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Qatar swiftly intervenes to resolve salary issues after workers' protest

By **Menatalla Ibrahim** April 28, 2021*[Twitter]*

*The **labour law reforms** introduced a minimum monthly basic wage of 1,000 Qatari riyals QR [275 USD].*

A group of **security guards** staged a peaceful protest in Qatar on Monday to demand an increase to their salary to meet the minimum wage set by the reformed labour law, sourced told Doha News.

The workers are all employees of European Security [EGSSCO], one of the largest security companies in Qatar, and accused the company of refusing to adjust their pay as per updated labour laws in the Gulf state.

In a memo, the protest organisers called for colleagues to “unite as brother” in launching a peaceful demonstration on April 26, if the company refuses to pay them their basic salary.



“This call for our joined efforts to force the management @EGSS to abide by the rules laid by Qatar government as regards the minimum wage increment. We have staged a peaceful demonstration on 26th March 2021 not to attend work and demand for the increase of our salary,” the memo read.

“Note most of the companies, especially security companies in Qatar have given their staff a new contract in order to meet legislation of new Qatar labour law except for our company. We call for your cooperation to this cause,” it added.

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However, speaking to Doha News a Government’s official said in a statement: “EGSSCO” failed to inform its workers of how their salaries would appear on their pay slips once the new minimum wage law was introduced.

“When asked to re-sign their employment contracts, some workers believed their benefit allowances had been reduced, which was not the case. Workers’ salaries have not changed and all wages remain above the new minimum threshold,” the official added.

In a statement to Doha News, the Government’s Communication Office said when the non-discriminatory minimum wage was announced in September 2020, employers were given a transition period of six-month to prepare for the new minimum thresholds.

“During this period, the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (ADLSA) provided support to employers to ensure their employment contracts and payroll systems were updated,” the statement said.

“If a company violates the minimum wage law, the government has the authority to suspend the company’s operations and initiate legal proceedings. The government will not tolerate any company that violates Qatar’s labour laws,” it added.

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All workers who have yet to receive their salary or received an amount lower than the minimum wage threshold are urged to contact the ministry of labour via the Amerni app or directly to ensure their rights are met, the GCO urged.

“All complaints are recorded and dealt with in the strictest confidence.”

Authorities confirmed concerns by the protesters have now been addressed and resolved by all parties involved.

Historic labour reforms

Last year, Qatar introduced the region's first ever non-discriminatory minimum wage as part of a major 'historic labour reform' programme.

In addition to the minimum monthly basic wage of 1,000 Qatari riyals QR (275 USD), the new legislation stipulates that employers must pay allowances of at least QR 300 for food and QR 500 for housing, should employers not provide workers with these directly.

As part of the major labour reform agenda, Qatar has drastically enhanced monitoring across the board to detect violations, enacting swifter penalties and further strengthening the capacity of labour inspectors, according to an announcement made by the Government Communications Office (GCO).

Employers who pay their staff less than the minimum wage will face one-year in jail and a QR 10,000 fine.

⚠ SECURITY GUARDS WORKING FOR A COMPANY IN QATAR STAGED A PEACEFUL PROTEST ON MONDAY TO DEMAND AN INCREASE IN THEIR SALARIES, AS PER NEW LABOUR REFORM LAWS. MORE TO FOLLOW ON [HTTPS://T.CO/OGGLY43G1F](https://t.co/oGGLY43G1F) [PIC.TWITTER.COM/JPG5XVLUGY](https://t.co/oGGLY43G1F)

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In March, the GCO also said that since the reforms and new minimum wage were announced in September 2020, some 5,252 companies with a total of 222,042 workers have already updated their payroll systems.

The labour reforms also include the dismantling of the controversial “kafala” or sponsorship system, becoming the first country in the region to do so.

Workers are no longer required to obtain an exit permit to leave the country, or a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to request permission from former employers to change jobs.

In an exclusive interview with Doha News, senior [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#) official, Houtan Homayounpour said more work needs to be done to ensure the protection of workers in Qatar, though authorities should be recognised for the work that has gone into making these changes.

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