

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 119
ANSWERED ON 05.12.2024

PROTECTION OF INDIAN MUSLIMS ABROAD

*119. SHRI MUZIBULLA KHAN:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of Indian Muslim expatriates working in Gulf countries and the measures taken to ensure their safety and welfare;
- (b) whether the Government has received complaints regarding exploitation or discrimination faced by Indian Muslims abroad;
- (c) the steps taken to address such issues, including legal aid and assistance provided by Indian missions in these countries?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(DR. SUBRAHMANYAM JAISHANKAR)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (C) IN RESPECT OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 119 FOR REPLY ON 05.12.2024 REGARDING PROTECTION OF INDIAN MUSLIMS ABROAD ASKED BY SHRI MUZIBULLA KHAN.

(a) to (c) The Government does not maintain religion-wise data of Indian nationals abroad. It also does not have religion-wise information about complaints of exploitation or discrimination faced by Indian expatriates (including Indian Muslims abroad). The majority of complaints that the Missions receive are work/labour related. The Government accords highest priority to the safety, protection and well-being of all Indian nationals abroad, with various mechanisms in place to address such issues. It has established such mechanisms to enable Indian nationals abroad to reach out to the Indian Missions in case they need any assistance. Indian nationals can contact the Missions/Posts through various channels like walk-in, email, social media, multilingual 24x7 emergency numbers and also grievance redressal portals like MADAD, CPGRAMS, eMigrate etc. In addition, Indian Missions/Posts abroad have established 24X7 Helplines including Toll Free Helplines, whatsapp numbers and have launched mobile Apps to enable Indian nationals contact respective Indian Missions/Posts when in distress or in emergency situation.

Moreover, Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK) have been set up in New Delhi and at Dubai (UAE), Riyadh & Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) to provide assistance, guidance and counselling to Indian nationals in distress.

Our Missions/Posts abroad also utilize the Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) to provide the following assistance to the Indian nationals in distress on a means tested basis:

- (a) Transportation of mortal remains to India or cremation with the consent of the family;
- (b) Emergency medical care;
- (c) Legal assistance;
- (d) Boarding and lodging; and
- (e) Air passage for stranded Indians.

Besides, the Missions in Gulf Countries have provisions for shelter home to assist Indian women in distress by providing boarding and lodging, medical treatment and arranging for their repatriation. Female workers who are stranded and are in distress can approach the Embassies at any time of the day and they are accommodated and provided all facilities till they are repatriated to India.

Further, the Government has taken several initiatives such as Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojna (PBBY) and Pre-Departure Orientation & Training (PDOT) in ensuring that Indian migrant workers undertake safe migration, have decent working and living conditions in destination countries, are aware of their rights and have access to various welfare schemes of the Government.

Based on MoUs signed with the GCC countries, matters related to welfare and protection of workers are taken up during regular meetings of Joint Working Groups with concerned countries. In addition, such matters are also regularly taken up with respective host governments through diplomatic channels.
