

# Sri Lankan domestic helper accuses Kuwaiti former employers of abuse

Sri Lankan who worked as a domestic helper in Kuwait accuses her former employers of inserting nails into her body. A similar claim of nailing was made two months ago by another Sri Lankan domestic helper against her Saudi employers.

- By Habib Toumi, Bureau Chief
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Manama: A Sri Lankan domestic helper has accused her Kuwaiti former employers of inserting 14 nails into her body whenever she asked about her wages.

V. R. Letchumi 30, a resident of Ibbagamauwa Gokarella, made the torture claims as she underwent treatment at a Sri Lankan hospital.

According to Sri Lanka's *Sunday Times*, doctors operating on Letchumi at the Kurunegala Hospital have already removed nine nails from her right hand and left foot.

Hospital officials said that X-rays and scans showed that there were more objects in her body and that they will be removed in the coming days.

The Sri Lankan government has called for a full report from its envoy in Kuwait City in connection with the case of the alleged nailing, a senior official said, quoted by the daily.

External Affairs Ministry's Consular Affairs director Somadasa Wijesundera said Sri Lanka's envoy K.S.C. Dissanayake has already taken up the matter with Kuwaiti authorities and was expected to provide a feed back to Colombo.

Reacting to the report, Kuwaiti bloggers rejected the claims as "implausible", saying that nobody could stand having so many nails in their body.

A similar claim of nailing was made two months ago by a Sri Lankan domestic helper against her Saudi employers.

"It seems that we now have a new fashion. It started with Saudi Arabia and has now moved to Kuwait," Proud Kuwaiti wrote in Alaan news portal. "How could she go through the airport procedures and board a plane with nails in her body? This cannot be true."

Bu Hamad wrote that he could not believe the report because the domestic helper could have alerted the police at the airport or called her embassy from there.

However, Ghalban (Poor) said that Kuwaiti employers should abide by God's values and protect domestic helpers.

"Unfortunately, there are people who are in fact wolves who abuse the weak and the vulnerable. They should be made to assume their responsibilities fully," he wrote.

Women make up around 70 per cent of the 1.8 million Sri Lankans who work abroad. Most are employed as domestic helpers in the Middle East, and the rest work mainly in Singapore and Hong Kong.

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