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

**PRESS RELEASE**

Indian Embassy receives complaints on a daily basis from Indian workers in Kuwait on account of ill treatment, excessive working hours, filing of cases on false charges, physical & mental harassment, non-payment of salary, withholding of passport, non-regularization of service/payment of indemnity, denial of leave etc. On receipt of complaints from distressed Indian workers, the Embassy immediately takes up the matter with the Sponsor/employers as well as with the concerned Kuwaiti authorities for early resolution of grievances. While rendering all possible assistance to distressed Indian nationals in Kuwait, the Labour Wing of Embassy extends help in following such cases:-

i) **Distressed workers (under Visa-18)**

 We have been receiving complaints from female workers who had travelled from India on Visa-18 (company visa) for various jobs like sales lady, ladies tailor, hair dresser, beautician etc. Few workers under these categories are engaged as domestic aids and some are facing hardship in getting offered salary and proper treatment. They directly or indirectly approach Embassy for seeking assistance to resolve their grievances and for early repatriation to India.

In these cases (under visa-18) if sponsor /company does not cooperate, workers need to report to ‘Shoon’ (Public Authority of Manpower) as an initial stage of registering their grievance. However, Embassy is addressing such complaints and extends all possible assistance to amicably resolve the disputes in consultation with respective sponsors.

ii) **Distressed workers (under Visa-20)**

 Embassy has stopped (since December 2014) attesting any contract agreements in respect of domestic female workers (housemaids) under Visa-20. Domestic workers (visa 20) come under the purview of the Ministry of Interior while other categories of workers fall within the jurisdiction of the Kuwait Ministry of Social Affairs & Labour. Any Indian domestic sector worker, who contacts the Embassy or about whom the Embassy receives request for help, is being attended promptly by the Labour Wing. Embassy generally handles the ‘run-away cases’ in cooperation with the Kuwaiti sponsors/authorities. In some cases, cooperation from individual sponsor/employer/agency is not available for resolution of problems being faced by domestic workers. Many Indian male workers (visa-20) have been engaged with various categories of employment like driver, house boy, male cook etc in Kuwait. Upon the request from the worker, he is being accommodated in the Embassy’s shelter till the time of repatriation to India, with the support of local authorities and law enforcing agencies. Those domestic female workers (house maids/visa-20) who got foreign employment before Dec 2014 were also provided needful administrative and logistic support till they travel to India safely. Embassy provides financial assistance to the distressed workers for contingency expenditure besides managing travel expenses to the needy & deserving ones on merit.

In absence of valid travel documents, the workers have to wait for completing the formalities related repatriation which may sometimes take months as per the local regulations. Existence of a theft case on the worker further leads to judicial proceeding and worker has to wait considerably more time till the final verdict comes. Most of the complaints being received by the Embassy contain partial/inadequate information which restricts the concerned officials to process the case and help the distressed Indian worker. So it is requested to provide maximum information like passport/residency/telephone number, type of visa, details of the sponsor, etc which enable our officials to address the grievances promptly.

iii) **Rescue & Repatriation (Illegal confinement)**

At times Embassy receives complaints from Indian workers and their well-wishers regarding destitute status of him/her under confinement with the sponsor/at the work place. Most of these cases are reported without sufficient details regarding the sponsor, location etc. restricts Embassy from taking any prompt action to rescue the worker. Whereas, such complaints with adequate details enable the Embassy to seek immediate intervention of Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs and further follow up actions to rescue the distressed worker. Unfortunately, some distressed worker stranded in such environment is not even aware of the location and details of the sponsor and in those cases Embassy officials are restricted to extend needful assistance except advising the distressed worker to urgently reach Embassy by some means.

iv) **Wrong employment**

Many cases of engaging workers other than the promised job have been noticed in the past. These workers are being exploited at the initial level of their recruitment by unscrupulous agents in India and they are not even aware of any dos and don’ts for those who seek foreign employment. Distressed workers under this category (both visa-18 & 20) are being left with the option to perform the allotted job for their livelihood and to meet family obligations. These workers are even transferred form one sponsor to another without the consent of worker and at some point of their misery, they approach Embassy for repatriation. In most of these cases, a positive response from the sponsor is rare and Embassy extends all assistance for repatriation/deportation with the cooperation of related government agencies.

v) **Shelter for Male & Female Domestic Workers**

 In deserving cases, the workers (under visa 20) are accommodated in the shelter, maintained separately for male & female domestic workers under the supervision of Embassy till the formalities for their repatriation are completed

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