



## Hundreds of Indian workers demand unpaid wages

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CHENNAI, India- Hundreds of Indian migrant workers who were laid off by a construction company in Saudi Arabia due to the coronavirus pandemic have filed a rare complaint to the Indian government over unpaid earnings, lawyers and campaigners said.

More than 280 laborers – who were laid off by a local construction company before being flown home on chartered flights in July – are part of what is believed to be the biggest collective case of its kind, said their lawyer Subhash Chand.

Chand said all of the workers had been at the firm for at least five years – some over a decade – and were entitled to a “substantial amount” in outstanding end-of-contract benefits.

“Most of (the workers) confirmed that they had been asked to sign blank papers or documents that they didn’t understand ... (in order to get) their passports and tickets,” said Chand, who is part of Lawyers Beyond Borders, a network of legal experts.

“Many didn’t want to return without their money but had no choice,” he told Reuters by phone.

The Indian embassy in Riyadh said the workers’ complaint had been taken up with the company and Saudi officials this month, and that it was awaiting a response on the matter.

The Saudi human resources ministry said last month said workers could log violations through its online dispute settlement platform or go to a labor court.