

Labour Disputes: Grievance Redressal Mechanism of Saudi Government

1. What is the mechanism of Saudi Government for the redressal of Labour Disputes?

- (i) The labour dispute redressal mechanism of Saudi Arabia consists of **Labour Offices** and **Competent Commissions empowered to settle Labour Disputes**, viz. **Preliminary Commissions for Settlement of Labour Disputes** and **(b) High Commission for Settlement of Labour Disputes**
 - (ii). **Labour Offices (maktab al-amal: مكتب العمل)**
 - (a) In case of labour disputes, a worker has the right to contact the concerned Labour Office in his area of work to complain against the violation of his work related rights as enshrined in the Saudi Labour Law. There are [37 Labour Offices](#) located in different parts of the Kingdom (contact details are on [page No. 27](#))
 - (b) Labour Offices consider the disputes and try to settle them amicably between the worker and the employer. If they fail to do so, disputes are referred to the Preliminary Commission for Settlement of Labour Disputes.
 - (c) The Labour Office does not accept any case filed after elapse of 12 months of (i) the occurrence of event which led to the dispute (ii) the termination of work relations.
 - (iii) **Preliminary Commission for Settlement of Labour Disputes** (alhayyat Commission act as private courts to consider labour cases and settle them in accordance with the Labour Law.
 - (iv) **High Commission for Settlement of Labour Disputes** (alhayyat aleulya litaswiat)
 - (i) Either party may appeal the decisions of the Preliminary Commission to High Commission, within 30 days from the date of delivery of the preliminary commission's decisions. The decision of the High Commission will be final and binding on both parties.
 - (ii) However, the decision of the Preliminary Commission, if not appealed within 30 days shall be deemed final.
 - (iii) All decisions of the High Commission shall be deemed enforceable from the date of their issuance.
- ### **2. What are the welfare initiatives of the Saudi Labour Ministry for expatriate workers?**
- (i) The Saudi Labour Ministry has set up a Toll Free Helpline Number 19911 where the workers can register their grievances in multiple languages including English, Hindi/Urdu and Malayalam **and are provided appropriate advice for further follow up with concerned Labour Offices.**
 - (ii) Ministry of Labour has initiated a website <http://www.laboreducation.gov.sa> for educating expatriate labour about labour laws, duties and obligations of worker and the employer, and where to seek assistance in case of difficulty, etc.

- (iii) **Free mobile SIM cards with credit balance for calls/SMS are being given to all expatriate workers on their arrival at airports in Saudi Arabia. (This may be collected at the airport on arrival)**
- (iv) Saudi Government has a housemaids' shelter in Riyadh where runaway housemaids are housed pending their deportation.

3. What is the grievance redressal mechanism for workers not covered by Labour Law?

(i) **Domestic Service Workers** (housemaids, house drivers, gardeners) are required to approach the Commission for Settlement of Domestic Workers Labour Disputes: *lijan alfasl fi khilafat wa mukhalafat aemmal alkhidmat almanziliat wamin fi hakmihim* (لجان الفصل في خلافات ومخالفات عمال الخدمة المنزلية ومن في حكمهم) situated in the concerned Labour Offices for redressal of their grievances with the relevant documentation (copies of employment contract, iqama, passport copy as well as contact details of the sponsor). (Guidance may be obtained from Ministry of Labour helpline 19911). (ii) **Other category of workers** who are not covered under the Saudi Labour Law such as shepherds and farm workers may also approach the nearest Labour Office for redressal of their grievances.
