

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO-3760**  
ANSWERED ON- 11/08/2023

**INDIANS IMPRISONED IN GULF COUNTRIES**

†3760. DR. MANOJ RAJORIA  
SHRIMATI RANJEETA KOLI  
SHRI SUMEDHANAND SARASWATI

Will the minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether the Government is aware that a number of Indians are imprisoned in gulf countries;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of the action being taken by the Government for their release and deportation to India; and
- (d) the number of Indians imprisoned in foreign jails before 2015 and the number of Indian prisoners released from 2015 to 2023 as well as the number of people imprisoned till date?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN)

(a, b & d) As per the information available with the Ministry, the number of Indian prisoners, including undertrials, lodged in jails of Gulf countries is 4630, viz. Bahrain (277), Kuwait (446), Oman (139), Qatar (696), Saudi Arabia (1461) and United Arab Emirates (1611). However, due to strong privacy laws prevailing in many countries, the local authorities do not share information on prisoners unless the person concerned consents to the disclosure of such information. Even countries which share information do not generally provide detailed information about the foreign nationals imprisoned. The number of Indians in foreign jails is a dynamic figure as there are a number of arrests and releases every week. However, all of the arrested Indians are released after serving their sentences.

(c) The Government attaches the highest priority to the safety, security and well-being of Indians in foreign countries, including those in the foreign jails. Indian Missions/Posts abroad remain vigilant and closely monitor the incidents of Indian nationals being put in jail in foreign countries for violation/ alleged violation of local laws.

As soon as the information about the detention/arrest of an Indian national is received by an Indian Mission/Post, it immediately gets in touch with the local Foreign Office and other concerned local authorities to get consular access to the detained/arrested Indian national to ascertain the facts of the case, confirm his or her Indian nationality and ensure his or her welfare.

Missions/Posts remain vigilant to ensure that rights of the Indian prisoners in foreign jails are protected.

Apart from extending all possible consular assistance to Indians imprisoned abroad, Indian Missions and Posts also assist in providing legal aid wherever needed. Missions and Posts also maintain a local panel of lawyers where Indian community is in sizeable numbers. No fee is charged from any Indian prisoner for extending facilities by the Indian Embassy concerned. The Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) is set up in Indian Missions & Posts abroad for assisting overseas Indian nationals in distress situations on a means tested basis in deserving cases. The support extended under ICWF includes financial assistance to Indian prisoners for legal aid as well as travel documents / air tickets during repatriation.

The issue of release and repatriation of Indian nationals in foreign prisons is regularly pursued by Indian Missions and Posts abroad with the local authorities concerned. Missions/Posts abroad also approach the law enforcement agencies to complete the investigation and judicial proceedings at the earliest possible. The Government also follows up this issue during consular and other consultations with other countries. In addition, the Government, through its Missions/Posts abroad and during high level visits, also takes up and pursues grant of amnesty/commutation of sentences of Indian prisoners in foreign countries. When these imprisoned Indians get released, they are facilitated in getting travel documents for early repatriation.

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