

5,000 expats deported in past three years

Parliament will vote this week on a bill that shows more leniency towards convicted expats by scrapping compulsory deportation as a penalty



LMRA warned that the bill may encourage some expats to violate the law.

Picture Credit Biju Haridas

● **LMRA rejected the bill and warned that “it may encourage some foreign workers to violate the law”.**

● **The bill has the support of Interior Ministry and both parliamentary committees.**

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More than 5,000 expatriates were deported from Bahrain in the past three years for violating the Kingdom's labour laws, it was recently revealed.

According to the latest statistics released by the Supreme Judicial Council, 5,294 expats were sentenced to deportation after they were convicted in various cases related to the violation of the work titles mentioned in their residency permits between the years 2015-2018.

The figures showed that 16 expatriates were deported between January 1 and March 13 this year. It was also proved that 1,022 were deported in 2017, while the highest number recorded was 2,724, the total number of expats convicted and deported in 2015.

This was unfolded within the reply of the Supreme Judicial Council to queries of the Services Committee in the Council of Representatives, which is planned to vote this week on a bill that shows more leniency towards convicted expats by scrapping compulsory deportation as a penalty.

Submitted by MP Mohammed Al Maarifi last January, the bill aims to amend a clause in Act 19 of the year 2006 with regard to the regulation of the labour market.

The proposed amendment scraps the existing text in the law which stipulates compulsory deportation of foreign workers found guilty of “engaging in any work in the Kingdom without a work permit issued in accordance with the provisions of this act”.

“In the event of conviction, the court shall order the deportation of the for-

eign worker from the Kingdom and the prohibition of his re-entry either permanently or for a temporary period of not less than three years,” reads the clause in the existing law.

The proposed amendment suggests fining convicts BD100 and granting judges the jurisdiction to deport the convicts in accordance with their offence, instead of mandatorily deporting them as per the instructions of the current law.

According to Al Maarifi, the bill would achieve social justice that's instructed by the Kingdom's constitution, considering the humanitarian circum-

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stances of some of the convicted expats requiring that they're not deported from the country and granting the Judiciary Authority discretionary power whether to deport the convict or not.

The committee received the proposed law and thoroughly discussed it with the related establishments, including the Supreme Judicial Council, Interior Ministry and Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA), in addition to the Legislative and Legal Affairs and Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committees in the council.

LMRA rejected the bill and warned that “it may encourage some foreign workers to violate the law”. The authority also added that “if the bill is implemented, it would weaken the legal tools utilised by the Kingdom to combat the irregular employment issue”.

The bill was supported by Interior Ministry and both parliamentary committees. However, the Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee advised to maintain the existing text which stipulates the prevention of deported expats from re-entering the

Kingdom for at least three years.

After discussing the matter for almost five months with the related authorities, Services Committee members decided to approve the bill, which will be voted on this Tuesday during the regular weekly meeting of the Council of Representatives, in the presence of representatives of the government.

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MR AL MAARIFI

Inmates may be barred from funerals of second degree relatives

● **Based on a proposal submitted by a number of MPs, it was referred to the committee by the government last October in a form of a proposed law for studying.**

● **The committee reviewed the bill with several authorities, including the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), which also disapproved it.**

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Aparliamentary committee rejected permitting prisoners to attend the funerals of their relatives of the second degree, Tribune has learnt.

This follows the Foreign Affairs, Defence and National Security Committee in the Council of Representatives recently rejecting a bill to amend the existing Law 18 of the year 2014 of the reform and rehabilitation establishment.



The bill is related to religious, social and cultural rehabilitation of inmates. Based on a proposal submitted by a number of MPs, it was referred to the committee by the government last October in a form of a proposed law for studying.

According to the MPs who submitted the proposal, it would achieve the necessary social care and insurance for inmates by allowing them to attend the burial ceremony and funeral of their

second degree relatives.

The Committee's Legal Adviser Dr Ahmed Al Badri justified the committee's rejection in a written statement saying, “The bill doesn't introduce any new procedures, as all the mentioned amendments already exist in Law 18 of the year 2014 of the reform and rehabilitation establishment.”

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DR AL BADRI

authorities, including the National Institution for Human Rights (NIHR), which also disapproved it. “NIHR supports what the view of the Legislation and Legal Opinion Commission, stating that the instructions mentioned in the bill are mentioned in the existing law,” the institution stated.

However, the council's final call will be made during the upcoming weekly meeting on Tuesday, as the committee is scheduled to submit a report, requesting the MPs to reject the bill. Representatives of Interior Ministry are expected to be present during the session.