

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 682

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding worker protections in Qatar and the 2022 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 24, 2014

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California (for himself, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. GRIMALVA, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. MCDERMOTT, Mr. SWALWELL of California, Mr. LEWIS, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. POCAN, Mr. CONYERS, Ms. MCCOLLUM, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. CLARK of Massachusetts, Ms. NORTON, and Ms. SCHAKOWSKY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives regarding worker protections in Qatar and the 2022 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup.

Whereas Qatar has the highest per capita income of any country in the world and plans to build some \$200,000,000,000 dollars in infrastructure in preparation for the 2022 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup;

Whereas of the 1,350,000 workers in Qatar, approximately 94 percent of the workforce, are foreign nationals em-

ployed mainly in the construction, services, and domestic services sector;

Whereas Qatar has the highest ratio of migrant workers to the domestic population of any country in the world and at least 500,000 more migrant workers are expected in Qatar to accelerate the construction in preparation of the 2022 football World Cup;

Whereas the majority of migrant workers come from India and Nepal, but also from Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Sri Lanka;

Whereas according to figures from the Embassies of India and Nepal in Qatar, an average of 200 workers from each of those 2 countries die each year;

Whereas according to the coordinator of the Nepalese community in the Middle East, Narinra Bad, 70 Nepalese workers died at their workplace since 2012, while the Pravasi Nepali Coordination Committee (PNCC) has documented the deaths of at least 185 Nepalese workers in 2013;

Whereas the visa sponsorship rules known as the “kafala-system” mean that workers cannot change jobs without their employer’s permission and cannot leave the country unless their employer signs an exit permit;

Whereas the “kafala-system” is often exploited as employers withhold the workers’ passports and wages, as well as workers being charged fees as high as \$3,500 to obtain a visa from the sponsor leaving the migrant workers with excessively high debts;

Whereas hundreds of unlicensed labor agents are operating in Qatar;

Whereas there are reports of further violation of workers' rights in Qatar, including false promises on the nature and type of work by recruiters and sponsors, employer obligations on wages and working conditions not being met, workers being forced to live in squalid overcrowded labor camps, and denial of the right to form unions or bargain collectively; and

Whereas the United States Department of State has designated Qatar as not meeting the minimum standards outlined in the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2013, but recognizes that they are making significant efforts to comply with those standards: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) calls on the United States to prioritize the
3 rights of migrant workers in their relations with
4 Qatar by offering technical assistance and expertise
5 in combating human trafficking and the provision of
6 victim-centered services including a linguistically ap-
7 propriate and well publicized 24-hour hotline service;

8 (2) calls on the United States corporations in-
9 volved in constructing stadiums and other World
10 Cup related infrastructure in Qatar to ensure work-
11 ing conditions are in compliance with international
12 human rights standards and norms by holding sub-
13 contractors accountable for labor violations at every
14 level of the supply chain and incorporating mecha-

1 nisms for enforcement of these contractual obliga-
2 tions;

3 (3) calls on the Qatari authorities to effectively
4 implement existing legislation and enact new legisla-
5 tion to prevent human rights violations by—

6 (A) enforcing the prohibition against the
7 confiscation of passports;

8 (B) prosecuting violations and imposing
9 meaningful sanctions on companies and individ-
10 uals who violate laws designed to protect mi-
11 grants' rights;

12 (C) adopting legislation on domestic work-
13 ers that include meaningful labour rights' pro-
14 tection consistent with International Labour
15 Organization Convention 189 and effective com-
16 pliance mechanisms and establishing a min-
17 imum wage for all workers;

18 (D) abolishing the sponsorship system
19 (“kafala-system”) including by repealing the
20 need for an “exit permit” (to leave the country)
21 or a “No Objection Certificate” to change em-
22 ployer, and replace it by a regulated labor mar-
23 ket;

1 (E) allowing migrant workers to fully exer-
2 cise the right to freedom of association, to orga-
3 nize, and bargain collectively;

4 (F) ending the prosecution of migrant
5 workers for the sole purpose of having “run
6 away” from their employer, and calling on the
7 Qatari authorities to stop such practices; and

8 (G) providing all migrants deprived of
9 their liberty a means of contacting their family,
10 consular services, access to a lawyer and inter-
11 preter, and the right to promptly challenge
12 their detention;

13 (4) calls on the migrant laborers countries of
14 origin, notably Bangladesh, India, Nepal, the Phil-
15ippines, and Sri Lanka, to assume their responsi-
16 bility to protect their own nationals from deceptive
17 recruitment agencies in their countries and intervene
18 on behalf of their nationals whose rights are abused
19 when working in Qatar and other Persian Gulf
20 States by—

21 (A) promulgating and enforcing laws
22 against unscrupulous recruitment practices; and

23 (B) informing migrant workers of their
24 rights before they leave the country; and

1 (5) urges the Fédération Internationale de
2 Football Association (FIFA) that the World Cup be
3 a symbol of global cooperation and deliver a strong
4 message to Qatar to make sure that the 2022 World
5 Cup is not staged with the assistance of modern
6 slavery by continuing the organizations involvement
7 in Qatar and advocate for fair labor practices on all
8 World Cup related projects.

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