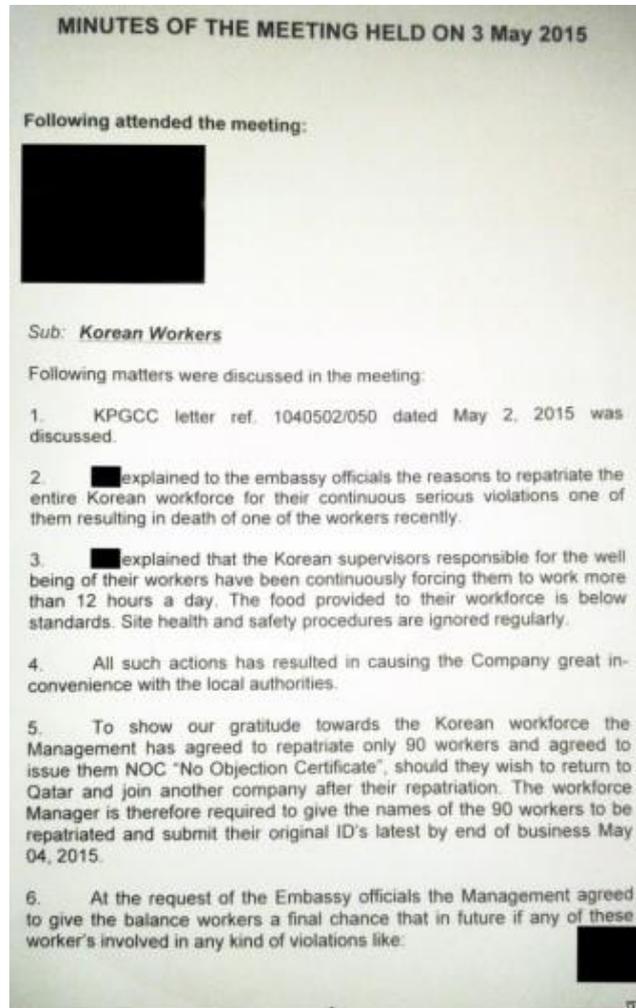


# Exploitation of North Korean Workers in Qatar by Pyongyang: Good practice of a company

*Human Rights Without Frontiers hails the behavior of Construction Development Company (CDC)*



*Memo between construction company and DPRK embassy representative*

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HRWH (22.10.2015) - According to Voice of America (VOA), **Construction Development Company (CDC)** fired 90 of its 192 North Korean workers on 7<sup>th</sup> May.

The decision by Qatar's Construction Development Company (CDC) came after repeated violations of local laws and regulations by the workers and their inhumane treatment by their supervisors, according to the minutes of a meeting between representatives of the company and North Korean officials that were exclusively obtained by the Voice of America (VOA) Korean Service.

The company asked the North Korean officials to provide the names of workers to be repatriated by 4<sup>th</sup> May. In the minutes dated on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, the company cited a series of violations and misconduct by the North Korean workers and their supervisors. The two-

page document has names and signatures of four North Korean officials who participated in the meeting.

The company had initially tried to fire all the North Korean workers, but later reduced their number at the request of North Korean officials. The remaining workers were allowed to stay on condition that they do not take part in any rules violations, including misbehavior at the working site, non-compliance of health and safety procedures, working at other construction sites and disobeying local laws. The amount of the wages and the payment procedure were not part of the agreement.

This deal was however not respected by the North Korean side. At the end of August, CDC fired its entire North Korean workforce for repeated violations of the company's rules and inhumane treatment of the workers by their North Korean supervisors.

CDC took the action after learning that the employees who worked during the day at the CDC site were then sent by their supervisors to another construction site at night and were forced to overwork. The company also suspected that supervisors might have confiscated workers' wages.

North Korean workers are contracted with local construction companies through a North Korean recruitment firm in Qatar: **Genco**, created in 2010 from the merging of **Sudo Construction** and **Namgang Construction**. The firms are all managed by **North Korea's External Construction Bureau**. Some of the workers are soldiers dispatched by North Korea to earn cash. Sudo and Gunmyung were the first companies to import North Korean work force in Qatar in 2003; they were followed by Genco in 2010.

CDC builds luxury hotels and government facilities in Qatar, with its annual revenue amounting to \$300 million. The company requires all its employees and associate companies to adhere to international labor and ethics rules.

*Human Rights Without Frontiers* hails the efforts of Construction Development Company (CDC) to try to meet the international labor standards.

This year, there were about 3,000 North Korean laborers in Qatar. Some defectors said that their monthly salary was \$100 while Genco was receiving \$750 per worker, an amount that was transferred to Pyongyang.

North Korea first began sending overseas workers in 1967 after signing a bilateral trade agreement with Russia. Since then, it has expanded the scope of its labor exports to Africa in the 1970s, followed by the Middle East in the 1990s. According to research by the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, a total of 45 countries have at one time employed North Korean workers and around 50,000 are currently working in at least 16 countries. The global income for the state is between USD 1.2 – 2.3 billion per year.