

## Local

# Hold Zionists accountable for systematic violations of Palestinians' rights: Kuwait

## 'Zionists exploit world's preoccupation with pandemic to commit crimes'

**NEW YORK:** The Zionist occupation policies required counter political and legal measures to hold it accountable for its systematic violations of the Palestinian people's rights, Kuwait Permanent representative to the UN has said. Mansour Al-Otaibi, in a statement to UN Security Council's open debate about Palestine Tuesday night, called for cessation of Zionist occupation's arbitrary arrests, demolishing and confiscating of Palestinian buildings and properties, forced deportation of civilians, Jewish settlers' crimes against Palestinians, the siege on Gaza Strip in addition to repeated attacks on sacred Islamic and Christian sites. He said the UNSC session was held amidst critical challenges, foremost coronavirus pandemic which claimed more than 4.7 million people, as well as growing food security crisis and economic recession.

Otaibi said the Zionist entity, the occupying force, "is exploiting the international community's preoccupation with "this critical battle" against the pandemic to continue with its hostile policies against Palestinian people in a clear reminder that it would keep on annexing more Palestinian territories in the

West Bank and East Jerusalem. The Zionist occupation, he added, sought to continue its illegal policies by building thousands of Jewish housing units and annexation of territories in a clear violation of UN Security Council resolutions, namely resolution



### Kuwait worried of Zionist settler violence

2334. He noted that the Zionist occupation has recently announced resumption of construction of 10,000 housing units in the occupied northern Jerusalem as well as demolishing of Palestinian houses in Selwan. "What worries us the most is continuation of violent acts committed by the Zionist settlers



Mansour Al-Otaibi

and Zionist security forces against the unarmed Palestinian people, as the Zionist security forces opened fire at at least 60 Palestinians in the West Bank and killed them," he said.

Otaibi said more than 260 Palestinians, including 66 children and 41 women, were killed in Gaza Strip so far this year. These actions, he went on,

were "new war crimes added to the Zionist record which is full of vicious crimes against the Palestinian people, human rights violations, UN Charter and resolutions, and international law." The Zionist occupation wants to abort any Palestinian hope to establish an independent, viable and sovereignty state, he said.

Otaibi said the region would remain unstable unless the Palestinian people get all their political rights and Zionist occupation ended its violations of international humanitarian law, like ending construction of settlements, confiscation of lands, lifting siege on Gaza and desecration of holy sites. He underlined importance of relaunching peace negotiations within a specific time frame to reach just and comprehensive peace in line with relevant UN resolutions and Arab peace initiative in order to establish the independent Palestinian state in the June 4, 1967, borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital and return of refugees. Otaibi commended the historic role of UNRWA to which Kuwait recently donated \$21.5 million to provide educational, health and social services for Palestinian refugees. — KUNA

## High air ticket prices disrupt travel plans, vacations of Filipino helpers

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** Filipino domestic helpers are delaying their vacations to return to their families due to a steep rise in airfare to the Philippines. The cheapest tickets to Manila these days are around KD 670, reaching up to KD 3,435. Many domestic helpers are complaining their annual vacations are already long overdue, but their employers do not want to buy the pricey tickets.

Travel agencies told Kuwait Times that prices of airline tickets to Manila from Kuwait will only fall to pre-pandemic levels once the Philippine government allows airline companies to add more capacity or removes the travel quota. Currently, the Philippines allows only 2,500 passengers daily, up from 1,500 in April and 2,000 passengers in May.

Speaking to Kuwait Times, Dadabhai Travel Agency Brand Manager Paulita Lundang said the spike in airfares to Manila is due to the quota implemented by the Philippine government, adding thousands of Kuwaiti employers are complaining about the incredible amounts they have to spend to send their domestic helpers to the Philippines.

"We cannot do anything about the price of airline tickets. I think the airlines also want to reduce their fares, but they cannot do so easily, as they also have to pay their pilots and crews," Lundang said. "Prices will go down soon, especially when the Philippines removes restrictions from airlines. Before we could only carry up to 35 passengers, which later increased to 50, to 90 passengers now. If these restrictions are removed, airlines will cut



prices," she said.

