

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4010

ANSWERED ON:06.08.2014

INDIANS IN CONFLICT ZONE

Ahir Shri Hansraj Gangaram;Devi Smt. Veena;Galla Shri Jayadev;Jena Shri Rabindra Kumar;Kachhadia Shri Naranbhai;Mahadik Shri Dhananjay Bhimrao;Noor Smt. Mausam;Patil Shri Vijaysinh Mohite;Satav Shri Rajeev Shankarrao;Shanavas Shri M. I.;Sreeramulu Shri B.;Sule Smt. Supriya Sadanand;Tharoor Dr. Shashi;Venkatesh Babu Shri T.G.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has reviewed the civil war situation developing in Libya and the conflict which has broken out in the Gaza Strip;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether there are reports of several Indian citizens being trapped in Libya and Gaza Strip;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the details of the steps taken/proposed to be taken to evacuate them safely from the conflict zones?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS [GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

- (a) Yes. The Government is closely monitoring the evolving situation in Libya and Gaza, taking into account our interests in the region.
- (b) Libya: For last three weeks, there has been intensification of militia warfare for control of the Tripoli International Airport, which has led to its closure and suspension of all foreign airlines till further notice. The clashes have spread to airport's adjoining districts. Separately, militia in-fighting is continuing around Benghazi in the eastern part of Libya. This has given cause for concern regarding the safety and security of Indian nationals in Libya. Gaza: There has been an outbreak of violence between Israel and Hamas, centred in Gaza, since 08 July 2014, following the kidnapping and killing of 3 Israeli teenagers in the West Bank, that led to the arrest of a number of Palestinians and apparent retaliatory murder of a Palestinian teenager. This activated a barrage of rocket attacks by Hamas and militant outfits launched at Israel from Gaza, in turn triggering extensive air and ground strikes by the Israeli Defence Forces. The conflict has resulted in rising number of civilian casualties in Gaza. This is of deep concern to us.
- (c) & (d) Libya: There are an estimated 6,000 Indian nationals, including 1,000 nurses, in various parts of Libya. Out of these, around 4,500 are registered with our Embassy in Tripoli. Gaza: Currently there are 02 Indians (04 were evacuated on 21 July 2014). In addition to these 02, there are 03 Indian nationals married to Palestinians, who wish to remain in Gaza.
- (e) Libya: Our Embassy in Tripoli has been issuing regular Advisories to the Indians, giving an update on the security situation, advising them to avoid the conflict areas and to exit Libya, with the facilitation of the Embassy. The Government is making the best efforts for ensuring the welfare of all our nationals in Libya and bringing them home safely. In a pro-active manner, it is assisting the orderly departure of Indians through all possible routes – air, land and sea. Arrangements are being made for chartering of special commercial aircraft and ships, as required. Our Embassies in Libya and the bordering countries have been reinforced with adequate additional staff for facilitating the departure formalities and making the necessary departure arrangements for our nationals. Extensive liaison work is also being undertaken with relevant government authorities in Libya, the neighbouring countries, as well as the respective Embassies in New Delhi for the smooth exit of the Indians from Libya. Gaza: Our Mission in Ramallah facilitated the safe exit of 04 Indian workers from Gaza on 21 July 2014. The remaining Indian nationals are not willing to return to India.