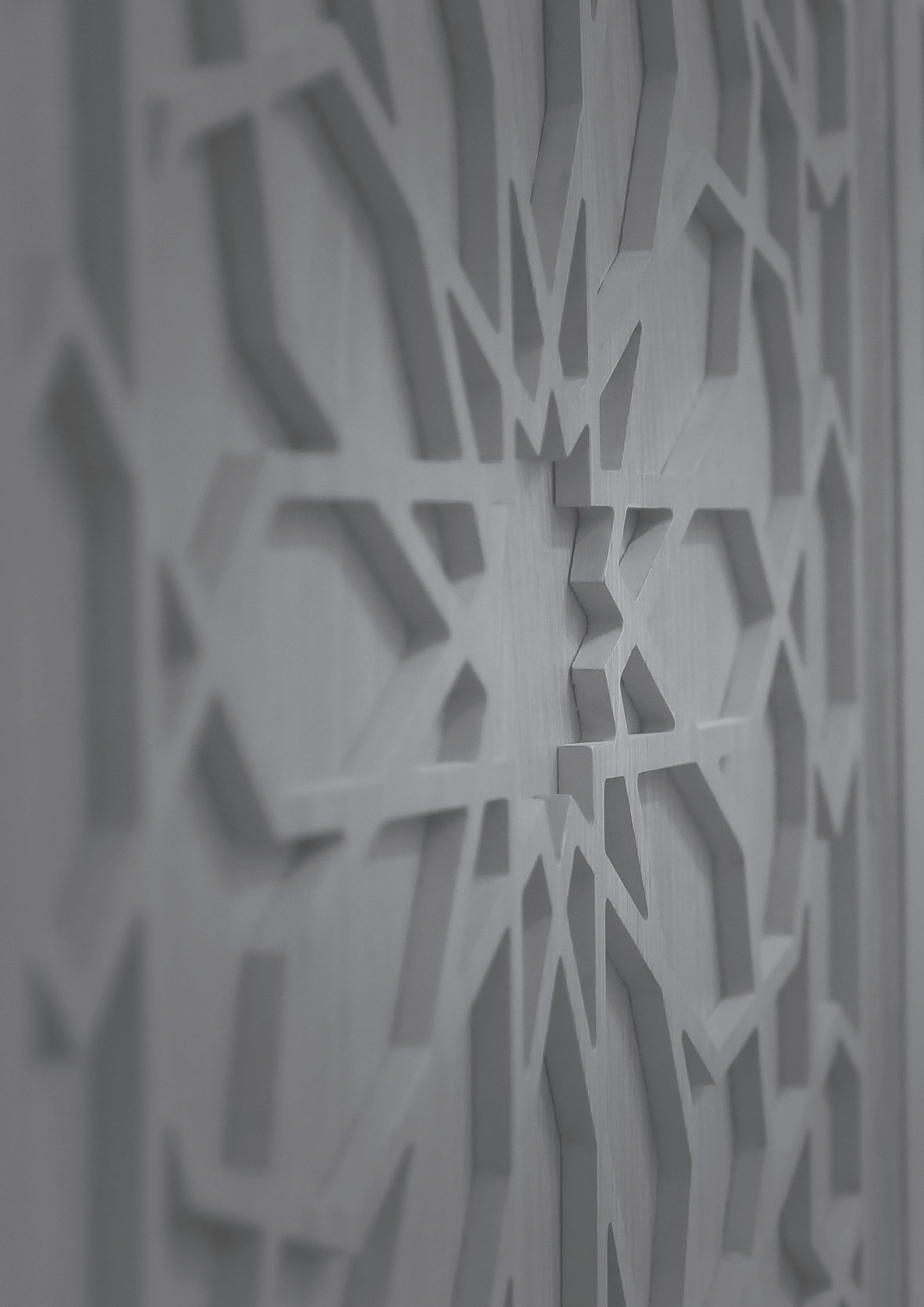
The 2018 edition of the summit was a great opportunity for experts from the MENA region and all over Asia to discuss arbitration and its dimensions in settling disputes in various fields. The participants engaged in various topics related to alternative dispute resolution with a distinguished group of local speakers and international specialists in the field of international commercial arbitration and commercial justice.



QICDRC PARTICIPATES IN THE COMMERCIAL COURTS FORUM IN NEW YORK

A delegation from the International Court of Qatar, headed by the President of the Court, Lord Phillips and Chief Executive Officer, Faisal bin Rashid Al-Sahouti, participated in the meeting of the International Forum of Commercial Courts held from 27-28 September at the Federal Court Building in New York City, USA.

On the side-lines of the conference, the CEO of QICDRC, Mr. Faisal Al-Sahouti, met Judge Loretta Prisca, President of the Federal Court of New York, to discuss ways to enhance cooperation between the two tribunals, especially in the areas of exchanging judicial experience. Mr. Al-Sahouti also met with judges of the Supreme Court of the State of New York where judicial issues of mutual concern were discussed.



ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION 2018

In October 2018, QICDRC participated in the Annual Conference of the International Bar Association (IBA) as gold sponsor. The conference, which took place at the Roma Convention Centre in Rome, Italy, follows on from QICDRC's presence as silver sponsors at the IBA conference held in Sydney, Australia in 2017.

The 2018 conference was attended by over 6,000 judges, lawyers and other legal professionals who congregated to attend sessions on a wide variety of legal issues concerning anti-corruption, arbitration, construction, crime, health, human rights, environment, financial services, insolvency, intellectual property, international trade and customs, litigation, mediation, media, mining, oil and gas, technology, and transportation.

Due to the central European location of the conference – delegates who took part in the Rome edition of IBA were able to meet individuals from almost all corners of the globe, a key factor of the significant traffic at the QICDRC booth. At the booth, the team discussed and assisted delegates with questions, comments and relevant legal topics. The team met with delegates from across the world to introduce and educate them about Qatar's arbitration system, the functionality of Qatar International Court and its international judiciary expertise.





The QICDRC delegation which travelled to Rome comprised of CEO, Mr. Faisal Al-Sahouti, former QICDRC President, Lord Nicholas Phillips of Worth Matravers, the newly appointed President, Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, Legal and Research Associate, Mr. Hamad Al-Musfir, Registrar, Mr. Christopher Grout in addition to the marketing team.

A significant factor to QICDRC's success at the conference was the unique booth at the Roma Convention Centre. The booth included a wall of key messages to enable delegates to learn more about the court and its facilities. It also featured interactive and user-friendly display screens demonstrating QICDRC's technologically-advanced capabilities.

QICDRC's participation in the conference received significant coverage both online and in print media, as well as the court's Twitter account. The importance of technological trends is not to be underestimated, and QICDRC continues to play a pivotal role in ensuring that the development of the court is in line with advancements in technologies.



ARAB REGIONAL FORUM LUNCH

Another highlight of IBA Rome 2018 was the Arab Regional Forum Lunch which was exclusively sponsored by QICDRC. The sold-out lunch, which had as one of its guests the newly appointed QICDRC President, Lord Thomas of Cwmgiedd, former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, provided the opportunity for dialogue between legal professionals from various Middle Eastern countries as well those from the international legal and business community who conduct business in the Middle East.



EJUSTICE IN THE AGE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COURT SEMINAR

As part of the court's participation in the conference, a seminar was held by QICDRC titled 'eJustice in the Age of the International Court' and was attended by a variety of IBA delegates. During the seminar in which Mr. Faisal Al-Sahouti gave introductory remarks. The topics discussed at the seminar focused on technology, arbitration and access to justice in the modern age. Seminar attendees included legal professionals from nations such as the United Kingdom, United States of America, Italy, Sweden, China, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait as well as some local law firms based in Qatar including Al Sulaiti Law Firm. The panel also featured our former President, Lord Nicholas Phillips of Worth Matravers and Professor Khawar Qureshi from McNair Chambers. Hosting such seminars is crucial to the continuous engagement with the legal community and, to better inform delegates of processes and procedures of arbitration and the judicial framework in Qatar.



PANEL DISCUSSION

Throughout the course of the week of the IBA Rome 2018 conference, Mr. Faisal Al-Sahouti also took part in a panel discussion facilitated by the IBA Litigation Committee titled ‘The art of witness examination’. The panel shared valuable insights on the role and conduct of witnesses in civil and common law countries and provided useful tips to lawyers on how to conduct the examination of witnesses at the trial stage.



NETWORKING DINNER

As part of networking with delegates in Rome, QICDRC hosted a dinner at the Grand Hotel Palace in the presence of Mr. Faisal Al-Sahouti. In attendance at the dinner were Qatari law firms including Al Sulaiti Law Firm and Essa Al-Sulaiti Law Firm, as well as international guests hailing from the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, USA, Kuwait, China and France. During the dinner, Lord Nicholas Phillips of Worth Matravers, gave guests a speech where he discussed the growth of the court and its future aspirations. QICDRC continues to ensure that sufficient emphasis is placed on the development of maintaining judicial ties across Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Participation in such conferences is in line with QICDRC’s overall vision, to be recognised as a world-class specialised civil and commercial court that is one of its kind in the region. Being present on an international scale enables QICDRC to develop and maintain sustainable working relationships with other countries, which is crucial to cement QICDRC as a key player in the arbitration field.

UNIVERSITY OUTREACH

Throughout 2018 the QICDRC continued to support academic institutions in a variety of ways. In addition to providing various universities and colleges with the opportunity to attend the QICDRC to meet with the staff, judges and tour the facilities, the QICDRC has lent its support to a number of very specific initiatives.

QATAR UNIVERSITY (QU)

The QICDRC continues to fund a chair at Qatar University in order to support research into Alternative Dispute Resolution. The objectives of the chair include:

- Supporting ADR research;
- Promoting the use of ADR to resolve disputes in Qatar;
- Identifying impediments to the effectiveness of ADR;
- Encouraging the College of Law at QU to offer courses that focus on ADR;
- Encouraging post-graduate research in the field of ADR; and
- Developing training and continual professional development courses relating to ADR.