According to Lundang, for some countries that did not restrict their airports, airfares are almost back to normal. "Look at India and Bangladesh - airfares are still high compared to pre-pandemic levels, but they are somehow reasonable," she said. Lundang said the Philippine government is assisting its citizens by sending chartered flights to Kuwait to get distressed workers out free of charge, but the quarterly chartered flights are not enough.

"Besides chartered flights, the Philippine government also arranges special monthly flights to Manila. Filipinos are given a 50 percent discount on these special flights, so the regular ticket price of KD 670 is reduced to KD 295 only. The special flights are arranged by the Philippine Labor Office, while the chartered flights are arranged by the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs," she explained.

### Not allowed

Some Filipino domestic helpers are not being allowed by their sponsors to go on vacation to the Philippines due to the sky-high ticket prices. "I was planning to go on vacation, but my sponsor said I have to wait for some time because tickets are

insanely expensive," said Mary Grace Montacir, a domestic helper from Iloilo.

"I was supposed to take leave to be with my family last year, but it was delayed due to COVID-19. My boss told me to go this February, but cases of the Delta variant increased from that month, so my plan was put on hold again. They then said I could maybe go home by November, but when I asked them again, they said it's not the best time because tickets are too expensive, so my leave was put on hold again," she said.

Her problem is similar to Gina Morales', who hails from Surala South Cotabato. She was supposed to go on vacation two years back. "I normally go back every two years as promised by my boss. In 2019, when I was supposed to go home, I decided to travel in March 2020, but the pandemic began and I was not able to leave. My family was understanding, but now it's 2021 and soon 2022. How can I go home when airfares are too high? My employers said prices of tickets are very high, and told me to wait," she said. Besides exorbitant airfares, all arriving overseas Filipino workers are subjected to 14 days of hotel quarantine arranged free of charge by the Philippine government (eight days only for vaccinated passengers).

## stc launches breast cancer prevention awareness campaign

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, a world-class digital leader providing innovative services and platforms to customers, enabling the digital transformation in Kuwait, announced the launch of its breast cancer awareness campaign, in line with the internationally recognized awareness month, with several events held throughout the month of October. The campaign consists of both internal and external activities organized by stc in collaboration with various entities and participants aimed at practicing early detection methods and ways to possibly prevent breast cancer.

The initiative launched by stc titled 'stay informed, stay healthy' falls under the umbrella of "Because We Care", and coincides with the international breast cancer awareness month, which aims at raising awareness on the various dangers of cancer, especially breast cancer. The campaign also falls in line with one of the key pillars under stc's extensive corporate social responsibility framework, health, while providing the Kuwaiti society with valuable information on ways to reduce the likelihood of contracting the disease.

The activities organized by stc's Corporate Communications team, led by specialist Hadeel Al-Abdullah, included an awareness campaign launched across the Company's social media channels. As part of the campaign, stc collaborated with Tabeey App to produce and post several awareness videos, in addition to organizing a screening test at the Company's headquarters in Olympia, and arranging fitness activities.

stc also collaborated with Alia International Hospital through an interactive social post to provide free breast cancer screening tests as a complimentary service that was announced on the company's Instagram page. Additionally, customers visiting stc's main branches throughout Kuwait received giveaways as part of the awareness campaign.

In terms of the initiatives under stc's internal campaign, the Company organized an event for female employees at REBEL Gym, the first smart kickboxing gym, with the aim of shedding light on the importance



KUWAIT: Group photo at the Alia International Hospital stand at stc headquarters.

of practicing regular fitness activities to reduce the risk of contracting breast cancer. Another fitness activity that focused on walking will also be organized for female employees, reflecting the values stc stands by when it comes to maintaining a healthy lifestyle that can help prevent the formulation of diseases.

As part of its collaboration with Alia International Hospital, stc provided its female employees with the opportunity to learn more about self-examination techniques to detect breast cancer. The sessions were held at a dedicated booth at stc's headquarters in support of the initiative. Other than the self-exams and check-ups, female stc employees received a 50 percent discount on early detection tests and free giveaways for visiting the booth.

