



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

PRESS RELEASE

BY

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MINISTER OF STATE FOR LABOUR EMPLOYMENT AND INDUSTRIAL
RELATIONS

ON THE RECENT MINISTERIAL AND TECHNICAL VISIT TO THE
KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

21st OCTOBER 2024

UGANDA MEDIA CENTRE

KAMPALA

Members of the Media Fraternity

Fellow Ugandans I bring you greetings from the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development

Between 14th to 17th of October 2024 I led a government delegation to Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This Ministerial and Technical visit was necessary to discuss a number of issues between our two countries.

The main objective of this Ministerial and Technical visit was to monitor the welfare and document the conditions of work for Ugandans who live and work in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia is the biggest labour externalisation destination for Ugandan migrant workers accounting for over 150,000 workers. Uganda and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed a bilateral labour in 2023 that places responsibility on the host country to provide for the rights of Uganda workers externalised. Uganda migrant workers in the Middle East alone contribute about US\$ 900 million per annum to Uganda economy.

Many Ugandans have been languishing in Prison centres across Saudi Arabia and central to the discussions was Uganda's request for clemency for its citizens, including women with children born in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and those currently detained for various offenses in accordance with Saudi Arabian law, with the exception of those serving prison sentences due to capital offenses such as drug trafficking and murder.

I have the pleasure to announce that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has agreed to pardon Ugandan migrant workers who have been stranded in deportation centers and prisons across the country. The decision was made during a meeting held between the Ugandan delegation which I led and

the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Eng. Ahmed Alrajhi, during the Ministerial and Technical visit conducted from 14th to 17th October 2024, in Riyadh.

In a gesture of goodwill, the Saudi government further pledged to expedite their repatriation back to Uganda and support in their reintegration. This unprecedented move is expected to bring relief to numerous Ugandan families, many of whom have been living in uncertainty regarding the fate of their loved ones who travelled to Saudi Arabia with a hope of making a livelihood and support their families back in Uganda.

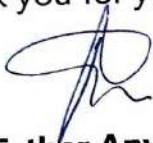
The Ugandan delegation's success in securing this pardon is a testament to the growing cooperation between the two nations in managing labour migration. The government of Uganda through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development as the regulator continues to pay keen attention to the issue of enhancing the protection of its migrant workers abroad and ensuring that labour migration is safe, secure, orderly and regular and , particularly in the Middle East and Saudi Arabia as the key destination for labour migration in Uganda.

In addition, the Ugandan delegation which comprised of the Ambassador of Uganda to Saudi Arabia, Uganda's labour attaché to Saudi Arabia and other technical officers from the Ministry focused their discussions on addressing the key challenges affecting Ugandan migrant workers in Saudi Arabia, strengthening bilateral relations and documenting distressed cases in order to enhance their repatriation to Uganda

With this development, Uganda's Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development reaffirms its commitment to improving the standards of labour externalization through strategic bilateral partnerships. The successful conclusion of the negotiations further sends a strong message of

support to Ugandans working abroad, reinforcing the government's determination to protect their rights and ensure their safety. The continued dialogue between Uganda and Saudi Arabia is expected to lead to further collaborations aimed at enhancing labor relations and ensuring that Ugandan workers are treated with dignity and respect wherever they may be.

I thank you for your attention.



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