

## **MALAYSIAN TRADES UNION CONGRESS**

### **MIGRANT WORKERS LIKELY TO BE SUBJECTED TO FURTHER HARDSHIP**

MTUC is apprehensive over Home Affairs Ministry's proposal to take full charge of the millions of migrant workers in the country.

MTUC receive hundreds of complaints every month relating to non payment of wages, breach of contract by paying less than the contracted wages, blatant violation of the provisions of the Employment Act relating to rate of overtime, working hours, paid sick leave, annual leave and public holidays. All these issues comes under the purview of the Labour Department under the Human Resources Ministry.

We get cases of workers not paid wages for 6 months to 1 year and when they demand their payment employer's terminate them and notify the Immigration Department who promptly cancel their work permit and declare them as illegals. Immigration officers turn a deaf year to their complains of wages owed to them.

MTUC feels that the Human Resource Ministry should have bigger say in the matter : Like verifying employers application and their needs. We believe Human Resource Ministry has reliable statistics on manpower needs and availability of Malaysian workers. This is essential to ensure that Government do not flood the country with migrant workers whilst Malaysians are sidelined.

Up to now we have not come across any case where the Home Affairs Ministry identifying employers who breach our Employment laws are refused new work permits. There is also contradicting condition imposed by the Home Affairs Ministry. Human Resource Ministry have repeatedly stated that migrant workers are allowed to join trade unions: Whereas the Home Affairs continue to ban migrants from joining a union as a condition on the work permit. This has caused embarrassment to Malaysia at international meetings at the ILO and others.

Most importantly, unlike the Labour Department and HR Ministry the Home Affairs Ministry is not approachable and often they don't seem to have any sympathy to the problems faced by the migrant workers. They take a mechanical and technical approached.

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