



## Government Communications Office response to Human Rights Watch's questions regarding recent violations of Labour Law

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27 October 2020

The following is on-the-record information related to ITCC, attributable to the Government Communications Office of the State of Qatar:

### Update

The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (MADLSA) investigated Imperial Trading and Contracting Company L.L.C with the relevant authorities and recorded Labour Law violations related to delayed salary settlement.

The company was immediately placed on MADLSA's list of banned companies and legal proceedings were launched. Strict penalties have been imposed on the company.

MADLSA is coordinating with ITCC and the relevant authorities to settle all remaining salaries. ITCC recently registered to secure a loan through the Qatar Development Bank (QDB) administered programme to cover the salaries of employees and the rent of employers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Employees have started to receive their salaries, and all remaining payments and end-of-service benefits are expected to be settled within the coming weeks.

In addition, MADLSA is overseeing corrective action at ITCC to ensure that violations do not re-occur in the future.

### QDB loan guarantee programme

Once a company is registered to secure a loan through the programme, all salary payments are transferred from QDB directly to the employees' bank accounts using the payroll details provided by the employer. At no point are funds transferred from QDB to the company.

ITCC is currently banned from operating in Qatar but remains eligible for the loan programme to provide salaries to its employees during the timeframe requested in its application.

### Workers Support and Insurance Fund

The Workers' Support and Insurance Fund is operational and has so far disbursed QAR 14 million in financial relief to workers.

A review of the Fund is currently underway to streamline its functions and increase internal efficiency. Once completed, the recommendations of the review will be implemented.

The loan guarantee programme administered by Qatar Development Bank (QDB) is also available to provide financial support to employers and employees during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Qatar ID cards



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Government Communications Office

Employees are not liable to pay any financial costs or penalties related to the non-renewal of Qatar ID cards. All costs related to the non-renewal of Qatar ID cards are the responsibility of the company to which the employee is sponsored.

Employees seeking to change jobs while their Qatar ID card is expired are free to do so without bearing any of the financial cost.

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**The following is an on-the-record statement related to Lalibela Cleaning & Services, attributable to the GCO of the State of Qatar:**

An investigation of Lalibela Cleaning & Services by the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (MADLSA) revealed salary deductions and delayed salary payments affecting some of the company's workers.

In response to violations of the Wage Protection System (WPS), the Ministry suspended the company and referred it to the judicial authorities for legal proceedings. Company officials are now subject to imprisonment for a period of up to one year and/or a fine of between QAR 2,000-10,000.

The owner of Lalibela Cleaning & Services has pledged to settle all unpaid salaries within the next month and MADLSA is following up with the company on a daily basis to ensure this happens.

Support will be provided to employees who wish to change their employer, and employees' complaints received by MADLSA through the appropriate channels will be expedited to the Labour Dispute Settlement Committee if they cannot be resolved amicably.

The owner has been ordered by MADLSA to provide a detailed statement on the status of all current employees.

The owner previously explained that the company suspended its activities due to COVID-19 precautionary measures and that during this period it was agreed in writing with employees that monthly salaries would be temporarily reduced.

For the month of August, the owner reported an administrative error in the company's internal salary transfer system, which was corrected in September. Salaries were disbursed according to the working days recorded on attendance sheets when a leave of absence was not provided by the employee.

Regarding the provision of electricity and water, documentation has been provided to MADLSA by the owner to show that all utility bills have now been paid.

Once the court has issued a ruling against the company, an enforcement request will be submitted to the Ruling Enforcement Office to expedite the enforcement process. Should the company be unable to settle its financial dues at this stage, a settlement request will be submitted to the Workers' Support and Insurance Fund and the salaries will be disbursed from the fund.

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