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קו לעובד /
Worker's Hotline
 / عنوان العامل

Dear Kav LaOved Supporters,

This week, on the 10th of December, we mark International Human Rights Day. We chose to take this opportunity to update you and highlight our work against the continued exploitation of Palestinian workers and the violations of their rights, as this section of our work gets much less media attention than other aspects of our actions.

The number of Palestinians employed by Israeli employers has doubled in recent years; nearly 100,000 Palestinians are working in Israel and in the settlements, most of them with permits. These employees are entitled to receive working terms and conditions identical to those of Israeli workers. Therefore, the authorities collect monthly taxes for social rights from these workers and their employers. Yet the majority of these funds are not used for the purpose they were collected for, and remain with the Ministry of Finance at the expense of the health and welfare of Palestinian workers.

Sadly, it is clear that the welfare and rights of Palestinian workers does not concern the nation's decision-makers and influential figures. Exploitation and abuse of Palestinian workers has been going on for years without justice.

However, last month, as part of the ongoing struggle against the harsh phenomena of exploitation we're seeing, we had a few important milestones:

In early November, Kav LaOved filed an appeal against the State of Israel with respect to the negligent management of Palestinian workers' pension funds. Later, we launched a new report after extensive research on the continuing violation of the medical care rights of Palestinian workers employed by Israeli employers. In addition, two weeks ago Kav LaOved led, along with other organizations and activists, the establishment of the "Coalition Against Work Accidents in Construction." The coalition aims to promote public awareness of the disrespect for human life common in the construction industry and how it takes a heavy toll, particularly on Palestinian workers who pay the price of continued exploitation with their bodies, with their money, and with their souls.



Exploitation of a Voiceless Working Population

The State of Israel is in possession of monies

belonging to Palestinian workers employed in Israel, amounting to approximately **1.5 billion NIS**, which is money owed through the pension funds guaranteed to workers employed in Israel. Workers and employers set aside fixed rates of salary in respect to pension insurance. The State is in control of these funds. However, in the case of many Palestinians, it refuses to treat them as pension insurance, and sees them de-facto as a kind of "savings".

Attorney Michal Tradger writes, "This exploitation of a working population which is already weak and lacks a voice, sums to a negligent management of billions of shekels. The State misleads workers to believe that it is "saving" these funds, and encourages them to withdraw these funds which includes a heavy tax. As a result, when they reach old age, or upon the occurrence of another qualifying insurance-event – they are left without an annual pension."

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Violations of the Right to Medical Care for Palestinian Workers Employed in Israel

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Violations of the Right to Medical Care for Palestinian Workers Employed in Israel

Kav LaOved–Worker’s Hotline published today an updated report which portrays the disturbing reality with regards to the basic right of health care for Palestinian workers employed in Israel. In the report, we detail the manner of money collection intended for health and welfare services, and expose data collected through the Freedom of Information Act on the **tens of millions of shekels** the finance ministry keeps to itself, at the expense of the health and welfare of Palestinian workers employed in Israel.

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"The Coalition against Work-Related Accidents in the Construction Sector"

Thousands of workers are injured every year on construction sites, and dozens are killed. The number of casualties is growing worse, but there has been no governmental promotion of policy enforcement or

effective prevention.

On the 24th of November we held the inaugural meeting of the "Coalition against Work-Related Accidents in the Construction Sector," which aims to raise awareness about the labor rights failures in the construction industry and to promote a dramatic change in the existing policy. The meeting was attended by representatives of Kav LaOved- Workers' Hotline, WAC Workers Union, Physicians for Human Rights, the Association for Civil Rights, the Division for promoting equality of the Histadrut, legal scholars, and activists.

All of the meeting's participants expressed a sense of urgency and the importance of increasing activity and improving coordination between organizations and activists to promote a change in the systemic negligence of safety standards in the construction industry, from the low level of enforcement of the state's poor safety procedures, to the ridiculously lenient 'penalties' against employers who provide unsafe and inhumane working conditions- even in cases resulting in death. The coalition will also work towards ensuring adequate compensation for victims and their families.

To monitor the activities of the coalition, please visit our Facebook page where regular updates are posted (Hebrew): <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1055757771123923/>

All donations aid Kav LaOved in advocating for workers' rights and helping workers reclaim compensation and benefits withheld from them by their employers. Each dollar goes a long way in fighting for equal labor rights in Israel, and even a monthly contribution of \$5 can make a great impact. Direct debit or credit card donations can be made to Bank HaPoalim branch 527 account 431095. Donations by check may be sent to Kav LaOved, P.O. Box 2319, Tel Aviv, 61022. Tax deductible donations from abroad may be sent through the New Israel Fund. Please contact ariane@kavlaoved.org.il for more information.

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