

# OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF OPPOSITION

Gujarat Vidhansabha, Gandhinagar.

**Press Note**

**15<sup>th</sup> May, 2012**

The External Affairs Minister held a meeting of all Senior Officials of the External Affairs Ministry with the Shaktisinh Gohil, the Leader of Opposition in the Gujarat Assembly at Delhi. At the meeting, the situation arising from the agitation by workers working at cement factory in Angola was extensively discussed and a review of the steps taken was conducted by the Minister. Work at a cement factory located in the Sumbe city of Angola has been going on since the last three years. Labourer's from India, Bangladesh and Nepal are working at this factory since the last three years. The workers have been taken there through an agency at the promise of a salary of Rs 32,000 per month. The salary of the workers was credited in their accounts in American Dollars. Earlier, the compensation for overtime was also paid in American Dollars, but since the change of law by the Government in Angola, workers were paid in the local currency of kwanza, which led to a dispute between the workers and the company. The workers went on a strike due to this. The management has alleged that many of striking workers rioted on May 9, 2012. As per the complaint based on these allegations, many workers had attacked the Manager, Engineer and Supervisor and had damaged many vehicles of the company. Around 20 motorcycles were torched while residential containers, signal systems and infrastructure were badly damaged. During this riot, the police was called in, which detained around 52 workers and presented them before a local court. The matter is presently under investigation. The External Affairs Minister personally talked to senior authorities in the Angola government and requested that humanitarian approach be taken with the people in trouble. He also requested that the people in police custody be treated humanely. The external affairs ministry had send a representative of the embassy in Angola to get a report about people in jail. The situation at the cement factory is normal at present and arrangements have been made to have safe return of the workers who had fled into the jungles. Arrangements have been made for food and lodging for the workers at the factory site. The Indian Embassy has been instructed to issue emergency certificates to those workers who want to return and whose passports are with the agency. A senior embassy official has been assigned the job of sending report about jail and the factory site to the government time to time. There are many who want to stay back and work there and instructions have been issued to make proper arrangements for their employment. It has been decided to provide logistic support to those who have been charged with criminal cases.

Gohil has asked Chief Minister Modi to take a pro-active approach rather than just being a statement Minister. Gohil also said that in the past when residents of states like AP were in trouble in UAE, their CM's had sent the representatives to the UAE with the permission of the MEA, and arranged for their return tickets and emergency certificates. The Chief Minister should send officers from Gujarat to aid these workers and provide lawyers to those against whom criminal cases have been filed in Angola. Gohil was assured by the External Affairs Minister that all help would be provided to the team send by Gujarat to Angola.

To,  
The Editor,

Hon'ble Leader of Opposition has requested to kindly publish this press note in your esteemed newspaper.



**(Ashwin Sikligar)**  
Personal Secretary