

## Correspondence Digest on FOI –0176-17 (3)

### November 2014 -Extract from Diplomatic Telegram from British Embassy Doha–touching on the rights and living conditions of migrant

[Redacted]

3. Qatar is also engaged publicly - and more privately in a constructive critical dialogue - with the Guardian newspaper and NGOs/trade unions. The issue is the rights and living conditions of almost 2 million migrant workers (mainly from India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Philippines) constructing the country's new infrastructure. Here there is the potential for Qatar to turn a negative into a positive as the government has accepted that, under the World Cup spotlight, they have an obligation and an opportunity to transform. New legislation is ready and once adopted and implemented it would do away with most of the outdated traditional employment practices and offer the chance of Qatar becoming a benchmark for the region within a few years.
4. The Qatari response to the intense international pressure this last year has evolved. Initially, the authorities were stung by The Guardian's attacks. But senior Qataris know the UK well and recognise that HMG does not control the media.

[Redacted]

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From: Ajay Sharma HMA British Embassy, Doha

Sent: 18 March 2016 11:58

To: FCO, Arabian Peninsula and Iran Depart

Cc: FCO, Gulf Team

Subject: Re: Qatar: ILO/ World Cup Engagement

Thanks. I'm pretty clear in my own mind that the line we're encouraging the Qataris to have a dialogue that aims to improve workers' conditions is one that NGOs/ Parliamentarians would support. [Redacted]

Ajay

From: FCO Arabian Peninsula and Iran Depart

Sent: Friday, March 18, 2016 11:34 AM

To: British Embassy, Doha

Cc: FCO, Gulf Team

Subject: RE: Qatar: ILO/ World Cup Engagement

Thanks Ajay for taking the initiative on this, [Redacted]

From: FCO, UK Mission to the United Nations

Sent: 18 March 2016 11:02

To: Ajay Sharma HMA British Embassy Doha

Cc: British Embassy, Doha

Subject: RE: Qatar: ILO/ World Cup Engagement

Ajay,

I think the ILO Secretariat and member states would see this as a positive step. Facilitating future engagement that can help support Qatar's dialogue with the ILO would be most welcome.

UK Mission to the United Nations - Geneva

From: HMA British Embassy Doha

Sent: 18 March 2016 11:45

To:– FCO,Multilateral Policy Directorate

Cc: FCO, Arabian Peninsula and Iran Depart,

Subject: Re: Qatar: ILO/ World Cup Engagement

Exactly. I see us as facilitators, given the difficult relationship between them, not as taking sides.

Ajay

287 March 2016 Extract from Diplomatic Telegram from British Embassy Doha covering the poor treatment of migrant workers around the 2022 World cup

[Redacted]

1. In recent years Qatar has been associated with [Redacted] (d) poor treatment of migrant workers, particularly around the 2022 World Cup.

[Redacted]

7. Hosting a successful 2022 World Cup will be part of this. The Qataris were taken aback by the media storm around their successful bid and then the focus on Qatar's record on migrant labour, especially as they see themselves as no better or worse than any other GCC country. On the latter, they have taken some positive steps – introducing electronic payment system migrant labourers, building better equipped and spacious accommodation facilities, more inspections and inspectors, and improvements to the exit visa system. But for the ILO (and international NGOs) these reforms while welcome don't go far enough, quickly enough; and there remains a serious issue around implementation of standards by sub-contractors in particular. This issue is complicated by cultural factors and commercial interests.

Reference

SHARMA

Authorised

Ajay Sharma | HMA Doha Contact

9:46 5 May 2016 Email from Foreign Secretary Private Office to HMA British Embassy Doha on Migrant Labour

**From:** FCO, Foreign Secretary Private Office

**Sent:** 05 May 2016 11:15

**To:** Ajay Sharma FCO, Foreign Secretary Private office, British Embassy Doha

**Subject:** RE: QATAR: MIGRANT LABOUR:

Ajay

Will try to get it in front of him this morning – a few hurdles to jump here first. This is the latest version of what I plan to ask him. Does it reflect what you need?

Thanks,

[Redacted]

Private Secretary to Foreign Secretary

13 September -Extract of Letter from HMA British Embassy Doha to Prime Ministers Office

Dear [Redacted]

**QATAR: THE EMIR'S MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER, 15 SEPTEMBER**

[Redacted]

- *delivering a successful 2022 World Cup*. The infrastructure on its own is a mammoth task. But there is also: the disruption it causes, the influx of more migrant labour and the international criticism and scrutiny over how Qatar got to host and how it treats its foreign workers. The UK media have been particularly harsh and the Qataris feel that the positive steps they've taken eg on migrant labour sponsorship and wage protection haven't been recognised. This is an area - in addition to events management/ security and cyber - where they would welcome our strong support[Redacted]

Ajay Sharma  
HM Ambassador

British Embassy Doha

10:33 15 November Email from HMA British Embassy Doha to FCO Gulf Team on BWI – SC Joint Press Release

**From:** Ajay Sharma HMA British Embassy Doha

**Sent:** 15 November 2016 10:33

**To:** FCO Gulf Team

**Cc:** FCO, Arabian Peninsula and Iran Depart

**Subject:** Fw: Fwd: BWI-SC Joint Press Release

See below. If this happens, I plan on welcoming this. It is an important step forward on co-operation between the Qataris and the international labour movement on workers' rights.

Ajay

Ps emailing you separately about health and safety; and how we as the UK can support.

**From:** Unite the Union.org

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 15, 2016 08:00 AM

**To:** Ajay Sharma HMA British Embassy Doha

**Subject:** Fwd: BWI-SC Joint Press Release

Hello Ajay,

Good to see you yesterday - the attached is the joint press release embargoed until 1 pm GMT or 4 pm local time. There is already a lot of media requests so this is bound to be a big story here and possibly internationally. I do hope you will feel able to welcome this joint commitment officially.

All positive with lots to follow up on.

Best wishes, [Redacted]

**From:** Bwint.org

**Date:** 15 November 2016 at 10:44:49 GMT+3

**To:** " bwint.org " unitetheunion.org

**Subject:** BWI-SC Joint Press Release

As agreed please see attached the joint press release which is embargoed until 4:00 Doha Time.

Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI)

15 December 2016 - Extract from Letter from HMA British Embassy Doha to  
Department of International Trade

Dear [Redacted]

**DR FOX'S VISIT TO DOHA: 19-20 DECEMBER**

[Redacted]

Importantly, the Qataris also feel that we are now more supportive of the 2022 World Cup than before. This remains the key priority for them both politically and economically. The Prime Minister has been clear that all the infrastructure projects related to the World Cup will continue despite the dip in the oil price and the Qataris have been taking steps to address some of the international criticism of them over labour rights (including introducing on 13 December amendments to the Labour Law which replace the 'sponsorship' system for migrant labour with a contract-based approach and a landmark agreement between the World Cup Supreme Committee and Building Workers International on joint inspections of accommodation and work sites).

Yours ever,  
Ajay Sharma  
HM Ambassador Doha  
British Embassy Doha