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| http://www.indianconsulate-sf.org/images/ashokachkra.gif | EMBASSY OF INDIAKUWAIT |

**PRESS RELEASE**

Subject: **Repatriation of distressed Indian nationals from Kuwait**

There has been an increase in Indian nationals seeking assistance of Embassy for their immediate return to India. Many Indian nationals continue to languish in various police stations, Detention Cell and Deportation Centre awaiting their repatriation to India. Also, there are distressed persons in Male and Female Shelters seeking early repatriation. Some of them in the Shelters are unfortunately waiting for 3-6 months and beyond for return to India.

2. The Embassy would like to clarify the following in this regard:

**I. DISTRESSED WORKERS IN THE SHELTERS (MALE & FEMALE)**

(i) As per local regulations, the repatriation of distressed domestic worker can take place under three circumstances; (i) the sponsor handing over the passport with valid residence visa. (*in such case, the worker can return to India after booking of air-passage*); (ii) sponsor filing an absconding case against the domestic workers thereby nullifying the residence status of the worker (*in such case, the repatriation process/formalities may take 2-3 months after lodging of absconding case*); (iii) and lastly, on the expiry of residence visa of the worker (*repatriation process/formalities may take 2-3 months after expiry of visa*).

(ii) Please note that distressed Indian nationals unfortunately remain stranded in Kuwait till such time one of the above three options materializes. The Embassy makes consistent efforts in expeditious repatriation of all stranded Indian workers in Kuwait. However, due to strict immigration procedure in Kuwait, the entire process of repatriation remains time-consuming as the repatriation of Indian nationals depend on the cooperation from the sponsors/employers and the local authorities which can sometimes take 3-6 months (or even more).

(iii) Therefore, those seeking refuge in shelter of the Embassy must bear in mind that the repatriation process takes a long time and that despite best efforts by the Embassy, there is no easy or quicker way out. It is not possible to arrange repatriation without fulfilling the local immigration procedure/conditions explained to above.

**II. INDIAN NATIONALS IN DEPORTATION CENTRE, KUWAIT**

(i) As per the local laws, expatriates detained for residency or visa law violations in Kuwait are deported to their home countries. Indians, who are not having a valid residency/visa, are detained by police authorities and deported to India. They are kept under detention at various police stations and finally at the Deportation Center, till the procedures for their deportation are completed by the local authorities. The number of such detainees varies on daily basis as the Indian detainees in Deportation Center are deported in small numbers and new deportees are forwarded to this Center by the police stations almost on a daily basis. There are presently 28,495 Indian nationals staying unauthorizedly in Kuwait (as per Data as on 15/2/2016 received from Kuwaiti authorities) due to visa or residency violations.

(ii) The Embassy, on its part ensures travel documents are issued early to Indian nationals facing deportation. In this connection, request for Emergency Certificate are received from the police stations/Deportation Centre authorities where passports are not available with the detainees or could not be retrieved from their Kuwaiti sponsors/employers. The Embassy officials visit the police stations; Detention Cell/Deportation Centre etc. to meet these Indian nationals detained, for interaction so as to verify nationality status and for issuing travel documents (Emergency Certificates) to Indian detainees not having passports with them to facilitate their repatriation to India. In recent years, the number of Emergency Certificates issued by the Embassy is as under:

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| **Sl No.** | **Year** | **Number of Emergency Certificates issued** |
| 1 | 2013 | 2,635 |
| 2 | 2014 | 2,789 |
| 3 | 2015 | 3,922 |
| 4 | 2016 (till June 16) | 3,127 |

(ii) In this connection, it must be borne in mind that the entire process of repatriation through Deportation Centre takes considerable time as it entails finger printing/verification and completion of other formalities/booking of tickets by Deportation Centre. It is not possible to indicate definite time-frame by which the deportees would travel to India and repatriation can only take place after completion of all formalities with the Kuwaiti authorities.

3. This is to assure once again that on receivingcomplaints, the Embassy takes up each and every case reported for early repatriation by contacting sponsors/employers and with the local authorities. To assist distressed Indian nationals, the Embassy can issue travel documents (Emergency Certificates) after verification of credentials and provide even free air-tickets for their travel to India in deserving cases. However, the process of repatriation is time-consuming and it is not possible for the Embassy to repatriate without the completion of immigration procedure and fulfillment of conditions, which may take 3-6 months or more.

**29 July 2016**