

[15 July, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

Inhuman treatment to Indians in Iraq

423. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there are many Indian who have been ill-treated and subjected to inhuman treatment in Iraq;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the matter has been taken up by Government with the US authorities; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Some of the Indians who have been misled by recruiting agents into taking up jobs in Iraq have complained of abuse and ill-treatment in some of the camps in Iraq. Visits to some of these camps and investigations by the Indian Embassy in Baghdad indicate that their living conditions in the camp are generally satisfactory but face restrictions relating to their movement for security reasons. The Embassy has assisted interested workers in returning to India.

(c) and (d) Cases of alleged ill-treatment and abuse were taken up with the US Authorities in Iraq and US Embassies in New Delhi, Kuwait and Amman. Our Embassy in Baghdad also pursued the matter with the Coalition Provincial Authority. The US authorities conveyed that they will not countenance abuse or exploitation of workers by the private contractors who have contracted Indian workers in Iraq. The US authorities conveyed their concern at the reports of ill-treatment of Indian workers and after investigations have conveyed that the allegation are exaggerated or largely false. The US also provided a list of private contractors who have employed Indian workers in Iraq. Our Missions in Kuwait, Jordan and Iraq are in contract with the contractors for ensuring welfare and well being of the workers.

Recognition of New Government in Iraq

424. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether in Government's opinion any qualitative change has taken place in Iraq with the assumption of Power by an Iraqi Government; and