

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 5556

ANSWERED ON- 27/03/2026

CONSULAR ACCESS TO INDIAN CITIZENS DETAINED IN GCC

†5556. MS IQRA CHOUDHARY

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any request has been received by the Ministry from family members of the Members of Parliament for consular access to citizens detained in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries in the last five years, if so, the action taken thereon, country-wise;

(b) the number of cases in which consular access was granted during the said period and the type of legal, medical and humanitarian assistance provided to the Indian detainees;

(c) whether requests have been made by the Government to the Governments of the respective countries for pardon, reduction of sentence, mercy petitions or repatriation to India in the cases of

**Indian citizens detained in GCC countries and if so, the details thereof;
and**

**(d) the details of any guidelines or SOPs formulated by the Government
in this regard?**

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (d) The Ministry receives requests from Hon'ble Members of Parliament, as well as from family members of Indian nationals detained abroad, regarding consular access and their welfare in foreign prisons. As per the information available with the Ministry, the number of Indian prisoners, including under trials, in GCC countries is 5548 (Bahrain-303, Kuwait-379, Oman-99, Qatar-870, Saudi Arabia-2478 & UAE-1419).

On the basis of requests of the Hon'ble Members of Parliament and family members, as well as in the course of their usual Consular functions, Mission/Posts undertake consular access to ascertain the safety and welfare of Indian nationals in jails. The data of consular

access granted to Indian nationals in jails in the GCC countries during the last five years may be seen at Annexure A.

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/Posts also assist in providing legal aid wherever needed. Missions/Posts also maintain a local panel of lawyers in countries 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/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 Dialogue and other consultations with authorities of foreign 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.

India has also entered into prisoner transfer treaties with many nations that allow a person convicted of a crime to be transferred to his or her home country to serve the prison sentence. So far, India has signed Agreements on Transfer of Sentenced Persons (TSP) with 31 countries, which includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia & United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Data on Consular Access to Indian Prisoners in jail in GCC countries in the last five years

Country	Number of cases where Consular access was granted	Remarks
Saudi Arabia	3427	Number of detained Indian nationals to whom Consular access was granted from 2021-2025
Kuwait	272	Number of detained Indian nationals to whom Consular access was granted from 2023-2025
Qatar	1192	Number of detained Indian nationals to whom Consular access was granted from 2024-2025
Bahrain	34	Number of Jail visits by Mission officials to meet detained Indian nationals from 2021-2025
Oman	48	Number of Jail visits by Mission officials to meet detained Indian nationals from 2021-2025
UAE	The Embassy/Consulate regularly seeks consular access to Indians detained in various jails. On an average, the officials undertake 14 jail visits in every month. On every visit, consular access to multiple inmates is sought.	
