

# OFFICE OF THE LEADER OF OPPOSITION

Gujarat Vidhansabha, Gandhinagar.

## Press Note

19<sup>th</sup> May, 2012

- **Four workers returned to Gujarat from Angola because of concerted efforts of Foreign Ministry.**
- **Gujarat Chief Minister should immediately send a team to Angola instead of issuing statements criticizing others.**
- **Indian Ambassador in Angola has sent a detailed report to Leader of Opposition in Gujarat Assembly.**
- **Demand to send a team to Angola as people of Gujarat origin has language and other problems. Gujarat should follow what Kerala and Andhra Pradesh had done in the past to help people of their states trapped in UAE.**
- **No Gujarati is injured in police firing in Angola.**
- **37 of the 59 arrested by police have been declared innocent.**
- **Embassy has made arrangement for emergency certificates for those who do not have certificates.**
- **Of the total 1260 employees in the Sumbe plant 1100 are Indian, 140 are from Bangladesh and 20 from Nepal.**
- **CM is always busy in politicizing issues, but he had no time to visit the families of the affected persons when he was in Petlad.**

With help from the Government of India, four Indian workers from Angola have been able to return to India. Instead of writing letters, if the Chief Minister would have sent a team from Gujarat to Angola to help these men with air tickets, emergency certificates and legal aid, these men would not have faced such hardships. Even though he was in Petlad, the CM did not have the time to visit the residences of workers from Petlad who are facing problems in Angola. Instead the CM played a political stunt by sending officers to bring the father of one of the workers stuck in Petlad to the CM's function.

All information regarding the situation in Angola and the steps taken by the central government was provided by the Indian Ambassador in Angola, Mr. Debraj Pradhan to the leader of opposition, Shaktisinh Gohil. Gohil has demanded that a team from Gujarat be sent to Angola to help the Gujaratis which are still there.

In the past when residents of states like AP were in trouble in UAE, their CMs had sent the representatives to the UAE with the permission of the MEA, and arranged for their return tickets and emergency certificates. Gohil has demanded to know if the CM, who is first to criticize others, has any plans to send a team to help these people in Angola. In reply to Gohil's E-mail dated 11.05.2012, the Indian ambassador in Angola has provided the details of steps taken to help these people.

A headcount has been conducted on 16.05.2012 and all Indians including 40 Gujaratis are present at the factory site. 1260 workers are working at cement plant in Sumbe city of Angola of which 1100 are Indians, 140 are Bangladeshis and 20 are from Nepal. The workers had a dispute with the management of the cement plant over the payment of overtime dues. The management was paying the dues of February and March in the local currency instead US Dollars. The workers went on a strike from 16.04.2012

regarding this matter. These workers have been accused of slogan shouting and rioting on 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2012. Some of these workers had burnt 16 motor cycles parked there. It is also alleged that they caused damage to the pantry, officer's mess and housing containers. Following this riot, police was called in teargas shells were fired. One Vijaykumar Modhabet from Karnataka was injured in the firing. He is being treated at present.

59 workers were arrested by the police at the spot and presented before a court. Of these, 37 have been deemed innocent while 22 have been judged guilty. On receiving the information, Gohil talked to these workers in Sumbe on the phone and brought the matter to the knowledge of the External Affairs Minister and Mr. Ahmed Patel.

Leader of Opposition went to Delhi urgently and held meeting with the External Affairs Minister. Information was gathered by the Ministry and steps were taken immediately. Indian Ambassador Debraj Pradhan had held meeting with Industries, Mines and Minerals Minister of Angola Joaquim David and Minister for External Relations Asia Andre Panzo and asked them to take humanitarian approach towards the trapped Indian labourers and see that they had no problem. He had also meeting with the Minister concerned for immigration.

Second Secretary of the Embassy S. K. Varun had visited the factory site at Sumbe and had got details of grievances of labourers and represented to the management and local government to help the workers. As many as 364 Indians have returned home during the period from April 3 and May 18, Gohil said.

In the case of people who wanted to return to India but did not possess passport, External Affairs Ministry has made arrangements for the issue of emergency certificates to them. As a result even those who did not have their passports with them are returning. For those who want to stay back and continue work, Embassy has asked the company to see that they had no problem. Many of them have resumed their work.

However, many who have returned to Gujarat have told that there are many who are still in trouble. Gohil demanded that to sort out the problem of Gujaratis trapped in Angola, Gujarat government must send urgently a team to Angola to provide them all kind of help right for money to return to legal support. It is the prime duty of Gujarat government to come to help of people of Gujarat and Chief Minister should become sensitive to the problem of people instead of indulging in statement attacks on the central government.

Gohil also provided to the media a detailed seven page report that Indian Ambassador sent to him.

**(A letter from H.E. Indian Ambassador in Luanda to Shri Shaktisinh Gohil, Leader of Opposition, Gujarat Vidhansabha, Gandhinagar together with detailed status report prepared by Indian Mission in Angola is available on [www.shaktisinhgohil.com](http://www.shaktisinhgohil.com).)**

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To,  
The Editor,

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

**(J. J. Rasanía)**  
Personal Assistant