

Seek ministry help, protesting workers in Dubai told

Hundreds of workers from two trading companies claim they have not been paid for six months

- By Bassma Al Jandaly, Senior Reporter
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Dubai: Police have again advised workers who have legitimate complaints against their employers, to seek help from the authorities.

The call came as hundreds of workers from two trading companies, in the fields of construction and establishment security, protested in the area between Emirates Road and the Bypass Road early on Thursday.

Witnesses said they caused traffic jams and engaged in unruly behaviour.

The workers, mostly Asians, said they had not been paid for six months and had suffered "intolerable conditions".

About 700 workers from the two companies took to the streets to protest on Thursday, WAM reported.

The Ministry of Labour said it would start liquidating the bank guarantee of the workers and start paying them within one week.

Earlier, the two companies had been referred to the public prosecution because they had not paid their workers' salaries for two months in accordance with the wages protection system.

WAM said the ministry on Thursday offered to transfer the workers to another company, without the permission of the two companies. An official from the Labour Ministry said it was keen to follow up the issue of the workers in line with the wage protection system and stop practices by companies that violated workers' rights.

The ministry stressed that all companies must adhere to the wage protection system. Companies that did not follow the wage protection system would be prosecuted and legal action would be taken against them.

"We are keen to protect workers' rights," the Labour Ministry official said.

Six months ago 1,060 workers belonging to both companies staged a protest. The Ministry liquidated bank guarantees for 360 workers and deported them to their countries because they did not want to remain here and work.

The other 700 chose to stay, but the companies did not pay them. They took to the streets on Thursday.

Bank guarantees

Police patrols were called to the scene to control the situation. Some of the workers were questioned by the police.

The ministry stressed that it would liquidate bank guarantees and pay them.

Police officials said the workers had been told to seek help from the authorities concerned at the Ministry of Labour.

"We used to borrow money from each other to survive and also owe nearby supermarkets," one worker said, without revealing his name. "We just want our unpaid salaries and we want to go back home," said another worker.

Gulf News tried to contact the company but no one was available.

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