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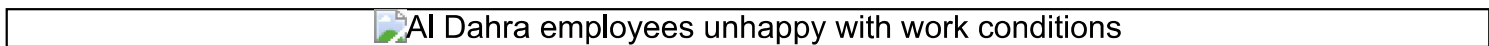


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# AI Dahra employees unhappy with work conditions

2019-02-26 [Staff Reporter](#)



Paheja Siririka

WINDHOEK – Employees at AI Dahra, a grape and date agricultural company in southern Namibia, say they live in deplorable conditions and receive low wages

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ALLOW COOKIES

Despite alerting relevant authorities to their plight, workers say no one has come to their rescue. Al Dahra is situated at Naute Dam, about 40 km south west of Keetmanshoop and employs more than 100 workers. Workers say they have been going through these conditions for the past nine years and there is no end in sight for their troubles.

Apart from low wages, employees claim they also do not have access to clean water. It is alleged that the company purifies its own water but the workers feel the process is not safe for their health and have thus called on the Ministry of Health and Social Services to assess the quality of the purified water. Workers also complained about their living conditions at the site.

“We are not provided with beds, we sleep on hard boards,” one worker complained. They also complained about the mode of transport used to commute between work and their residences. “Even when we are going to work, we are taken with a trailer and that is the same trailer that they use to take rubbish and dispose it,” another worker lamented.

Workers also complained that they are only given one and half day of leave per month, which translates into 18 days in a year. This, they say, is in contravention of the Labour Act of 2007, according to which an employee is entitled to 24 leave days annually.

According to the workers, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of victimisation, they have alerted authorities in the region about their plight but to no avail.

“We are suffering here and we cannot leave because we have families to support,” said one worker. Contacted for comment, the Legal and Human Resource Manager at Al Dahra Gaynor Hockey, claimed she was not aware of the alleged unfavourable conditions the workers are enduring. “Nothing was brought to my office,” she said.

The workers said they shared their grievances with the Office of the Ombudsman in Keetmanshoop but no action was taken against the company. They accused the investigating officer from that office of making empty promises.

//Kharas Regional Governor Lucia Basson, when contacted for comment, said she was aware of the allegations about unfavourable accommodation conditions.

However, the governor said she was not aware of other complaints raised by the workers. On accommodation, she said she was under the impression that the matter was resolved after the workers went mute on it.

Governor Basson further stated that when it comes to such matters, she usually refers workers to the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare for recourse.

“It is not my mandate to handle these types of matters, so I usually advice that workers go to the ministry of labour,” she pointed out.

She however referred New Era to her adviser Alfred Dax who confirmed that the situation at Al Dahra is in dire need of intervention and workers are living in inhumane conditions.

“I went there not so long ago and the condition that these workers live in is deplorable, they don’t have protective gears and so forth,” Dax stated.

A report compiled by Dax after his visit to the company vindicates some of the allegations that the workers shared with New Era.

The report also outlined actions that the employer should embark upon in order to meet the labour

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“As per the responsible leaders, I do agree that we must look into this matter to bring socio-economic change amongst our people,” Dax remarked.

In a letter dated 6th February 2017, seen by New Era, the ministry of labour acknowledged the plea by the Al Dahra workers and assured an investigation will be conducted in the matter. Nothing has been fruitful to date.

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