

Mustafa Qadri

From: Raj Bhattarai <admin@pigeonengg.com>
Sent: 02 October 2020 16:32
To: Equidem Research
Cc: Shazia Mizan; Rajendra Kumar Sharma
Subject: Re: Request for response regarding cases of labour exploitation in Pigeon Engineering Projects, Doha

Dear Mr. Mustafa,

I hope my email finds you in good health.

We appreciate you taking time and conveying us this information since we care about health, safety and overall wellbeing of our employees and ensure that they are fairly treated as per the law in terms of their rights as an employee and a human being.

With regards to the non-payment of salaries during lockdown, we confirm the as on today's date; all the employees under our payroll have received their due salary till month ending 31-August-2020 regardless whether they worked or stayed idle due to lockdown. Salary for March 2020 was delayed due to cash flow issue due to -sites on hold, offices closed and many of our clients opted to working from home. Thus, we could pay salary for March 2020 in 3 installments on 01 April 2020, 12 July 2020 and 10 August 2020, in the ratio of 50:25:25 respectively. Salary for other months is paid within the following month. We had pre informed our employees about this delay through Notice and Announcement and they were considerate enough to bear with us during the delay. Just for your information, to ensure any issues and grievances are resolved without delay, we conduct monthly Workers' Welfare Forum (WWF) meetings along with the elected workers representatives at the accommodation. Since the salary delay issue was raised during our monthly WWF meeting, we had notified the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC) as well.

During the entire pandemic period, we had ensured that our employees received good food, face mask, hand gloves, sanitizers, temperature gun for daily health monitoring and the accommodation is frequently sanitized. We have been circulating awareness messages issued by the Ministry of Public Health and WHO to discourage social gathering, crowd in mess hall and assembly areas and stopped practice of leaving the accommodation premises without any valid reason.

The world is going through stress due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and our employees cannot be an exception to it. Pigeon understands that migrant workers are more vulnerable to such situations as they are away from home and this situation created panic here and in their home countries as well. Thus, to minimize its effect, we provided support and counseling to the employees. We motivated them to follow the safety instructions and share their knowledge about COVID-19 with their relatives back in home. We provided financial advance payments to the needful, took everyone's body temperature regularly, prepared isolation rooms for the suspected and normal sick employees. For the employees under quarantine, we provided them free recharge cards to communicate with their family back home.

Most of the vacation requests could not be entertained owing to restricted flights and safety procedures specified by the regulatory authorities in the home country of employees. Immediately after flights resumed, we have started sending employees on vacation so the stress level comes down and everybody stays hopeful and positive about their departure from Qatar.

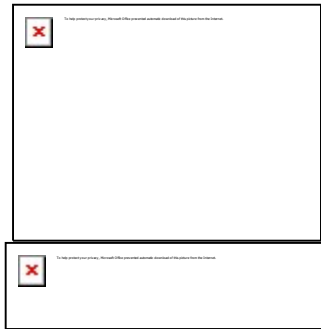
We also have been raising awareness amongst the workers about mental health and stress management through notice boards, flyers and prep-talks in the construction sites and during bus boarding. We are grateful to the government of Qatar for showing such robust resistance, containment plans and initiative, quick circulation of information, extensive awareness programs and medical tests, free quarantine facilities, free sanitization of accommodation and streets, voluntary awareness campaigns, and PPE, food and other material distributed during the pandemic. We also have benefited from the loan program of QDB, National Response Guarantee Program, from Qatar

government which finances salary payment to employees and lease rent payments for 6 months to help companies to mitigate financial crisis during this pandemic.

I believe the above information addresses your concern. Should you require further clarification, please feel free to reach us.

Thank You,

Regards,



Raj Bhattarai
Senior Officer - HR & Welfare

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P.O. Box: 91782, Doha Qatar

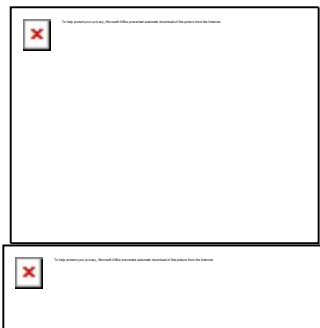
Web: www.pigeonengg.com

On Sat, Sep 26, 2020 at 8:33 AM Pigeon Engineering <info@pigeonengg.com> wrote:

FYI

Thank You,

Best Regards,



Amor Grace
Admin Assistant

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Equidem Research** <info@equidemresearch.org>

Date: Fri, Sep 25, 2020 at 11:27 AM

Subject: Request for response regarding cases of labour exploitation in Pigeon Engineering Projects, Doha

To: info@pigeonengg.com <info@pigeonengg.com>

Impact of coronavirus pandemic on migrant workers in Qatar

September 25, 2020

To the General Manager,

I am writing to you on behalf of Equidem, a not-for-profit charity working to promote human rights and labour rights globally including in Qatar and the Gulf. Equidem has been documenting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant workers in Qatar since February this year. During our research we came across individuals employed by your company that we believe are being subjected to labour exploitation. We wish to share our findings with you and seek further information about rights protections for migrant workers at your company and the cases we have documented. Where relevant and appropriate, Equidem would like to publish information provided by your company in a public report of our findings to be published this year.

We recognise the significant challenges faced by your company in the wake of the pandemic, to contain the spread of infection and respect the most fundamental human right, the right to life. The Equidem team is in the process of preparing the report. To accurately reflect the situation of migrant workers in your company, we would like to request your response on the following issues that we have gathered.

1. Payment: One of the respondents from your company said they had not been paid since the start of the lockdown and were placed on temporary leave. He added, "The company does not pay workers who are on leave. They cannot buy basic needs like food, toiletries, nothing because the company hasn't paid them, and they cannot leave the camp."

2. Stress: Stress levels for migrant workers are particularly acute where they are not being able to be with their family in this pandemic. One of the respondents said, "I am in a lot of mental stress. I am far from their home in this pandemic and very scared of being infected by this deadly disease."

With that background, we specifically would like to know if the company is aware of these particular issues included in this letter; about what steps have been taken to address these specific issues; and how many other such issues of human rights abuses is your company aware of.

We would appreciate receiving any information you can provide by Friday 2nd October so that we can incorporate your responses in our report. You can send information to Equidem by email at info@equidemresearch.org.

Sincerely,



Mustafa Qadri
Executive Director
Equidem Foundation

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