

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2472
ANSWERED ON:24.11.2010
ARREST OF INDIANS IN ISRAEL
Biju Shri P. K.;Mani Shri Jose K.

Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) the status of the 24 Indians arrested by the Israeli immigration officials in September, 2010 on suspected visa racket charges;
- (b) whether some members of the 50 member Christian group from Thruvananthapuram who went to Israel are hiding there as illegal immigrants;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) the corrective measures taken by the Government to check such anti-social practices;
- (e) whether the Indian Government is aware of any other such instances of malpractices vis-a-vis the Visa regulations; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI)

(a) to (c) : It has come to the notice of the Indian Mission from the Israeli authorities that a 50 member Indian tourist group from Kerala visited Israel on September 22, 2010. Facts ascertained so far reveal that the group traveled through Doha and Amman before crossing over to Israel by road. Some of the group members, the Mission met, stated that they had paid an Indian agent who assured them a three month visa to Israel, promising an extension of the same on arrival. However the visa was changed by immigration to an 8 day tourist visa and the agent reportedly abandoned the group.

The Immigration authorities have stated that 12 members were caught and deported on 6th and 13th of October 2010. A list of the members of the group is at Annexure-A. Another 11 members were caught subsequently and are waiting for deportation. The names of 10 out of these 11 persons, available with the Indian Embassy, is at Annexure-B. It is understood that these members were caught on their way to seeking refugee/asylum status with the concerned agencies. They have hired a private lawyer for representing them.

They will be in the detention centre till their case is finalized by the Ministry of Interior of Government of Israel. Consul from EOI, Tel Aviv visited the detainees who have informed of good treatment meted out to them.

The remaining 27 members of the group are at large till date. As they do not have valid visas, they would be deported on arrest.

(d) to (f): Such cases of Indian nationals being cheated by unscrupulous agents have occurred before albeit not on this scale. Government has taken corrective measures to check such malpractices including the following:

(i) Nation-wide awareness campaigns through media to educate intending emigrants about legal emigration procedures, risk of illegal migration and precautions to be taken during emigration.

(ii) Such instances are reported to the concerned State Government and Police authorities for investigation and action.

(iii) The Government has established an Overseas Workers Resource Centre (OWRC) which is a 24 hour telephone helpline in seven languages to provide authentic information to all citizens on all aspects of emigration.