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# Kuwait Times Friday Times



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NO: 17144- Friday, February 17, 2017



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## NINE YEARS WITHOUT SALARY

### Maid narrates her ordeal

By Ben Garcia

**N**ine years trapped in an abusive household without pay might sound like a nightmare, but it was all too real for one domestic helper working in Kuwait. Nena, not her real name, worked for a Kuwaiti family for more than nine years without receiving her salary. She's now patiently awaiting the resolution of her case, which is being heard by a Kuwaiti court.

Speaking to the Kuwait Times, Nena,

35, said given she had already spent nine long years in Kuwait without salary, a few more years to reach a resolution was not an issue. Nena's ordeal reached its lowest point when her family thought she was dead after several years of her being unable to communicate with them.

There are more than 600,000 domestic helpers in Kuwait. While the majority are treated fairly, thousands more face regular abuse, unpaid salaries, harsh working conditions including isolation

from family and friends, no days off and no paid overtime.

In January 2016, Kuwait became the first state in the Gulf to pass a domestic labor law offering modest protections for domestic laborers' rights. Current rules grant domestic helpers a minimum salary, weekly day off, 30 days annual leave, a 12 hour working day and end-of-service benefits. But the law is unevenly enforced and human rights groups point out that abuse remains common. ( See Page 6)

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