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Title : Need to take steps for release of Indians held in Kurdistan, Iraq.

SHRI BADIGA RAMAKRISHNA (MACHILIPATNAM): One more instance of how Indians, particularly, people belonging to Andhra Pradesh, are being exploited and abused in Gulf has come to light. About 90 people belonging to West Godavari, Khammam, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Adilabad districts of Andhra Pradesh were sold to a company in Kurdistan in Iraq by a Gulf agent. The agent had taken Rs.1.5 lakh to Rs.2 lakh from each individual and sent them to Dubai on a tourist visa in April, 2006, and were given employment in ACC Company. But, as soon as the period of tourist visa was over, some sub-agents came to them in a police uniform and said that they would be deported to India since their visa period had expired and took signature on some documents. But, actually, these workers were sold to Arabic International Company in Kurdistan for 50,000 dollars. Their real woes have started from here. These people are being treated like slaves by paying just 4 dollars per day and they are made to work for 16 to 18 hours a day. The company is not even giving them proper food. If they refuse to work, they are beaten with iron rods.

The Home Minister of Andhra Pradesh had also talked to the Minister of Urban Development and the Home Minister for release of Indian nationals from Kurdistan. But, nothing has been done so far. So, I sincerely request the Government to immediately take measures through diplomatic and political channels and see that these people are released immediately.