



Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratisation Comments on Key Provisions of New Domestic Labour Law

- **Law to include comprehensive reforms to protect domestic workers, provide a framework for regulating relations between employers, employees and recruiters**
- **Protected rights for domestic workers to include access to dispute resolution, thirty days paid annual leave, minimum hours of daily rest**
- **New law prohibits employment of domestic workers under 18 and aims to tackle discrimination**

Dubai: 4 June 2017

The Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation is today releasing key provisions of the UAE's new Law on Domestic Labour, which was passed by the Federal National Council on Wednesday 31 April 2017. The bill will become law when signed by the President of the UAE, H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

Commenting on the new law, the Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation, H.E. Saqr Ghobash, said:

"The passing of this bill by the Federal National Council is a groundbreaking reform that will ensure that employees in a domestic setting are guaranteed the full protections of the UAE government. The bill, once signed into law, will bring the rights and protections afforded domestic employees into line with other workers in the UAE.

"Domestic employees play a vital role in our society and our economy. They are an important part of UAE family life and often enable both parents to return to work after having children, driving economic growth. It is consistent with the UAE's international obligations that they are afforded full protection under the law.

"The Domestic Labour Law will regulate four areas of key importance in the protection of domestic employees: Contracts, Rights and Privileges, Prohibitions, and Recruitment Agencies.

"The Domestic Labour Law establishes the principle of informed consent, ensuring that workers are aware of the contract terms before departure from their home country. It also sets out the terms under which either employer or employee may terminate the employment contract.

"The rights afforded to domestic employees include minimum daily rest hours, paid annual leave, weekly rest days, and access to dispute resolution. This will ensure that the UAE remains an attractive option for overseas workers contemplating employment here.



“Moreover, we are taking tough action to protect vulnerable workers, cracking down on the employment of minors, discrimination and sexual harassment. We will be announcing enforcement mechanisms in the coming months to ensure that the government can take action to uphold the law’s proscriptions.

“Finally, the law provides for strict regulation of private recruitment agencies. It restricts the recruitment of overseas domestic workers to UAE-registered agencies, prohibits the payment of commission in exchange for employment, and aims to tackle potential abuse of workers in the care of agencies.

“The passing of this bill reflects the UAE’s commitment to upholding the rule of law, aligning its legislation with international standards and defending the fundamental rights and dignity of its guest workers across all sectors of employment. I am grateful to members of the Federal National Council for their role in helping to achieve this important milestone.”

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Key Highlights from the Domestic Labour Law

Regulation of Contracts

- 1) A copy of the job offer must be presented by the recruitment agency to the employee, prior to the employee's departure from their country of origin.
- 2) Terms of employment will be governed by a standard contract, adopted by the Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratisation, setting out the terms and conditions of employment.
- 3) Either employer or domestic employee may terminate the contract if the other party fails to meet their obligations. Either employer or employee may instigate a no fault termination, subject to compensation as outlined in the Domestic Labour Law.

Rights and Privileges of Domestic Employees

- 1) Wages, as set out in the standard contract, must be paid within ten days from the day they are due.
- 2) Employees are entitled to one day's paid rest per week.
- 3) Employees are entitled to twelve hours of rest per day, including eight hours consecutive rest.
- 4) Employees are entitled to thirty days paid vacation per year.
- 5) Employees are entitled to medical insurance provided by the employer.
- 6) Employees are entitled to up to thirty days medical leave per year.
- 7) Employees are entitled to a round trip ticket home every two years.
- 8) Employees are entitled to decent accommodation.
- 9) Decent meals must be provided to employees at the employer's expense.
- 10) Attire, if required by the employer, must be provided at the employer's expense.



11) Employees are entitled to keep possession of their personal identification papers.

12) A dispute between employer and employee may be referred to the Ministry by either party. The Ministry will attempt to resolve the dispute amicably within a period of two weeks; non-resolution after two weeks will be referred to the courts.

13) Any legal suit by the employee is exempt from court fees and must be dealt with expediently.

Legal Prohibitions

The following are legally prohibited under the Domestic Labour Law:

- 1) The employment of anyone under the age 18 for domestic work.
- 2) Discrimination against domestic workers on the basis of race, colour, gender, religion, political opinion.
- 3) The sexual harassment of domestic workers, whether verbal or physical.
- 4) Forced labour or any other practice that may amount to trafficking of persons, in accordance with national law and ratified international conventions.
- 5) The exposure of domestic workers to physical harm.
- 6) The assignment of tasks that are not covered under the contract.

The Regulation of Recruitment Agencies

- 1) Only UAE-registered natural or legal persons - in good standing - may engage in recruiting domestic workers into the UAE.
- 2) An agency may not, on its own or through a third party, solicit or accept from any worker, whether prior to or after employment, any form of commission in exchange for employment.
- 3) In the event of early termination, the agency must act to repatriate the worker at the agency's expense and either offer the employer an acceptable substitute worker, or return to the employer the agency's fee.
- 4) The agency must at all times treat the worker decently and refrain from exposing the worker to any form of violence.