Further, the QICDRC continues to support QU and its students by participating in the QU externship programme whereby the Registrar acts as the supervising attorney for those students who wish to undertake their 10 week externship placement at the QICDRC.

The Registrar also assisted in providing coaching and judging to QU students who participated in the 2018 Willem C Vis Moot competition.

Towards the end of 2018, the QICDRC supported QU's FinTech event by fielding Sir William Blair and the Registrar as speakers. Sir William Blair spoke about the importance of FinTech generally and the Registrar delivered a presentation on how Artificial Intelligence is being utilised in legal systems throughout the world.

DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY VISIT

In April, we welcomed a group of law students from De Montfort University in the United Kingdom who visited QICDRC as part of their training trip to the State of Qatar to study and learn about the judicial system in Qatar.

The visiting students attended an introductory session presented by Dr. Zain Sharar, Senior Legal Counsel, and Mr. Christopher Grout, Registrar, in which they learned about the jurisdiction of the Court and the Regulatory Tribunal, their procedures, and how the cases are managed and progressed. The delegation was also given a tour of the courtroom and arbitration facilities, where the students were introduced to the newly launched e case management system, eCourt, and given a demonstration of the system's advanced virtual hearing capabilities. He also toured the court's arbitration facilities and the courtroom, where we explored the advanced courtroom technology used at QICDRC.



HAMAD BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY (HBKU)

The Registrar has been working closely with the students and faculty at HBKU in relation to advocacy and ethics training which forms part of the HBKU Juris Doctor programme. Students have been introduced to advocacy skills concerning speech preparation and delivery as well as techniques relating to witness examination, including examination in chief and cross examination. The advocacy programme culminated in students and faculty attending the QICDRC where the students performed the roles of the lawyers and witnesses in a mock trial setting which took place in the courtroom and was presided over by the Registrar.

Towards the end of 2018, the QICDRC supported HBKU's 2 day event on the Future of Hybrid Dispute Resolution Fora. A team from the QICDRC including its President, Registrar and Senior Legal Counsel all took part by providing lectures and participating in panel discussions.

COLLEGE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC

The QICDRC has developed a welcome relationship with the CNA with the Registrar attending its Doha based campus to provide ad hoc lectures to students in relation to the role of the Qatar Financial Centre, in particular the roles of the Court and Regulatory Tribunal.

UNIVERSITY OF TREVISO

The Registrar has previously attended the University of Treviso in Italy to lecture Italian and Qatari students who were participating in a Summer School Programme which introduced students to contemporary legal issues in Europe and the Middle East. In 2018, the University of Treviso joined forces with Qatar University and ran a joint initiative in Doha which was supported by the QICDRC, with the Registrar providing an advocacy master-class.

SORBONNE UNIVERSITY

The QICDRC has also supported Sorbonne University by facilitating work experience placements for its students within the Registry department of the Court. This opportunity allowed students to learn about the role and functions of the Registry, meet with the QICDRC judiciary and observe proceedings in Court.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

QICDRC understands that our responsibility as a legal institution goes beyond the administration of justice. QICDRC's social responsibility programs, including responsible business practices, philanthropy and volunteer efforts continue to be integral component of our work. We remain committed to promoting goodwill and fairness, effecting positive change in communities and our environment and leaving a lasting legacy for future generations.



QICDRC PARTICIPATES IN ORGANISING THE FIRST CHARITY TREASURE HUNT

In Ramadan, QICDRC participated in organising the first charity treasure hunt at Aspire Zone Dome in which ticket returns were donated to contribute toward purchasing schools supplies and gifts for children at the Qatar Orphan Foundation, Dreama.

During the event, participants worked in teams to follow clues in search of gifts hidden throughout Aspire Dome. The initiative comes as a continuation of the wonderful spirit of giving fostered throughout the holy month of Ramadan, and encourages all members of the community to come together to engage in an entertaining treasure hunt that serves a great cause.



QICDRC JOIN BLOOD DONATION INITIATIVE

QICDRC employees joined earlier this year a blood donation campaign organised by Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority (QFCRA) in collaboration with Hamad Medical Corporation where they donated blood in efforts to address the blood reserves shortage at HMC Blood Donor Center and create wider awareness of the need for blood donations.

The blood donation drive witnessed an enthusiastic participation from a number of QICDRC and QFC entities employees, as well as individuals working in offices in the vicinity of the QFC headquarters.



QICDRC CELEBRATES WORLD AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH WITH MIND INSTITUTE

In April, Qatar International Court employees observed World Autism Awareness Month as they joined Mind Institute's celebrations under the theme "Light it Up Blue." Staff members from QICDRC and QFC Authority engaged with children with autism in various activities and games that aim to raise the staff members' awareness about autism and make the children feel included in the society.



18