

The question of human rights violations of workers in Qatar

In 2010, Qatar was selected as the 2022 World Cup host, which is a very beneficial event for the country, as it hosts millions of people, and increases the need for renovations and construction. However, this construction boom isn't all that positive because it requires an immense number of workers. Qatar's population increased from 1.6 million people in December 2010 to 2.7 million in October 2018, and this is mostly all workers for the World Cup ("REALITY CHECK"). With all these workers coming from poor countries looking for an economic opportunity, they fell into even worse working conditions. According to Amnesty International, there has been large scale labor abuse in the construction sector, especially with forced labor, to construct the Doha's Khalifa Stadium from 2013 and 2016 reports. All these workers have been working non-stop to be able to have every stadium and construction done for the 2022 World Cup and it was reported that in "May 2018, a group of 1,200 workers went unpaid for several months and went weeks without running water or electricity" ("REALITY CHECK"). One of the biggest causes of the poor working conditions is the Qatar 'Kafala' System, which binds workers through a contract to their employer, who has full control over their immigration status, wage, accommodation, etc. (Nguyen). This is a system that enforces labor, as the employers tend to take away workers' passports, which is illegal, so they can't travel and if workers do want to leave the country, they need to ask for an exit permit from their employer. While higher income foreign workers, also known as expats, have negotiation power and good working and living conditions, lower income foreign workers, known as migrant workers, do not have any of these benefits and are mostly black and Asian workers. Although Qatar has imposed the legal laws on contracts, these are widely ignored by the employers and workers keep suffering from this abuse.

The debate around the question of human rights violations of workers in Qatar should be focused on measures to stop the Kafala system and be able to give proper living and working conditions to workers in 2022 World Cup. Debate time should be used to implement rules on how employers treat workers and find solutions to protect workers in Qatar from human rights violations.

Debate time should be used to come up with resolutions that change and reform the Kafala system, to allow lower income foreign workers to have the same power as higher income foreign workers, and to stop employers from taking advantage of their workers. Also, strengthening enforcement of labor laws are needed in place to make sure that workers in Qatar have working and living conditions.

References

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