Additionally, stc launched an awareness campaign providing valuable information on breast cancer through the Company's dedicated public and staff Instagram accounts, which is scheduled to resume throughout the month of October. Educational videos produced in collaboration with Tabeey App were posted on the account to support the cause.

On this occasion, Danah Al-Jasem, General Manager of Corporate Communications at stc, praised the continuous efforts of stc's team in showcasing the Company's eagerness and dedication in raising awareness on health risks that may affect members of the Kuwaiti society. Jasem extended her gratitude and appreciation to all those who participated in this cam-

paign, including the management teams of Alia International Hospital, REBEL Gym and Tabeey App for their role in making this initiative a success.

Jasem said, "Stemming from stc's CSR framework and our active role in supporting the Kuwaiti society, we organized a series of initiatives under this campaign that involved our customers, employees, and the public. Each activity aimed at spreading awareness on the importance of maintaining a healthy and balanced lifestyle. This campaign builds on the various activities launched by stc since the beginning of the year, which includes our initiative with the Kuwait Blood Bank which kicked off on the World Blood Donor Day."

She added, "On top of the goals associated with raising awareness on this matter, the Company strives to organize such events that enhance its role in supporting the healthcare field, in addition to other fields such as education and the environment through various contributions."

Jasem concluded that stc will spare no effort in continuing its various health and awareness campaigns by collaborating with institutions that help spread awareness on causes that benefit the Kuwaiti society. It is also worth mentioning that this initiative comes as an additional step under the annual "#Because We Care" campaign, which focuses on raising awareness on various causes, organizing fitness activities, and hosting informative lectures.

### News in brief

#### Kuwait's Defense Minister congratulates Qatari counterpart

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable of congratulations to Qatar's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defense Affairs, Dr Khalid bin Mohammad Al-Attiyah on his re-appointment. In the cable, Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali, wished the Qatari counterpart success, good health and wellness to bear the burdens of this important position. He also wished Qatar and its people further progress and prosperity.

#### Age limit for Indian helpers

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait and India have agreed to set a 30 - 55 age limit for domestic helpers recruited from India to Kuwait, as per an agreement signed recently between the two countries. The agreement also stipulates a minimum KD 100 monthly salary to be deposited into the worker's bank account, Al-Qabas Arabic newspaper reported yesterday.

#### Request to operate car park

**KUWAIT:** The Public Utilities Management Company has submitted a request to Kuwait Municipality to start operating a multi-storey car park that was built in the Dasman district of Kuwait City with a capacity for 2,300 vehicles. The building, the largest of its kind in Kuwait, has been out of service since construction was completed in 2019, Al-Anbaa Arabic newspaper reported yesterday.

#### Oil drops 88 cents

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait crude oil dropped 88 cents during Tuesday's trading sessions to reach \$84.28 per barrel (pb), Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. Benchmark Brent rose 99 cents to \$85.32 pb and West Texas Intermediate gained 58 cents to \$83.02 pb.

#### Drugs found in shipment

**KUWAIT:** Shuwaikh customs officers discovered around 4 kg of shabu hidden in a container of furniture that arrived from Iran, the Kuwait General Administration of Customs said in a statement yesterday.

## EPA distributes eco-friendly bags at co-ops

**KUWAIT:** The Environment Public Authority distributed one million eco-friendly bags among cooperative societies in the country's six governorates on Tuesday. The move is part of a campaign to raise public awareness about environment protection and minimize use of harmful plastic bags, said director of EPA's public relations and media department Sheikha Al-Ibrahim. EPA carries out this campaign in cooperation with the fund of environment protection with a view to encouraging the public to use the eco-friendly or ecobags instead of the traditional ones that are hazardous to environment, she said. Ecobags are made of organic materials and alcohol (fennel) that degenerate in hot water and leave no harmful impacts on air, soil or water. An ecobag is strong enough to carry up to 10 kg, she pointed out. After the end of the ongoing campaign, EPA will coordinate with cooperatives countrywide to replace the traditional bags with the eco-friendly ones, Ibrahim added. — KUNA

