

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:43

ANSWERED ON:02.12.2015

Exploitation of Indians Abroad

Kumar Dr. Virendra ;Singh Deo Shri Kalikesh Narayan

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

- (a) whether cases of exploitation/torture of Indian workers are on the rise in countries abroad and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has received several complaints of physical and sexual abuse of migrant workers particularly domestic workers from Gulf countries during the last one year and if so, the details thereof and the action taken in each case;
- (c) whether the Government has signed any agreement with various countries, especially the Gulf countries for preventing such incidents and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to conduct a review of such agreements and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the remedial measures put in place in various missions/posts abroad to expediently deal with such cases in order to provide ample relief to the victims?

Answer

MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

SMT.SUSHMA SWARAJ

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement referred to in reply to the Lok Sabha Starred Question No. *43 for 02-12-2015 regarding "Exploitation of Indians Abroad"

(a) & (b): As per information made available to this Ministry by the Indian Missions/Posts in twelve Middle East countries, including six GCC countries, in November 2015 there is no general pattern to indicate an increase in cases of exploitation/ torture of Indian workers. Details of complaints received during the year 2015 are at Annexure-I. Segregated data of physical assault/ sexual abuse and the action taken on each such complaint is being collected from the Missions.

Most of these complaints were addressed by the Indian Missions by taking them up with the concerned foreign authorities. Complaints pertaining to employment were taken up by the Indian Missions with the concerned foreign employer/Labour officials in that country.

(c) & (d): Government of India has signed MoUs with 6 Gulf countries, namely UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Malaysia to provide, inter-alia, that the host country will take measures for protection and welfare of the workers in organized sector and the recruitment and terms of employment will be in conformity with the laws of both the countries.

These MOUs are renewed / signed afresh, from time to time during which process any modifications are duly considered for inclusion.

(e): The Government of India has set up Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) in all the Indian Missions/Consulates abroad to meet contingency expenditure incurred by them for carrying out various welfare activities for overseas Indian citizens who are in distress.

The objectives of the ICWF include:-

- (i) Boarding and lodging for distressed Overseas Indians in need;
- (ii) Extending emergency medical care to the Overseas Indians in need;
- (iii) Providing air passage to stranded Overseas Indians in need;
- (iv) Providing initial legal assistance to the Overseas Indians in deserving cases;
- (v) Expenditure on incidentals and for airlifting the mortal remains to India or local cremation/burial of the deceased Overseas Indians in such cases where the sponsor is unable or unwilling to do so as per the contract and the family is unable to meet the cost;
- (vi) Providing the payment of penalties in respect of Indian nationals for illegal stay in the host country where prima facie the worker is not at fault;
- (vii) Providing the payment of small fines/penalties for the release of Indian nationals in jail/detention centre.

The Ministry has set up a 24X7 Helpline 'Overseas Workers Resource Centre' (OWRC) in Gurgaon, Haryana which provides information and guidance on all matters and problems pertaining to overseas employment of Indian nationals. Indian Workers Resource Centre (IWRC) set up in Dubai by Embassy of India, in UAE, provides guidance and counseling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers in UAE. Shelter homes for distressed Indian nationals, have been set up in Malaysia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These shelter homes provide free boarding and lodging to overseas Indians in distress pending their repatriation.

Government of India have also started 24x7 Helpline- 'Madad'- for lodging the grievances of the emigrants, which are attended to on priority basis.